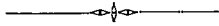


died fighting at the battle of the Boyne. There are portraits of both the Viscount and Viscountess in the possession of the Earl of Roden; that of the Viscountess was painted, in 1665, by Louise, Princess Palatine, daughter of the Queen of Bohemia. Both the date and the name of the artist are stated, by Lord Roden, to be inscribed on the picture.

G. F. W. MUNBY.



ART. VI.—THE PROSECUTION OF THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN.

IT would be difficult to over-estimate the gravity of the present crisis in the Church of England, or to exaggerate the consequences—be they good or evil—which must result from the prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln for breaking the law, if it be followed out to the bitter end, whether it succeed or fail. Can it be possible that he who has provoked, or they who have instituted, the prosecution had seriously thought the matter out, and realized or pictured to themselves its inevitable results? Each of the parties to this contest no doubts expects to win: has either of them reckoned the cost at which the victory will be obtained? Each, unless guilty of inconceivable recklessness, must have contemplated the possibility of an adverse judgment. Can either of them contemplate without dismay the dire consequences of defeat?

Nor is it easy for anyone, unless like Gallio he cares for none of these things, to approach the consideration of the subject with an impartial mind. Every earnest Churchman is surrounded by a theological atmosphere, which more or less obscures his vision: he cannot secure that dry light which is so essential to the formation of a right conclusion. Consciously or not, his view of the subject must be affected by his standpoint, and his judgment biased by his opinions, his wishes, or his fears.

It thus becomes incumbent upon anyone who takes his pen in hand for the purpose of guiding or persuading others, to state frankly his own position, so that they may make due allowance for his prepossessions. The present writer hopes that they will also make due allowance for his want of literary skill.

I must first, therefore, be permitted to state with regard to myself that while endeavouring to keep free from partisanship, I am a member of the Evangelical or Low-Church party in the Church of England. According to my view, there is no sacrificing or mediatorial priesthood in our Church; the Lord's Table is not an altar, and might, without harm, and sometimes with advantage, be brought at the time of Holy Communion into the body of the church. It is scarcely necessary for me to add that

I recognise no localized presence of our Lord in the bread and wine, but only in the heart of the believing communicant.

Having thus cleared the ground, my survey of the present situation is as follows:

In the prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln we have in the prosecutors three gentlemen who allow their names to be used as aggrieved parishioners by the Church Association—a society of which I will say more presently. The defendant is a Bishop of the Church, a man of great learning and piety, much beloved in his diocese, an active leader in the battle against sin and vice, and one whose personal talents and character add largely to the influence which his high position gives him. By the law of the land he was placed in that high position, and obtained patronage, emoluments, and power; and by that law he is entrusted with the administration of the law; he is a man in authority, having soldiers under him; and it is his bounden duty to set an example of obedience to the law; or, if conscience forbids him to obey the law, to resign the advantages which the law gives him. He cannot approbate and reprobate; he must not pick and choose which law he will uphold as upholding him, and which he will disobey because he dislikes it. That is tantamount to a claim to be above the law.

The Bishop of Lincoln has of set purpose done six or seven solemn acts in public worship, as to most of which eminent counsel advised the English Church Union many years ago that they were illegal, and some of which have been judicially declared to be illegal by the highest Courts of the realm.

So far there is no dispute as to the facts; and it would seem to follow that unless in the Church of England anarchy is to be universal and every man is to do what is right in his own eyes, such action on the Bishop's part must be stopped, and if there be no way of stopping it except a prosecution in the Courts of Law, their interference must be invoked in that way.

Many years ago, when prosecutions were not so common in the Church as they have unhappily become, Dr. Pusey declared emphatically that "prosecution is not persecution"; and the present attempt of the party in the Church, which was the first to appeal to the Law Courts against one whom they accused of heresy, to stigmatize as persecutions all similar appeals against those whose doctrines they favour, is simply ridiculous.

It is now time to consider what the overt acts are for doing which the Bishop of Lincoln is being prosecuted on account of their alleged illegality. They are these:

1. The use of lighted candles on the Holy Table when not required for the purpose of giving light.
2. The mixing of water with the sacramental wine to be used in Holy Communion.

3. Standing when reading the prayer of consecration between the people and the Holy Table, so that they cannot see him break the bread and take the cup into his hands.

