

THE PRIMATE AND THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

The Archbishop of Canterbury has addressed the following Pastoral Letter to the Archdeacons and Rural Deans of his diocese:

"My dear Archdeacons and Rural Deans:—At the close of our annual gathering held here last Wednesday you asked me to assist you in meeting the wishes of the clergy who wrote to you for guidance and advice as to the bearing upon their own services of the judgment which, with five right reverend assessors, I have been called upon to deliver in a recent ritual suit. The request is plainly a reasonable one, and indeed, I felt that I scarcely fulfilled my duty to my beloved diocese if I left myself in the distant relation towards it of provincial judge without, as your Bishop, writing you a few words of counsel for Christ's and His Church's sake on the questions involved. To judge of particulars wisely we must take up one or two general considerations. We cannot learn our latitudes without reference to higher objects.

I ask the clergy, then, to consider the disproportion between those points of ritual which have been contested and the grand characteristics in which all agree of our English Eucharistic service—a liturgy Scriptural, primitive, with Communion in both kinds, in the mother tongue, free from superstitions or doubtful devotions, most reverent, yet truly 'Common,' the humblest people sharing every prayer and every action. Beside this great Catholic and Reformed heritage the diversities are small indeed. And when these diversities and questionings are contrasted with the tremendous burden of duty to Christianity and to mankind which this age above all ages binds on the shoulders of our Church above all Churches, the overwhelming contrast casts a new light on Christ's searching saying that the world itself has to suffer for the 'stumbling blocks' among ourselves (St. Matt. xviii. 7).

I ask all to consider the vital importance of peace, charity, unity. Without these we can make no impression on the world's tasks which are ours to do. Without them we can carry no conviction of Divinity in our faith. Without them we cannot solve one great problem. Without them in the presence of an enemy ready to pour in at every breach, our highest aims will become unattainable, and our position almost indefensible. And peace and charity and unity are being visibly set at naught because we will not impose this essential on ourselves—such silence and stillness about differences as make the peace of families, above all of the household of God.

I ask the clergy to consider the ruling principle of St. Paul's life and counsel, that all that is lawful is not expedient; that the feeding of the flock of Christ is the substance and evidence of expediency; that they who have insight enough to know and act safely on the knowledge that things which bordered on even heathen ceremonies (1 Cor. viii.—x; vi. 12; Rom. xiv.) were not really dangerous, but admissible when understood by Christian intelligence, were nevertheless bound by a wisdom higher than knowledge, and a law greater than that of the new freedom of the Church; bound, like himself, to limit choice by expediency; bound to abstain not only from the parade of their convictions, but from the very use of them when surrounded by eyes that would be pained and spirits that would suffer at sight of what seemed their dangerous advance.

I feel that to say so much as this gives to those who are uneasy the right to ask me if I do not fear that men are in danger of being led to the Church of Rome. I answer, I do not. Considering how much wrong, Christianity and this country suffered during the Roman domination, I do not wonder that fears arise. I lament the imperfect acquaintance with the subject,

the unworthiness, the injustice to worshippers, with which the dignity and simplicity of the English use may anywhere be spoilt by imitations of past or foreign modes. But I do not think this will lead to Rome. With my predecessor, I believe that while our service is in this mother tongue of ours and is the glory of it, and Scripture makes so large a part of it, and inspires the whole, and is in every home and every hand, and the clergy are citizens and fathers of families, there will be no following for Rome. It has been shown that in all these years she has effected here a multiplication of edifices and institutions, but not of souls; that she makes no statistical progress. No. The ancient Church of England is with us. I do not fear that the new Italian Mission will make anything of our clergy or people. This is a digression I feel bound to make.

Again I entreat the clergy to reflect that there is no Church in the world in which parish priests or ministers have anything like the same independence, in or out of Church, as our parochial clergy have. This means that there is no Church in the world in which so much responsibility for the preservation and good estate of the whole rests on each one of them. We are trusted as Englishmen only trust. Nothing but the sense of honor in many cases forbids our abuse of independence. What delicacy of consideration ought to possess our spirit towards thoughtful, troubled, even over-sensitive, even prejudiced parishioners!

