

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE CHURCHMAN.

AUGUST, 1907.

The Month.

An
Impossible
Position.

THE address of Lord Halifax at the annual meeting of the English Church Union has given Churchmen yet another opportunity of understanding the position he occupies in regard to Church matters. In his attack on the Royal Commission we are enabled to see more clearly than ever that what he means by Churchmanship is something really indistinguishable from the position of the Church of Rome. This is true of his doctrines of the Eucharist and Eucharistic worship, of the invocation of saints, and of the future life. He objects to the findings of the Royal Commission mainly on the ground that they

“strike a most serious blow against the two main reasons why we value our position in the Church of England—namely, first, because the Church of England has a continuous history, which goes back through the Apostles to our Lord Himself; and, secondly, because whatever outward divisions there may at the present time be in the Church of Christ, the Church of England is in the deepest sense unsevered from the rest of the Catholic Church, and as such is in possession and the enjoyment of that great body of truth which has been handed down continuously in the Church.”

Is it not astonishing that Lord Halifax is able to overlook entirely what happened in the sixteenth century and the relations since that time between the Church of England and the Church of Rome? On any showing, the Reformation made a break between them—a break that abides to-day, and is written deeply on the whole history of our country for the last 300 years. It is, therefore, curious that Lord Halifax, however he may object to the Reformation, should ignore

facts that are patent to almost every one else. The best way, perhaps, of testing this is to ask what the Roman Church itself thinks. Does that Church consider that the Church of England is "in the deepest sense unsevered from the rest of the Catholic Church"? The reply of the Pope with reference to Anglican Orders some few years ago is surely a sufficient answer. Lord Halifax himself would not be allowed to partake of the Mass in the Roman Church without submitting to Confirmation. Where, then, is the "unsevered" condition? The Reformation may be "repented of in tears and ashes," but at least it cannot be ignored; and when the Royal Commission speaks of certain practices as lying on "the Romeward side of a line of deep cleavage between the Church of England and that of Rome," it must be obvious to every plain man that Lord Halifax's position is an absolutely impossible one.

Clearing
the Air.

We are exceedingly glad that Lord Halifax is able to see that the recommendations of the Royal Commission about certain practices being "promptly made to cease" do really involve doctrine. Of course they do; and when the practices are made to cease, the doctrine necessarily goes with them. It is this simple but significant fact that is at the root of Lord Halifax's opposition to the Royal Commission, and it is well to have it clearly understood on both sides. His plea for the observance of All Souls' and Corpus Christi Days and for the invocation of saints are all based on the assumption of an essential oneness between the Church of England and the Church of Rome, and so we have the patent fact that Lord Halifax represents one view and the Royal Commission one that is diametrically opposite. It is obvious that these cannot both be right, and equally clear that if Lord Halifax is right, not only the Royal Commission, but the past 350 years of English Church history, are altogether wrong. Merely to mention this is to show its utter absurdity. Meanwhile we will venture once again on the assertion that on all such matters as the doctrines of the Real Presence in the

elements, invocation of saints, observance of All Souls' and Corpus Christi Days, the Tractarians and their successors represent a line of teaching and practice which was absolutely unknown in the Church of England before Tractarian days. The *Guardian* not long ago admitted that it was only partially true to say that the Tractarians were the lineal successors of the Caroline High Churchmen, and that the former represented in particular an effort to reunite the Churches of England and Rome. It is well to have all these facts before us, for the two sides represent two utterly opposite ideals, and in the contest that is coming upon us one of them will certainly have to go to the wall. It is a great satisfaction to get the issues so clearly and narrowly defined.

Loyal Churchmen will be grateful for the valuable letter of the Bishop of Oxford with reference to the way in which Lord Halifax, Mr. Athelstan Riley, with others, have been misrepresenting the findings of the Royal Commission. The terms of the Bishop's letter seem to us to offer a fine opportunity for Churchmen of various schools to come to something like an agreement on the main question at issue connected with the Holy Communion. We hope the letter will be pondered, and that some action will be found practicable. The Bishop's description of the medieval teaching of the Church of Rome on the Sacrament of the Holy Communion is very significant, and he shows that the ceremonial objected to by the Royal Commission is expressive of this medieval teaching, and is, therefore, to be "promptly made to cease." If only this first recommendation were thoroughly carried out, the way would be cleared for such reforms and adaptations to modern needs as would enable our Church to go forward on the pathway of blessing to the nation and the world; but if these practices are not stopped, our troubles will be increased and accentuated. The closing words of the Bishop's letter deserve to be heeded by all who are concerned for the best interests of our Church:

Misrepresenting the Commission.

“A year ago I hoped much from the work of the Commission. I knew, of course, how that work had been done. I had watched the reverence, the sincerity, the patience, and the prayer which had kept it straight and true. The outcome seemed to me strangely different from all that anyone could have forecast when the work began. I thought it showed an ungrudging and unprecedented recognition of the rightful strength of the position of High Churchmen. I thought it offered them a way in which, without any surrender of Church principles, they might bear part in a great common effort to rescue the Church of England from the quarrels which are wasting its power and bringing dishonour on its name. The hope of such an effort has been overclouded and imperilled; but I do not think that it is quite gone, and I trust that it yet may be recalled and realized.”