4. Singing the *Agnus Dei* immediately after the prayer of consecration.

5. Pronouncing the absolution and benediction with both hands elevated, and making with one hand the sign of the cross.

6. That at the termination of the service he cleansed the chalice with wine and water, and drank the wine and water up in the face of the congregation.

7. And lastly, though this seems hardly important enough to be an independent item, as it is included in No. 3, that he stands on the east side of the Holy Table instead of the north.

The reason assigned for declaring Nos. 4, 5 and 6 illegal is that each of them is "a ceremony, in addition to and other than a ceremony prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer."

Anyone ignorant of the history of Church controversies during the last fifty years would, on perusing these seven items of charge, be filled with wonder that they should be esteemed of sufficient importance to warrant a prosecution.

He would probably say to the Church Association, "What is there in these seven acts to arouse your indignation? If a clergyman is a God-fearing, Christian man, and preaches the Gospel of the grace of God to sinners, but for some reason of his own likes to do those things, why should you object? Why can't you let him alone?" And, turning to the Bishop, he might as reasonably ask, "Why do you insist upon doing what you know to be causes of offence to many brethren—weak brethren, as you may think them?"

He would certainly be puzzled to know why there was so much turmoil about such trifles; nor would his bewilderment be removed when he considered the matter more minutely. In detail, his reflections as he considered the charges one by one would be to this effect:

As to the first: to light candles in the daytime when not required for the purpose of giving light may be a foolish way of spoiling the heavenly rays of the sun, and showing the poverty of man-created illumination; it may be a piece of wasteful extravagance; but if it is his fancy to light them, why are you so moved to indignation as to invoke the aid of the law to prevent him?

2. The mixing of the water with wine. There is already water in the wine. Amongst Eastern nations wine is rarely drunk without water. It was customary to mix water with wine in the time of our Lord. Water was most probably mixed with the wine at the Last Supper. The efficacy of the wine is not destroyed by the addition. Why, then, object to it?

3. and 7. That the consecration is not *coram populo*. What can it matter to any communicant how the officiating clergyman stands? What devout communicant occupies his mind at that time of solemn prayer with any thought on the point, or lifts his eyes from his Prayer-Book to see the act of breaking the bread or of lifting the cup from the Table? Is there some charm inherent in those acts which evaporates if you cannot see them done? Did anyone, who did not wish to be offended, ever purposely allow his thoughts to wander from his devotions so as to mark the clergyman's attitude and gestures?

4. As to singing the hymn "O Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us," is it possible that any humble Christian should think it wrong, so wrong that the strong arm of the Law must be called in to punish it, to offer this prayer at any time in any service?

5. It may be novel and foolish to make the sign of the cross in the Communion Service, though it is expressly ordered to be made in the baptismal service; but, after all, the former is a showing forth the Lord's death on the cross, and, therefore, a plea of appropriateness may be urged. No doubt the sign of the cross is used by ignorant Roman Catholics as a charm, but is their superstitious abuse sufficient reason for objecting to its reverent use on a solemn occasion?

6. As to the washing the chalice with wine and water, what is this but great carefulness in obeying the direction, that "if any of the consecrated wine remain, it shall be reverently drunk in the church." This may be hyper-carefulness, but is it not hyper-criticism to object to it? Is it not inconsistent with Christian love for one good man to interfere with another good man's liberty in such matters? Argue against the wrong-doer if you like, but don't ask the policeman to run him in.

To reflections such as these the obvious rejoinder is, that if it be conceded *argumenti causa* that these outward acts are in themselves of no moment, yet they derive importance from the doctrines of which they are the symbols and exponents. They are intended by the Bishop to show forth certain doctrines to the people; their use is one mode of inculcating erroneous doctrines, and therefore must be prevented.

Let us, then, ascertain what these doctrines are. They are:

1. That the candles are lighted in order to set before the congregation the doctrine that Christ is the Light of the world.

2. The mixed chalice typifies:

The water and the blood
From Christ's riven side which flowed,
Of our sin the double cure,
Saving from its guilt and power,

as that good old Evangelical Olney hymn-book taught us. Also

it may remind us of Christ's double nature : that He was Man as well as God.

