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ever, the fact remains that for excess of lay zeal the classical example of present days is with those who oppose the claims made for the priesthood of the laity.

(To be concluded.)



The Ornaments Rubric and the Convocations of Canterbury and York.

BY THE REV. CANON NUNN, M.A.

AS it is expected that the Resolutions of the Committees of the Houses of Convocation on the Ornaments Rubric will come on for discussion in November, it may be well to review the position in which the subject now stands.

The Report of the Committee of five Bishops of the Upper House of Canterbury, dated January 23, 1908 (which was reviewed in the *CHURCHMAN* in April, May and June, 1908), came to the following conclusion :

“We feel bound to state that our own study of the facts leads us to the conclusion that the Ornaments Rubric cannot rightly be interpreted as excluding the use of all vestments for the clergy other than the surplice in parish churches, and in cathedral and collegiate churches the surplice, hood and cope.”

This conclusion was in direct contradiction of the Ridsdale Judgment. That Judgment contained the following words :

“Any interpretation of the Rubric, which would leave it optional to the minister to wear, or not to wear, these vestments, not only would be opposed to the ordinary principles of construction, but must also go to the extent of leaving it optional to the minister whether he will wear any official vesture whatever.”

But the five Bishops also expressed their belief that—

“The evidence here collected indicates that they [the vestments] cannot rightly be regarded as expressive of doctrine, but that their use is a matter of reverent and seemly order.”

Of course, the real question is, whether they were “regarded as expressive of doctrine” at the time of the Reformation, and

are so regarded at the present time by those who seek to reintroduce them. There can be no doubt upon this question.

The Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline recommended that—

“Letters of business should be issued to the Convocations with instructions to consider the preparation of a new rubric regulating the ornaments—that is to say, the vesture of the ministers of the Church at the times of their ministrations, with a view to its enactment by Parliament.”

The five Bishops did not recommend any new form of Rubric. They wrote as follows :

“What should be the action of the Church at the present time in extending or restricting liberty as regards such ornaments, or in making definite requirements as to their use, or in leaving the controversy about them where it stands, lies outside the reference of our Sub-Committee.”

THE LOWER HOUSE OF CANTERBURY.

The Committee of the Lower House of Canterbury took up the work where the five Bishops left it off. We read as follows (Report, p. 9) :

“The Sub-Committee of the Upper House had already entered upon the same two inquiries, and a most important Draft Report, drawn by two members of the Bishops’ Sub-Committee, was placed at the disposal of this Sub-Committee.

“This Report is so elaborate and exhaustive as to leave little room for independent investigations on the part of members of the Sub-Committee. Its statements, however, have been considered, and generally verified, and it seemed unnecessary to go over the whole ground afresh. What follows is mainly an abstract of its arguments and conclusions.”

We observe, therefore, that no new light whatever is thrown upon the subject by this Committee. No omission in the Report of the five Bishops is supplied, and no mistake has been corrected.

The conclusions of the Committee are, as frankly stated, “an abstract” of the conclusions of the five Bishops. They are as follows :

“We pass now to the history of the Ornaments Rubric and its interpretation. Here, also, we have followed the Report of the Bishops’ Sub-Committee, and we append our conclusions without the arguments which have led to them.

“1. We are of opinion that the phrase ‘the second year of King Edward

the Sixth' refers to the first Edwardian Act of Uniformity, and not to the state of things existing previously to the passing of that Act.

"2. We are of opinion that, as a matter of history, the Advertisements of 1566 must be regarded as administrative orders, issued for the Southern Province, and without the sanction of the Crown.

"3. It appears to us that, even if a different decision were reached as to the character of the Advertisements, such an opinion would not affect the meaning of the Rubric of 1662, which was deliberately inserted after revision."

We propose to return presently to the examination of these three "opinions," but in the meanwhile we observe that this Committee does not, like the Sub-Committee of the five Bishops, regard the recommendation of new rubrics or rules as beyond the scope of its reference, but proposes the following Resolution for the adoption of Convocation :

"Resolution No. 8: Whereas the Eucharistic Vestments commonly so called cannot rightly be regarded as symbolic of any distinctively Roman doctrines, and whereas the historical conclusions underlying the ruling judgments in regard to the Vestments appear to be liable to reasonable doubt, it is expedient that two alternative vestures for the Minister at the time of celebrating the Holy Communion—viz. : 1, the surplice, with stole or scarf, and the hood of his degree ; 2, the Eucharistic Vestments commonly so called—be recognized as lawful, under proper regulations."

It is to be observed—(1) That "doctrines," without being "distinctively Roman," may be opposed to the doctrine of the Reformation, as found in the Holy Scriptures, and expressed in the Prayer-Book and Articles ; (2) that it is proposed that the Vestments which have been condemned by the Highest Court should be "recognized as lawful." This would be to "recognize" lawlessness.

If the Judgment was wrong, it can be reviewed. If the law is to be altered, the necessary power must be sought in a lawful manner.