When High Churchmen like the Bishops of Oxford and Gloucester can unite in such expressions, it shows at once the dangers and the hopes of the situation. Will not Churchmen realize the true gravity of the crisis that is upon us?

In the Bishop of Oxford's letter he speaks of Defining our Terms. the truth of the Real Presence as tenable in the Church of England, and we are not surprised to find that Lord Halifax asks the Bishop to define what he means by the Real Presence. This is Lord Halifax's own definition :

“The doctrine of the Real Presence is not the doctrine of a presence of Christ in the whole rite, but the doctrine that the bread and wine—sacramentally, mystically, but really and in an ineffable manner, by virtue of consecration and the operation of the Holy Ghost—‘become,’ ‘are made,’ ‘are changed into’ the Body and Blood of Christ.”

This is certainly plain enough, and we are once again glad to know what it is that Lord Halifax really believes, for we can the more readily join issue when we know precisely what it is that we are opposing. And we do not hesitate to oppose this doctrine of Lord Halifax from the standpoint of the Church of England on the following grounds: (1) It is not distinguishable from that of the Roman Catholic doctrine which our Articles oppose, and for opposing which Cranmer and Ridley died. (2) It is nowhere found in our Prayer Book and Articles. (3) It has not been found in any Church of England formulary since 1549. (4) It is opposed to the plain words of the Communion Office, especially the words of the Consecration

Prayer, which speak of "receiving these Thy creatures of bread and wine." Is it not significant that the Church of England never once uses the phrase "Real Presence" because of its ambiguity? Churchmen believe with all their hearts in a real and blessed Presence of Christ in the "whole rite" of the Holy Communion, but with equal strength and conviction they absolutely disbelieve the view that that Presence is in or "under the veils" of the bread and wine. The one simple question is whether consecration effects any change in or makes any addition to the nature and substance of the bread and wine. The Church of England view is that it does *not*. Consecration involves a change of use or purpose, the elements being separated or consecrated for the purpose of becoming signs and symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ. Beyond this consecration does nothing, and we would challenge anyone to disprove this position from our Prayer Book. On this simple but really decisive point we must be prepared to fight the battle against those who hold the views propounded by Lord Halifax.

In the course of the report of the Royal Commission, the Bishop of Oxford's letter, and Lord Halifax's reply, references have been made to the **The Bennett Judgment.** Bennett Judgment in connexion with certain language about the Holy Communion. As the matter is one of great importance, and there is no little misunderstanding on the point, we should like to call attention to a very valuable pamphlet by that great authority the Rev. N. Dimock. It is entitled "The Bennett Judgment cleared from Misconception" (Vivish and Co., Maidstone, 1s. 6d.), and it discusses very thoroughly the whole position. It ought to be widely known that Mr. Bennett escaped condemnation only because of the ambiguity of his language, and that on this account alone the judges gave him the benefit of the doubt. As Mr. Dimock rightly says, the crucial test of the doctrine of the Eucharistic presence is the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ by such as are void of a lively faith, and on this our Article XXIX. is quite clear and

unambiguous. The matter can be brought to a very simple test by asking whether a Roman Catholic or a Lutheran would endorse the teaching of that Article. The plain answer is that they would not, and yet that Article has been signed, or otherwise accepted as true, by every clergyman of the English Church.

A
Distinctive
Vestment.

The discussion about a distinctive vestment for Holy Communion has been making progress during the month, and the air has been full of rumours which connect the Canterbury and York Convocations with suggestions for recommending the permissive use of a distinctive vestment. It is therefore timely to have so definite and clear a pronouncement as that recently put forth by the National Church League, in which the League affirms "the necessity of strict adherence to the principles on which the Prayer Book was constructed by the English Reformers—namely, of conformity with Holy Scripture and with the example of the primitive Church." The League will therefore

resist any proposal for legalizing a special vestment or vestments for the Holy Communion, and in the event of such a proposal being accepted by Convocation must use all practicable means, both in Parliament and in the country, to prevent its adoption.

We have reason to know that this view is upheld by a very large and powerful body of Churchmen whom it will hardly do to ignore. If the Committees of Convocation should report in favour of a permissive use of vestment or vestments, and if by any possibility this should become law, it is the simple truth to say that it will lead in no long time to disestablishment, with its inevitable consequence of disruption. It ought to be known to those who are pleading for such permissive use that on this question no compromise is possible. Those who are represented by the resolution now quoted are not at all likely to give way, and if the permissive use of a distinctive vestment passes into law the end is not difficult to see.