3 and 7. The position of the celebrant, and his action in not performing the manual acts before the people, are not intended, so far as I have been able to ascertain, to teach any particular doctrine. The nearer anyone is to believing in "the Real Presence," the more anxious he should be that the bread and wine be seen ; as Bishop Ken wrote in his "Exposition of the Church Catechism :—" "When at Thine altar I see the bread broken and the wine poured out, oh, teach me to discern Thy body there ! Oh, let these sacred and significant actions create in me a most lively remembrance of Thy sufferings." Nevertheless, the long and determined contest which has been waged on the question of the eastward position shows that in the opinion of both parties a great deal is involved in it, and I will deal with that presently.

4. That the Lamb of God has, by His one sacrifice on the cross, commemorated in this Sacrament, taken away the sins of the world, is signified by singing the *Agnus Dei*.

5. The sign of the cross teaches us that we are to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto us and we unto the world.

6. The ablution of the chalice again teaches no doctrine ; or, at all events, it only accentuates the doctrine taught by the Rubric.

Now, all these doctrines are true ; they are part of the faith common to the Bishop and the prosecutors, and the latter would disclaim the idea of prosecuting the Bishop for holding these doctrines, or, even if each of the actions complained of stood alone, for endeavouring to teach by that action the doctrine involved.

But the prosecutors allege that a great deal more is involved than these simple truths. They contend that it is the place and time at which these things are done which makes them severally, and *a fortiori* when combined, so objectionable in the eyes of a true Protestant. They all circle round the Holy Communion. The different acts are performed with significant reference to the bread and wine. They are intended to teach the worshipper that the priest has, in some mysterious manner, changed the character of the sacred elements, and by this act caused Christ to be present in the Church in some more than spiritual manner. It is Christ present in the bread and wine, who is the Light of the world, to whom the *Agnus Dei* is to be addressed, and who is to be offered up again by a sacrificing priest. And the next fatal step (the contention runs) is a short and easy one to the pernicious heresy of the Church of Rome (from which all these things are slavishly copied), that the bread and wine have

become the body and blood of Christ, and are to be worshipped accordingly; and that from this follows the soul-destroying superstition that the priest who can work this miracle is a mediator between man and God, between the sinner and his Saviour—a vicar of Christ, who has power to forgive the sins of a confessing penitent. That such doctrines as these are to be “resisted unto blood” by us in the nineteenth century, as by our fathers in the sixteenth, is my firm conviction; but I would rather be prosecuted for denying them, for arguing, writing, preaching, teaching, speaking against them, than I would run the risk of disseminating them, by delivering over to the secular authority as criminals those who hold them.

But we are now brought into the presence of a great difficulty. The Bishop of Lincoln avows his belief in the doctrines of the Church of England as set forth in her Articles and Formularies; he must, therefore, hold that the sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and may not be adored, “for that were idolatry to be abhorred of all faithful Christians;” and he must repudiate the construction put by his opponents upon the symbolism of his acts. He also states in his own language what it is for which he is contending. On the 5th January, replying to an address presented to him by the students of the Schola Cancellarii at Lincoln, he spoke thus :

The present contention is not merely for outward ritual and form, though that appears on the face of it. Two great, important principles are at stake. The first is the need of the help of external ritual in our acts of worship. As we are made up of both body and soul, the outward as well as the inward is necessary to help us in our approach to Him, and it would be a distinct wrong to our people to let all external religion be swept away.

The second goes much deeper. The attack is an attack on the supernatural and the spiritual. The struggle is for the sacerdotal character of the Christian ministry.

He explains by this that he means “whether it (the ministry) came from below or from above,” “whether it was ordained by man or by God.” “It is a struggle for the faith in the presence of God among us.”

Now, on their face, these two doctrines cannot be fought over within our Church; no members of it will deny them. Quakers may deny both, but I doubt if any other sect will repudiate either. We all believe that some external rites are advisable in our spiritual worship; we kneel down to pray, we stand up to sing; rites and ceremonies have been decreed by our Church. All Churchmen believe that Almighty God has “by His divine Providence appointed divers orders of ministers in His Church,” and amongst them are bishops, priests and deacons; therefore we all hold, with the Bishop of Lincoln, that “the Christian ministry came from above, and was ordained by God.”