THE UPPER HOUSE OF THE YORK CONVOCATION.

We turn with more hope to the Upper House of the Convocation of York. Their Report is found in the *York Journal of Convocation* for May, 1908. We read there :

"The recent [January, 1908] learned 'Memorandum' of a Committee of the Upper House of Canterbury affords a compendium of general and

Anglican vestiarian history which, while presenting some elements calling for criticism, is yet probably more complete than any previous review of the kind."

This Committee does not accept without question, as the Committee of the Lower House of Canterbury does, the conclusion of the five Bishops.

On the other hand, it does not fall back upon the Judgment of the Privy Council, but raises afresh, after the example of the five Bishops, some of the questions which that luminous Judgment should have set at rest.

The Northern Bishops, after dealing briefly with the subject of the origin of the Vestments, which is a matter largely of antiquarian interest, proceeds to divide the questions involved after the same manner and order as the Committee of the Lower House of Canterbury. Their Report runs as follows :

"Coming to English post-Reformation history, we are at once in face of historical problems, some of them very difficult of solution. These the 'Memorandum' states and examines with great clearness and ability. To enumerate the chief questions: *a.* In the present Ornaments Rubric, what is precisely denoted by the words 'By authority of Parliament in the second year of King Edward VI.'? The reply appears to be fairly decisive. The reference is to the Act signed and enforced within that year, imposing on the Church the use of the First Prayer-Book with its rules."

This answer, it will be seen, coincides with the answer to the same question given by the Lower House of Canterbury, and to that of the five Bishops.

We may be well satisfied with the agreement thus arrived at, which excludes, let us hope, finally the contention of some Ritualists that the Rubric refers to Ornaments in use before 1549, and that as the Ornaments of that date are lawful, the ceremonies in which they were used must be lawful also!

There remain the two other questions raised by this Report. But before we proceed to examine them, it may be well to ask whether the

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affords us any new light upon the subject. We find no light.

The Report, found in the *Journal of the York Convocation* May 21, 1909 (p. lvii), runs as follows :

“With regard to the Vesture of the Ministers, the Committee have not considered it to be their duty to determine doubts which have arisen as to the interpretation of the existing Rubric prescribing the Ornaments of the Ministers, but recommend that—

“At the time of the Holy Communion the minister shall wear either a surplice, with stole or scarf, and hood, or, a white alb plain, and a vestment or cope, provided that no change be made in the existing use of Parish Churches and Chapels, without the consent of the Bishop being given formally.’”

This Committee support their recommendation by no arguments. “Stat pro ratione voluntas.”

The Two Outstanding Questions.

It remains that we should consider the two questions (*b*) and (*c*) of the Northern Bishops, which correspond with the questions (2) and (3) in the Report of the Lower House of Canterbury, as given above. They relate respectively to the Advertisements, and to the Rubric of 1662.

The Northern Bishops write thus (p. li) :

“*b.* The ‘taking of other order’ by the Crown in consultation with the Church was foreshadowed in the Elizabethan Act of Uniformity. Was it ever actually taken? The reply is attended with great difficulty. On the one hand it is seriously questioned whether the ‘Advertisements’ can be held to be this ‘other order’ in view of the numerous references to them in letters, etc., of the period, in which the language appears always to fall short of a decisive reference to *Royal* authority. There is no proof that they were held binding for the Northern Province. It may be argued, so far as epistolary allusions go, that they carried only metropolitanical authority, and only for the Southern Province.”

Then follow some arguments on the other side. But the Committee do not go to the bottom of the matter. They leave it as if it was still an open question, and then, at the end of their Report, they make recommendations for the toleration of certain vestments which, according to the Ridsdale Judgment, are absolutely illegal.

The truth is that every one of the arguments in depreciation of the authority of the Advertisements adduced by the five Bishops, and in some details repeated by the Northern Bishops, was fully examined and rejected after a long and patient hearing

by one of the strongest Courts that ever sat to determine such matters.

The authority of the Queen is expressed in the very title-page of the Advertisements. This title-page, strange to say, is omitted in Gee and Hardy's "Documents," p. 46a. Yet the compilers describe them as "without royal sanction or authority." The title-page is found in Cardwell's "Documentary Annals," vol. i., p. 28a. It runs as follows :

"Advertisements partly for due order in the public administration of common prayers, and using the holy sacraments, and partly for the apparel of all persons ecclesiastical, by virtue of the Queen's Majesty's letters, commanding the same, the 25th day of January in the seventh year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Elizabeth, by the grace of God of England, France, and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, etc."

That the Advertisements were not mere "administrative orders" of Archbishop Parker is shown by the fact that they are described in the Preface as the result of the Queen's letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury charging him that "*with assistance and conference had with other Bishops, namely, such as be in commission for causes ecclesiastical,*" some orders might be taken, etc.

This advice of the Commissioners was prescribed in the Act of Uniformity, and the fact that it was required by the Queen shows that she was acting under that Act.

