

deanery, assuring me as it does of your sympathy and co-operation, and of your concurrence in the conclusion, to which the Bishops generally have been led, that it is the wisdom of the Church at the present time to discourage any attempt to alter the Book of Common Prayer.

Few, I suppose, would assert that our Prayer Book—admirable as it is in itself, and strong in the associations and affections of the people—will not admit of adaptations to altered circumstances; and there might be an almost general agreement in the desirableness of modifying or explaining some of its rubrics, of revising the Table of Lessons, and of providing some additional occasional services, as well as a shorter form of prayer for the week-days.

But this is not the measure of revision which is sought in the present movement. Many of its most earnest and able advocates are demanding alterations of passages which express or imply doctrine, and doctrine respecting points over which the struggle of controversy has scarcely yet subsided, and about which men's minds are sensitive and excited still. He must be a very sanguine man who can expect to secure unity or promote charity by the proposal to alter such passages at such a time; and it is not timidity but prudence to deprecate an attempt which, whether it succeeds or fails, cannot but disturb disastrously the peace of the Church. If, on the one hand, any doctrinal alterations should be made and enforced by authority, it is vain to close our eyes to the certainty of a deep-seated dissatisfaction, and the possibility of an open rupture; while the far more probable alternative, the failure of the endeavour to effect such alterations, will have been an unmixed evil, a disappointment to its authors, and a fruitless exasperation of controversy.

Many, no doubt, who are favourable to liturgical revision do not desire any doctrinal alterations; but they can attain their object only by making common cause and adopting the same measures with those who do; and it is for them to consider whether the advantages they expect, allowing them all the weight which they themselves can fairly assign them, are sufficient to justify the evil of disturbing the peace of the Church, and the risk of consequences which they themselves would be the first to deprecate.

A temperate opposition, therefore, to proposals for altering the Prayer-book is, I believe, the part of both wisdom and charity at the present time.

If, however, there are any imperfections and inconveniences in the arrangement or details of our Book of Common Prayer, which must thus be left unaltered, it is our duty to supply or mitigate them as far as by law we can. And much may be done to remove the objections most frequently brought against our services, by carefully instructing our people in the true meaning and significance of our Prayer-book and its parts; by conducting public Worship with care and devotion ourselves, and inducing our congregation to join in it generally and heartily; by avoiding all that unnecessarily lengthens our services, and, in some few cases, by availing ourselves of the authority for separating and arranging their parts which is assumed to belong to the Ordinary. Nor is it impossible that means may be found for preparing and issuing with authority the few additional services for particular occasions, the want of which has been so often expressed.

Permit me to add one word in conclusion. Various as are the objects and motives of those who are combining in the movement for a revision of the Book of Common Prayer (and I would be understood to speak of them all, as I think of them, with respect), there is, I am convinced, but one cause at present which can add to their efforts the momentum of public opinion, and that is the persevering introduction into our churches of ornaments, and into our services of practices, gestures, and vestments which, if not illegal, are at least obsolete, and which are sufficiently