It will be urged by the Church Association that leading

members of the Ritualistic Party do teach and preach in their books and in their sermons the Romish doctrines above described ; and I admit it. This fact may afford a very good reason for prosecuting them for so doing, but it can afford none for the present action against the Bishop of Lincoln ; on the contrary, it makes that action very much more hazardous. If the action fails, it will be immediately contended that on the Church Association's own showing, the rites and ceremonies thus allowed involve these doctrines, and that, therefore, the doctrines are also allowable within the Church. This is one of the many dangers to which the Church is being exposed by the present proceedings.

Viscount Halifax is the president of the English Church Union. He has the courage of his opinions, and speaks out what he thinks. At the last general meeting of that society he used this remarkable language :

The Church preaches a God who, not content with dying for us, gives Himself now to us on the altars of His Church, and who, coming to us under the forms of bread and wine, vouchsafes His continued presence——

This, surely, is transubstantiation ! No ; read on——

in the hearts of His people.

A writer in the *Record*, over the signature "Justitia," quoting this, calls it "extraordinary, he had almost said blasphemous, language." Yet Lord Halifax might not unfairly contend that this language does not go beyond the statement in the Catechism that the Sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, ordained by Christ Himself as a means whereby we receive the same ; for he expressly limits the presence of Christ to the *heart* of the believer, where the bread and wine do *not* go.

My desire in making these quotations, and putting, it may be, a too charitable construction upon them, is to present the case of the Bishop of Lincoln, and those who are supporting him, in the most favourable manner that is consistent with truth. My own view is that our Lord is present with His people by His Holy Spirit, and only in a spiritual manner ; that He has appointed divers means whereby the gift of His Holy Spirit is imparted to us, and, amongst them, the two Sacraments. The bread broken and the wine poured out remind us of His death on the cross, but they do more : they symbolize and help us to the realization of the intimate union, or oneness, of Christ and the believer. Eating bread, it passes into our system, becomes part of us, helps our growth and gives us strength ; drinking wine, it, too, passes into our system, becomes part of us, helps our growth and exhilarates—makes glad our heart. In this varied action of the two elements we recognise the strengthening and refreshing of our souls which union with Christ imparts.

Neither the bread nor the wine by itself alone would be sufficient to adequately represent the manner and results of that union.

But it is not given to any of us to see the whole truth; and truth presents itself in different forms to diverse minds. We ought, therefore, to be slow to impute dishonesty to those who declare that they hold the doctrines of the Church, and teach nothing contrary to them, because, in our judgment, the logical deduction from their teaching is a contradiction of the Church's doctrine.

But now, in order to do full justice to the motives and action of the prosecutors, we will assume that the Bishop of Lincoln holds the heretical doctrines imputed to him, and seeks to promulgate them by means of the acts in Divine Worship complained of—acts which, whatever else may be said for or against them, are certainly innovations upon the constant practice of the Church for 300 years.

It does not, however, follow either that the Bishop is justified, from his own point of view, in continuing these practices, or that the Church Association on their side are wise or right in prosecuting him. Would that some strong representative committee of devout and earnest Christian men, lovers of the Church, could act as mediators between the two contending parties in the interests of peace! One can imagine such a committee addressing the Bishop thus:

“You practise these novel ceremonies, not for their own sake, but because they are a means of teaching certain doctrines which you hold to be precious and necessary, if not to salvation, at least to edification. You admit that without oral explanation, they could not teach those doctrines, and that apart from them you have full liberty to maintain and teach these doctrines. Nay, thanks to the judgment in *Sheppard v. Bennett*, there is no legal hindrance to your teaching orally or by writing, ‘a real, actual, and objective presence upon the holy Table—which you may call an altar—under the form of bread and wine.’ You may teach with impunity that in the Eucharist Christ is offered commemoratively, that the commemoration is made to God ‘the Father,’ and you may plead to God the merit of His Son’s sacrifice once offered on the cross and in this sacrament represented; and though all outward acts of adoration to the sacrament in the service are forbidden, you cannot be punished for teaching that mental adoration is due to Christ’s presence in the sacrament under the form of bread and wine.