If there were any whose first impulse would be to give no attention to any judgment or ruling, spiritual or temporal, but their own and their 'organ's,' I should still not despair that one hour's sober communing with themselves and with history would reveal to them what have been always the beginnings of schism and separation,—what is the secret of the lost influence and serviceableness of the clergy in some other countries, not Roman only, and what the guiltiness of undermining our own power of good.

Such strong impressions are, however, made on our minds by extremists on either side that it is easy to forget that these are, after all, few in comparison with the solid central mass of moderate and earnest men whose work is carried on in peace. By them, in happy conjunction with the laity, a universal, unimpeached advance in the devout beauty of public worship has been made in the last half century.

Looking now to the conclusions of the Court, the accurate limits of those conclusions, and that which emerges from them, I would ask the clergy preliminarily to observe that each conclusion relies on the whole chain of the history of each observance, and on the fact that the English Church is a true faithful branch of the Church Catholic, enjoying the right of every branch to order its rites and ceremonies, within the limits of Scripture, and of that 'edification whereunto all things done in the Church ought to be referred'; and that our Church asserted in its reformation and made use of this its authority, and specially by the restoration of primitive order and tone in the Holy Communion.

I would then ask you to observe generally that the conclusions reached are simply the decision that such or such an act is or is not, expressly or by necessary implication, forbidden by the law of our Church—is or is not, in immediate or ultimate consequence, actually penal by that law as it now stands. It is evident that decisions of this character are far from throwing the weight of the Court's authority upon the side of any act which it does not find to be illegal. We had not as a Court to allow or disallow anything on grounds of advisability or policy. Our sole duty was to ascertain whether existing Church law forbade or did not forbid certain practices. The circumstances under which the inquiry was committed to us rendered it imperative to make the ascertainment as complete as we could,

The judgment speaks for itself. It would be out of place for me to expand, compress, or restate its conclusions. I am ready to trust the living spirit of unity and loyal faithfulness among us. As to particular observances which the judgment of the Court has found allowable, I feel confident the clergy of the diocese will be with me when I make it my own undoubting recommendation and earnest request that the clergy will make no changes in the direction of adopting any of them in their conduct of Divine service, unless, at the least, they are first assured of the practical unanimity of their people in desiring such change. And that, even if any do, in accordance with the clear sentiment of their people, make any change within the limits of the judgment, yet they will make it their bounden duty to provide at the most convenient hours, especially on the first Sunday of the month, and at the most frequented hour, administrations of the Holy Communion which shall meet in all ways the desire of those parishioners whose sense of devotion seeks and feeds on the plain and quiet solemnities in which they have been reared, which they love, and in which their souls most perfectly 'go in and out and find pasture.' Those simplest forms are liturgically true. The people have a right to them, and through them the true pastor will delight to be one with them, to break for them the Bread of Heaven, to feast with them on its inmost spiritual realities. He will fear no loss when, like his Master, he girds himself to serve them and pay them all observance. Believe me, ever your faithful brother and servant in Christ.—*Edw. Cantuar.*

Lambeth, Dec. 6th, 1890.

CONFIRMATION.

SELF EXAMINATION.—OBEDIENCE TO GOD'S LAW.

The second Promise of Baptism was—
That we should Believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith.

The explanation of these Articles of our Christian Faith will come more properly under the second heading of the necessary "preparation of the heart"—Faith.

The third Promise of Baptism was—
That we should Keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of our life.

A distinction may be drawn between Will and Commandments.

"Will," is the more comprehensive, answering to the spirit.

"Commandments," are the expressions of that Will in special cases, answering more to the letter.

A child is obedient to its parent's commands when it strictly does what its parents has told it to do or not to do. It is obedient to the parent's will when it does what it knows the parents would wish it to do, even when there is no express command given.

It is thus that Christ has taught us to obey the "Commandments" given by God to the Israelites on Mount Sinai.

Those Commandments were the publication by God of the MORAL LAW, i. e. the eternal and unchangeable Law by which moral creatures are bound to God.

We may see in the Bible that men were punished for doing things contrary to some of these Commands before they were published on Sinai.

We, therefore, as Christians, are as much bound as were the Jews to keep these "Commandments," as the expression of the Moral Law.

Indeed, they have a much wider and deeper meaning for us. Christ came to fulfil, not to destroy the Law. He fulfilled it Himself in its uttermost requirements; and by His teaching