These words relating to the Commissioners are omitted where they are wanted, in the quotation given by the five Bishops in p. 78 of their Report, though found in a subsequent quotation on p. 80.

The same words are also omitted from a quotation taken from the same Preface in Frere's "Principles of Religious Ceremonial," p. 256.

That the Advertisements were intended for the Northern Province as well as the Southern is shown by the expression "all her loving subjects" in the Preface, but these words are not quoted at all in the extracts of the five Bishops ; and also by

the words "the realm," "the whole realm," which are omitted, where they are wanted, on p. 80 of their Report, though found on p. 78.

That they were published in the Northern Province is made certain by the fact that the Queen had promised "*the same will we also order for the Province of York,*" by their promulgation in the Diocese of Durham, and by the fact that Grindal, when Archbishop of York, quotes them. (See Report of the five Bishops, pp. 80, 81.)

Thus all the three objections to the authority of the Advertisements are shown to be unsound. They were urged in the Ridsdale case, and were found wanting. Nothing of weight has been added to them since.

The Committee of the Lower House of Canterbury, being apparently anxious about the validity of these objections, have yet another refuge :

"It appears to us that even if a different decision were reached as to the character of the Advertisements, such an opinion would not affect the rubric of 1662, which was deliberately inserted after revision."

It is true that the Rubric of 1662, which is our present Rubric, was "deliberately inserted," but not until significant alterations had been deliberately made in the Rubric which it superseded.

The alterations made in the Rubric were three :

1. The reference to the Act of Uniformity was dropped out. But the Act itself was made part of the Prayer-Book, and stands first in the Table of Contents in every complete Prayer-Book.

2. The wording of the Rubric was made to conform to the Act, the words "be retained and be in use" being substituted for "shall use."

3. The most important change was the omission of the words "at the time of the Communion," so that instead of the words "at the time of the Communion, and at all other times of his ministration," there were substituted the words "at all times of his ministration."

Is it conceivable that, if the Revisers wished to restore the disused Vestments for use at the Holy Communion, they should have altered the Rubric by bringing in the word "retain" from the Act, and should have eliminated the words "at the time of the Communion" from the Rubric?

They had indeed replied to the Puritans, who had objected to the Rubric in a captious spirit, "that it seemed to bring back the cope, albe, and other vestments," "We think fit that the Rubric continue as it is."

The suggestion of the Puritans was that the Rubric should be "wholly left out." This would have left it open to the Puritans to use the surplice, or not, at their pleasure.

The Bishops, however, did alter the Rubric upon second thoughts. It would have been better if they had specified the surplice. They did not do so. They inserted the word "retain," and they struck out all reference to "the time of the Communion."

The Vestments could not be "retained," for they had disappeared, except in some sporadic cases of a survival of the non-sacrificial cope. The surplice was "retained."

It is to be regretted that the five Bishops in their very considerable volume do not find room to describe this vital change in the Rubric found in the removal of the words "at the time of the Communion."

The Northern Bishops have noted none of the changes in the Rubric.

Such is the kind of evidence and argument upon the strength of which it is proposed to convulse the Church by an attempt to legalize the Vestments.

The Convocations were to be invited to frame a new Rubric "with a view to its enactment by Parliament." It would seem as if some attempt would be made to effect changes in the Rubric without reference to Parliament; but this cannot be done.

The Committees having done their work, the subject will have to be discussed by the Houses of Convocation at large.

It would seem probable that the Upper House of Canterbury will follow the lead of the five Bishops.

The Upper House of York have already had a long discussion (February 18, 1909); but the discussion resulted only in a resolution that the Report drawn up should be "commended to the attention of the Church." It became evident, however, from the stirring speeches of the Bishops of Durham, Carlisle, Newcastle, and Manchester, that the case against the use of the Vestments will be fully put before the Church.

The Lower House of Canterbury, unreformed, and unrepresentative of the bulk of the clergy, may follow the lead of the majority of the Committee; but it would be a disappointment if a large number were not found to vote for the Minority Report of the Dean of Canterbury and Canon Hensley Henson.

The Lower House of York will, it is to be hoped, discover a spirit of independence, and decline to adopt a resolution which would permanently divide the ranks of Churchmen. Some prominent Ritualists express the desire that the question should be allowed to rest for a time. "We contend that the interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric of the five Bishops is so remarkable an advance that it ought to be allowed time to work its own results." "Convocation itself has not yet had time to assimilate the judgment of its own Committee" (Rev. W. J. Sparrow Simpson: "The Use of the Vestments in the English Church").

Others, who hold different views, may also desire time, in order that the glamour caused by the first appearance of the Report of the five Bishops may die down, that the questions raised and the arguments employed in that Report may be thoroughly sifted by the clergy, and, above all, that the lay members of the Church may be instructed as to the attempts which are being made to reintroduce the Vestments and the pre-Reformation doctrine that they signify. At the present time the laity generally are quite unaware of the proposed changes.