“All this liberty has been obtained for you by the Church Association. This being so, it cannot be a point of conscience that you should teach these doctrines in this indirect way. Surely you can celebrate the Communion without these ceremonies, and then preach the doctrines symbolized, although you do not use the

symbols. By using them you gain nothing doctrinally, but you do annoy and offend your fellow-Christians and brother Churchmen. To quote the words of Dean Vaughan: 'If not vital, why fight for it? If it hurts, wounds, irritates, offends even one of the least of the little ones, better to die twenty deaths than to introduce and, after introducing, to maintain it. He who does is the aggressor rather than he who lets alone, or than he who bids you let alone.'

"Further, your lordship cannot deny that several of these acts have been declared illegal.

"It is true that you decline to admit the authority of the Courts which pronounced them illegal, but the same law that made you a Bishop and which gives you Riseholme, and a seat in the House of Lords, and a good income, and which enforces your authority, that same law established these Courts. You cannot blow hot and blow cold at the same time. You cannot take all the advantages the law gives you, and when it calls you to account say, 'Oh! I do not acknowledge the law. I appeal to something higher.' Set an example yourself of obedience to the law, and then you will be obeyed by those subject to your authority. Use, if you like, constitutional means to change the law and to change the Courts; but do not, meanwhile, imitate the anarchy of the Irish members of the Home Rule Party by refusing to obey the law.

"As Dean Vaughan says: 'Consider the terrible danger, the real wickedness of throwing into confusion, perhaps of absolutely upsetting, the order of things as established under the good hand of God in this realm and Church of England.'"

From the Bishop the committee would then turn to the prosecutors and to the Church Association, and ask them:

"Why do you institute this prosecution, and what good do you hope to effect by it? In your early days you professed that all you wanted was to get the law declared. You brought various actions, and they succeeded to your heart's content. You boast that in every, or nearly every, case you obtained from the highest Courts judgment in accordance with your contentions, and thereby vindicated—what needed no vindication—the right of the Evangelicals to hold their doctrines and remain members of the Church of England. What other good did you do? Did you stay the tide of Ritualism? Have you promoted Evangelical religion?"

"You, the Church Association, having appealed to these Courts, are bound by their decisions. You have thus established the use of the surplice in the pulpit, and the legality of the eastward position, and you have obtained from the highest Courts a declaration that it is lawful to affirm, with regard to the Holy Communion, (1) that there is in some sense a sacrifice offered;

(2) that there is a real, actual, and objective presence of our Lord, external to the communicants under the form of bread and wine; and (3) that adoration is due to our Lord, present under the form of bread and wine.

“Your opponents, protesting against the Courts, and taking no trouble to argue their case, simply ignored the decisions which were against them, and went on as before. Though this result had been foreseen and foretold, you were disappointed by it, and thought you would try another move. You went on to bring the offenders to punishment, and locked up a clergyman in gaol, reckless of the fact that his imprisonment effected, and could effect, no purpose for which punishment is designed. It deterred neither Mr. Green, nor any other Ritualist, from repeating the offence. On the contrary, the punishment inflicted created the heartiest sympathy in the breasts of those who, though condemning his actions, yet did not like to see a clergyman of the Church of England imprisoned for conscience’ sake. You made him a martyr, and largely increased the heresy.

“And what was the result to the Church Association? You lost from your council and from your ranks nearly every man of position, influence, or reputation among Evangelical men. Counter-associations have been formed all over England, in which true Protestant members of the Church may unite for the promotion of their principles without the taint of connection with you; and again and again have you been implored in the interests, not only of peace, but of pure doctrine, to dissolve.

“And how has Ritualism fared under your attack? It has flourished exceedingly. Like the Israelites of old, the more you afflicted Ritualists, the more they multiplied and grew. Every prosecution has increased their numbers and their zeal. Yet you will not learn wisdom by experience; not content with your past achievements, when you assailed only the inferior clergy, you now are flying at higher game, and are prosecuting a Bishop.

“‘A saint in crape is twice a saint in lawn,’ and you flatter yourselves that you will make an example of a chief officer in the Church; you may unbishop him, you may unfrock him, you may, perhaps, exhibit to a mocking world the edifying spectacle of a Bishop in prison; and when the trial is over, and judgment given, and sentence pronounced, what reason have you for supposing that there will be one Ritualist the less, one Evangelical the more? Cui bono? What good do you expect to obtain? What is your object? What is your hope? To settle the law? But that was done long ago. You are running the risk of unsettling it. The Archbishop may not consider the decision of the Secular Courts binding upon his Spiritual Court, or he may distinguish; and then where will you be? Will you appeal from his Grace to the Law Lords or the

Privy Council? Will you carry public opinion with you in the appeal?

