

connection between Church and State, should resume, as the Church Association are doing in an intensified form, a legal conflict which can hardly fail, if long maintained, to tell powerfully in the direction of disestablishment. The *raison d'être* of the action of the Church Association is not the mere prevention of such acts or observances as are charged against the Bishop of Lincoln, but the general defeat and discomfiture of the party in the Church of England who hold advanced views as to the sacerdotal office of the clergy and as to the nature of the sacraments. It must be obvious to all reflecting persons that such a result could only be brought about by risking a complete disruption of the Church of England. We have more than once had occasion to lament the exceedingly narrow views as to the Christian ministry taken by many of the High Church clergy. No sensible person, however, can shut his eyes to the vast amount of success of various kinds which attends the work of the clergy in question, or the hold which they have obtained upon the working classes; and it cannot be supposed for a moment that the adherents of the school of thought of which Dr. King is a distinguished exponent will submit, at this time of day, to the general crippling of their special forms of activity and influence by the militant Low Churchmen. Whatever views may be held as to the particular practices charged against Dr. King, the dominant public feeling will be regret on the one hand that he felt it his duty to give expression to his views in so many ways of doubtful legality; and, on the other hand, that the zeal of the members of the Church Association should have led them into a prosecution which cannot fail to incite a great amount of bitterness, and so to impair the religious effectiveness of the Church of England as a whole." The above could be supplemented by a score of citations from leading journals, but it is needless, as the above are representative.

#### THE RITUAL REDUCTIO AD ABSURDAM.

The impossibility of conducting divine service at all according to the Prayer Book, if nothing may be done which is not set down in the rubrics, is well set forth in the following letter by the Rev. R. H. A. Bradley, Vicar of St. Peters, Regent Sq., London.

"The prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln for practices adopted by the Protestant Churches professing Lutheranism must be a singular spectacle to those staunch opponents of Popery. What Luther and his followers in other parts of Europe approved of is considered 'soul-destroying' by his admirers in England. It is difficult to comprehend the standpoint of these gentlemen. When I see 'processions' of the Salvation Army with bands of music and banners, and officers in strange attire; functions held in their halls of still stranger nature; when I read treatises by Evangelical clergymen admitting the doctrines of a thinly veiled purgatory and a purification

of the soul after death; when I observe placards announcing 'services of song with solos' to be held in Dissenting chapels, I rub my eyes and ask are these all marching on the road to Popery? I see also Evangelical Bishops vested in scarlet in place of the old sombre black satin; *Te Deums* sung in the Presbyterian Church of St. Giles at Edinburgh, and a Book of Common Prayer issued for the use of ministers of the Establishment in Scotland, and I ask again *Quousque tandem?* Are these gentlemen of the Church Association so unobservant of the signs of the times that they imagine they can arrest this advancing tide, or that, if they succeed in condemning this Bishop or that priest, the world will go back to the ritual of fifty years ago? If they do so think, I am sorry for their simplicity, though I may admire their zeal. If they do not, what are we to think of their wanton and futile harassing of a few zealous clergymen, and of the waste of money and of time upon that which will produce nothing but bitterness and ill feeling? If all the clergy are to be tied hard and fast by rubric and by judgments, well and good. But I confess to an utter inability to conform thereto. For aught either say, I may (as it has been said) begin the daily service arrayed in a pea-jacket and sitting in the font. I must preach my sermon standing at the north side of the altar with my face away from the people. I must keep every infant I baptise in my arms until the Day of Judgment, for, though told to take the child, I am not told to give it back; the sacred vessels must never leave the holy table; the water must never be removed from the font, nor the priest ever go out of the Church; no hymns must be sung and the people must never sit; hassocks, carpets, curtains, organ, and divers other necessary ornaments must be excluded, and gas forbidden. As to common sense, which some would import into the subject, the rubric nowhere provides for its importation. There seem to be two logical positions—strict rubrical conformity (apparently, though not really, demanded by the Bishop's prosecutors), and the plea that omission is not prohibition—in other words, that the compilers of the rubric left the traditional ritual where it was, except where they purposely altered it. The first position is an impossible one, the second is that by which, more or less, the clergy have practically been governed. It covers the use of the pulpit, organ, and various other ornaments and utensils; it regulates much of our movements. Ritualists (so-called) contend that it covers also the questions in dispute. It certainly squares with the contention that the Church of England is the great historic Church of this country, and not the creation of Henry or Elizabeth, or any person or party of the period of the Reformation, and it as certainly squares with the laws and statutes of the realm, as well as affords the only meaning of the word 'Reformation.' It provides the only possible *modus vivendi* at the present time. I believe that if fairly and honestly recognised it will be found to cover such a diversity of ritual as will suit all parties

in the Church. The great majority of Churchmen are tolerably contented with matters as they now stand; they assuredly will not be contented if they are brought to such an issue as the Bishop's prosecutors desire. An Established Church in which such men as Pusey and Keble and Drs. Liddon and Church and Bishop King could find no place would not hold together a twelvemonth, and I may venture to say would not be worth preserving."

Churchmen in the Niagara Diocese who are bent on reducing all ritual strictly within lines laid down by their own private fancies would do well to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the above comments on the prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln.

#### LENT.

THE duration of the Lenten fast appears to have varied considerably from the time of the acceptance by the primitive Christians of the principle of some such self-denying ordinance until the eleventh century, when the present became the established usage of Western Christendom, though even now the rite of Milan places the beginning of the fast four or five days later than the day which Anglo-Catholics have for twelve hundred years observed as "the first day of Lent, commonly called Ash Wednesday."

From the first, however, the number forty would seem to have been universally regarded, in theory if not always in practice, as the proper multiple of the space of time which was for the moment adopted as the unit in the calculation, this preference being doubtless due to the recurrence of that number in the sacred annals, which record the holy fasts of Moses and Elijah and of our Lord Himself. Accordingly, in the first instance, a solemnity of forty hours duration was kept by the primitive Christians, the observance of which began on the afternoon of the day on which they commemorated the Crucifixion and ended on the morning of the Paschal Feast. This observance of an ante-Paschal fast is incidentally shown by St. Irenæus to have taken rank from the first among the grand Catholic usages, which are distinguished from varying and various pious customs of merely local obligation by bearing the clear impress of the "notes," or ecclesiastical "hallmarks," of unanimous and ubiquitous acceptance. Thus much is evident from the remarks of the Father, whom Tertullian calls "*omnium doctrinarum curiosissimus explorator*," upon the inclusion in the *vexata questio*, concerning the proper time of keeping Easter, of a subsidiary dispute as to the proper duration of the preceding fast. Whether her children were to fast for one day or for two days, or for a yet longer time; and whether the suggested period of forty hours was to be taken as limiting the fast to hours of daylight, and so rendering it intermittent, or as including the hours of darkness, and so rendering it continuous; these were matters of detail which the Church, in affirming the general principle, appears to have purposely referred to the future decision of