Meanwhile it is impossible not to endorse and
 An Urgent re-echo the solemn words recently uttered by the
 Plea. Bishop of Ely :

“ It would be idle to try to minimize the importance of this question of vestments. But its importance is only a relative importance. Essentially it is a very minor matter. I pray God that we may have the wisdom and the mutual patience which are needed for its settlement. Its settlement is worth working for, worth praying for, for this end : that we may be the better able as Churchmen to devote ourselves to the work which our Master has given us to do for Him and in Him. When I think of the grave intellectual problems which confront our generation ; when I think of the vice, the ignorance, the godlessness, which prevail and which are sapping the nation's strength, of the men and women and children whom the Church has as yet failed even to attempt to evangelize ; when I think of the imperious calls of the colonies and of the foreign mission-field, I long with an intensity which no words can express that we as a Church may be free from the entanglement of controversy—free to give ourselves, with all our energies and all our powers, to the one supreme work of the furtherance of the Gospel of the grace of God.”

Is it not unutterably sad to think of these differences between Churchmen on such a question as the precise character and form of vestments in Divine service ? Surely those who insist upon the doctrinal significance of such vestments have a great and grave responsibility. For the first centuries the Church knew absolutely nothing of vestments, and yet the Holy Communion was none the less valid or spiritually efficacious. Let us also make bold to say that the Holy Communion would be the same to-day in its spiritual blessings without the use of any ecclesiastical vestments at all. With the Bishop of Ely we think of the grave intellectual problems that confront us, the ignorance and sin which are affecting our nation, and the urgent calls of the world-wide field, and we marvel that Churchpeople should be occupied with such comparatively trifling matters as vestments and ceremonials. Oh the pity of it in the light of eternity !

The Church and Social Questions. The Convocation of Canterbury has been doing real service in discussing various social questions, especially that of the housing of the poor. The

speeches of the Bishops of London and Birmingham were admirable, and gave Churchmen a true lead on the subject. The question of overcrowding is, as Bishop Gore said, only part of a very much larger problem, all the parts of which are vitally and necessarily interconnected—such as, for example, the problems of sweating and the establishment of a minimum wage. One resolution proposed “that compulsory registration of ownership is urgently required to bring home a sense of responsibility to owners”; and it was remarked that there is the greatest possible reluctance to publicity as to ownership of a very large body of people desiring to keep dark the fact of their ownership of slum property. But, as the Archbishop of Canterbury said, it is “a public scandal that houses of the worst description should be owned by people who would be horrified at the thought that it should leak out that the property belonged to them.” Christian people have a grave responsibility in this matter. Should they not inquire earnestly as to the sources whence their dividends come, and not rest content until these sources of income are beyond reproach?

The Clergy
and Social
Questions.

The debate in the Representative Church Council on the Witness of the Church on Economic Questions was very fruitful in suggestion, and the following resolution was passed :

“That more attention should be given in the public teaching of the Church to the obligation resting on all Christians to apply in practice the principles of the Gospel as to the duty of the Christian to his neighbour, with special reference to the moral character of the actual conditions of industrial life, but that care should be taken to guard against the risks involved in any partisan use of the Christian pulpit.”

It is perfectly true, as Lord Hugh Cecil said, that the clergy must not be “the Court Chaplains of King Demos,” and it is also true that they must continue to proclaim the principles of New Testament morality; but we believe it to be equally true that many people need to have these principles applied as well as proclaimed, and to be shown how they bear on the practical matters of everyday life; it is not enough to lead the applica-

tion to individual consciences. As one speaker said, "There was no intention to make the clergy busybodies; but they did want to say that the clergy were not only what the Americans called 'sky pilots,' but guides to their earthly pilgrimages as well." The Church has a great part to play in bringing these social questions first before her own members, and, through them, influencing the nation. It is by such work as this, rather than by ritual controversies, that the true life and work of the Church will be gauged.

The
Bishop of
Newcastle.

We welcome with great heartiness the translation of Bishop Straton to the See of Newcastle. It is a fitting acknowledgment of his long and strenuous service in Yorkshire and the Isle of Man. It is also a welcome indication, like the appointment of the Rev. E. A. Stuart to the canonry of Canterbury, that firm and outspoken Protestantism is not necessarily a bar to preferment in the Church of England. There has, perhaps, been a tendency of recent years to think that what are usually termed the "safe" men—by which is meant men of not too pronounced views on Church matters—are best for promotion to the highest posts; but if this view has been held, we are glad to find some exceptions to it. The way in which Bishop Straton's appointment has been received by the extreme Anglican party is, it would seem, an evidence that they are fully alive to the meaning of the appointment. On Lord Halifax's unfortunate reference to Bishop Straton's appointment we prefer not to comment beyond saying that we sincerely hope that by this time its author is deeply sorry for his deflection from the pathway of Christian courtesy. In the days now before us in the Church we shall need the strength and courage of men of Bishop Straton's type. The time is passed, if it ever really existed, for timorousness and hesitation. What is needed is a courageous adherence to the great principles of the Prayer Book and Articles. Many prayers will follow Bishop Straton in the great and difficult work which awaits him.