"But you say that you are constrained to go on against the Bishop, because of the false doctrines implied by his symbolic acts, and because of their admitted illegality. Yes; but will stopping these acts prevent the false doctrines from being taught in other more direct and palpable ways? Surely it would be better to attack the false doctrines themselves.

"Next, you will urge that, the illegality of these additional ceremonies being admitted, those who break the law should be punished. Possibly; but it is not your business to put the law in force for that purpose. There are high officers in the Church, and if they do not do their duty, your conscience is not burdened. And remember that if, in Divine service, an action of the minister is illegal, merely because it is 'an additional ceremony not prescribed by the Book of Common Prayer,' and that is to be taken as a sufficient warrant for the institution of criminal proceedings, these must be taken all round. Sins of omission and of act in all our services abound. I never go to church without witnessing some breach of the strict law. If the *Agnus Dei* be an additional ceremony, so is it to sing a hymn during the Communion Service, as is done in many churches where the clergyman is a Low-Churchman; so is the invocation of praise before and after the Gospel.

"It was laid down by the Privy Council in *Westerton v Liddell* and re-affirmed in *Martin v Mackonochie*, that 'it is not open to a minister, or even to the Privy Council, to draw a distinction in acts which are a departure from, or a violation of, the Rubric between those which are important and those which appear to be trivial. No minister is at liberty to omit, add to, or alter any of the details. . . The directions contained in the Prayer-Book must be strictly observed; no omission and no addition can be permitted.'

"The law, thus declared, is broken in some way or other in almost every service by every clergyman who is active in the performance of his duties, and who struggles to adapt to the habits and requirements of the nineteenth century rules which were made in the sixteenth century. Are you prepared for prosecutions all round?

"We do not dispute the excellence of your motives and aims, but we implore you for the sake of the principles and practices which you desire to promote, to desist from this ill-advised proceeding.

"Here trip you that your aim

Allowed is right;

Your means thereto were wrong.

Come, we this night

Profess one purpose, hold one principle,

Are at odds only as to—not the will,
But way, of winning.—BROWNING.”

But I am afraid that remonstrances and appeals, however forcibly and solemnly made, would be fruitless; and the more I think upon the position into which our beloved Church has been forced by the hot-headed zeal of a few of her members, the sadder are my reflections. Would that it were any but Evangelicals who are thus urging on the battle! For it is they that take the sword who will perish by the sword. And no spiritual truth can afford to use carnal weapons.

One other consideration is borne upon me in trying to ascertain the actualities of the case. Throughout the whole world no society—secular or religious—exists which is bound by the same trammels as the Church of England. She has no power of altering the laws which govern her, even in the smallest particular. Every State is free to alter its constitution and laws in accordance with the wishes of the major part of the people subject to them. The authorities of every other Church or religious body have power to make such changes in its doctrines, its ceremonies, its services, and its laws, as are from time to time considered desirable; or they can—if that course be preferred—declare that what they now believe or desire has always been the belief or the rule of their Church. Every corporation and company may at its pleasure, subject in some cases to the veto of the State, alter its laws and by-laws to meet the exigencies of the times.

But the Church of England, though she makes no claim to be infallible, and therefore is confessedly improvable, stands alone in her immutability. Not only is her constitution unchangeable, not only are her fundamental doctrines declared for all time—to which I for one make no objection—but there is no detail of her services, no minute particular of her rites and ceremonies, which she or her authorities have the power of changing, even though changes may be essential to her activity and usefulness, if she is to meet the varying requirements either of succeeding ages, or of the many different races and peoples whom she is gathering into her fold.

At her own bidding the Act of Uniformity was passed by Parliament in 1662; for a century and a half she hugged the chains which impeded her movements, and sank into a state of inactive lethargy. When at last she awoke to a sense of her responsibilities and her needs, she learned to her sorrow how much easier it was to forge fetters than it is to loose them. She did indeed, in 1872, at an unusual conjunction of favourable circumstances, succeed in obtaining an Act to amend the Uniformity Act, which relaxed some of its provisions as to her services. But at the present time there seems to be little hope

that Parliament will either itself make the necessary reforms, or give to the Church the power of making them. And there is a natural dislike on the part of devout Churchmen to submit such matters to discussion in an assembly in which Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Labouchere, and Mr. Morley are ruling spirits. These considerations do not indeed justify, but they form some excuse for, the conduct of those who, believing it to be futile to attempt to change the law, transgress it for what they conscientiously believe to be adequate objects.

Let me not be misunderstood. I am dealing here with the question of the illegality alone of the acts complained of, and am looking at them in the light of the rule laid down by the Privy Council in *Westerton v. Liddell* quoted above. The contention that some of these acts are significant of erroneous doctrine, and the others have no such significance, and indeed have no doctrinal meaning whatever, does not affect this dry question. Nor, for the reason given by the Privy Council, can it be taken into account by those who stand up for law and order as opposed to anarchy. The modern tendency is towards the contention, in my opinion untenable, that to break the law for an outside reason, political or religious, is venial in comparison with a breach for which no such motive can be pleaded. Popular judgment deals lightly with "political offences."

I know not whether to desire the success or the failure of this prosecution, for I cannot tell which will produce the direr consequences to the Church and State. On these I will not dwell in detail. A disruption such as has not been known in the history of religion seems to be inevitable, and following upon it the severance of the connection between the National Church and the National State; and the confiscation to secular uses of the property which has been devoted during fifteen centuries, up to the present day, to the maintenance of ministers of the Gospel of Christ.

Hitherto all but the extremest members of each party in the Church have met in common worship, and have knelt before the same Table of the Lord. They have gone to the same meetings of religious societies, diocesan conferences, and Church congresses. There they have learned to respect each other, and to give each other credit for sincerity of conviction and honesty of purpose. There they have found how much fundamental Evangelical truth both High Church and Low Church hold in common. United in the same Church, bound by the same Articles and Formularies, all have been subject to a wholesome restraint which has kept them within defined limits, and the natural tendency of all enthusiasts (and what is religion worth without enthusiasm?) to fly off into extremes has been kept in check. But when these moderating influences have been done

away with, it is only too probable that thousands of the most zealous members of the three great parties in the Church will break from their moorings, and take refuge, one in Rome, another in Unitarianism, and a third among the Plymouth Brethren; and it is only too likely that the more moderate men who remain will split up into two or perhaps three Churches, none of which will be *the* Church of England. That pure and reformed part of the holy Catholic Church which has been always established in this kingdom will be dismembered, and the old historical Church of England will be no more.

No wonder that the Nonconformists and Secularists, and the members of the Liberation Society, look on with ill-concealed delight. If peace had been within her borders, the Church might have withstood their attacks so long as the world lasts, but her worst foes are within her walls, and, like Jerusalem of old, those who should have combined to her defence, by their fratricidal conflict will render her an easy prey to the Roman foe.

And how is this warfare regarded by the chief adversary? The joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth is great. What must be the joy in hell when the devil and his angels see time, talents, money, learning, influence, energy, even prayers, that might have been employed in the battle against misery and vice and sin, against the world and the flesh and the devil, against Islam, Idolatry and Heathenism, by united battalions of faithful men, clad in varying uniforms, shouting diverse war-cries, and using different weapons, but all fighting under the banner and leadership of the same Captain of their salvation, now engaged in urging these battalions to internecine warfare in the very presence of the enemy?

To think of the enormous good that might have been done if all these talents had been devoted to the service of the Master, instead of being worse than wasted in these prosecutions. Shall brother still go to war with brother?

But shall error be allowed to prevail? Shall heresy stalk rampant? Shall "another" gospel be preached without rebuke or hindrance? No! a thousand times no! By teaching and by preaching, by argument and exhortation, by example and by prayer, the truth should be maintained in season and out of season. Use the right means, the heavenly weapons, the stones from the brook, not the armour of Saul, and in quietness and confidence you may leave the result to the Almighty Disposer of all things—the God of truth. "Magna est veritas, et prævalebit."

SYDNEY GEDGE.

