

PRINCIPLES FOR
CHURCHMEN

A MANUAL OF POSITIVE STATEMENTS
ON SOME SUBJECTS OF CONTROVERSY

WITH AN

*EXPLANATORY INTRODUCTION ON THE PRESSING DANGERS
WHICH BESET THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND*

BY THE RIGHT REV.

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"EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS ON THE GOSPELS" "OLD PATHS"
'LIGHT FROM OLD TIMES' ETC.

Fourth Edition, Revised
CONTAINING THE BISHOP'S FAREWELL LETTER TO THE DIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL

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BISHOP RYLE'S FAREWELL TO HIS DIOCESE.

REVEREND AND DEAR BRETHREN,—Almost the last words of the great Apostle to the Gentiles are before the eyes of my mind today: “I have finished my course; the time of my departure is at hand.” After filling unexpectedly the office of your Bishop for nearly twenty years, I am about to resign a post which years and failing health at the age of eighty-three told me I was no longer able to fill with advantage to the diocese or to the Church of England.

I have resigned my Bishopric with many humbled feelings. As I look back over the years of my episcopate, I am conscious that I have left undone many things which I hoped to have done when I first came to Liverpool. I am equally conscious that the many things I have had to do with—meetings, ordinations, confirmations, and consecrations—have been done very imperfectly. I only ask you to remember that I was sixty-four, and not a young man, when I first came here, and to believe that, amidst many difficulties, I have tried to do my duty. But I am thankful that our God is a merciful God.

I can truly say that my approaching separation from Liverpool will be a heavy wrench to me. I shall never forget you. I had ventured to hope that I might be allowed to end my days near the Mersey, and to die in harness. But God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, and He has gradually taught me by failing health that the huge population of this diocese requires a younger and stronger Bishop.

Before I leave you I ask you to accept a few parting words from an old minister who has had more than fifty-eight years' experience, and during that time has seen and learned many things. It is written, “Days should speak, and multitude of years should teach wisdom “(Job xxxii. 7). Let me, then, charge all the clergy whom I am about to leave behind me never to neglect their preaching. Your districts and population may be comparatively small or large. But the minds of your people are thoroughly awake. They will not be content with dull, tame sermons. They want life, and light, and fire, and love in the pulpit as well as in the parish. Let them have plenty of it. Never forget that a lively, Christ-exalting minister will always have a church-going people.

Last, but not least, cultivate and study the habit of being at peace with all your brother ministers. Beware of divisions. One thing the children of the world can always understand if they do not understand doctrine. That thing is angry quarrelling and controversy. Be at peace among yourselves.

May God bless you all.

To the many lay Churchmen whom I shall leave behind in this diocese (knowing far less of them than I should have done if I had come among them a younger man), I can only send my best wishes, and add my prayers that this diocese may have God's blessing both in temporal and spiritual prosperity. Cling to the old Church of England, my lay brethren, cling to its Bible, its Prayer-book, and its Articles. Let no charitable institution suffer. Consider the many poor and needy. Support missionary work at home and abroad. Help the underpaid clergy. Never forget that the principles of the Protestant Reformation made this country what she is, and let nothing ever tempt you to forsake them.

In a little time we shall all meet again; many, I hope, on the King's right hand and few on the left. Till that time comes I commend you to God and the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified.—I remain, your affectionate Bishop and lasting friend,

J. C. LIVERPOOL.

THE PALACE, ABERCROMBY SQUARE,
February 1st, 1900.

INTRODUCTION

TO THE THIRD EDITION.

THE volume now in the reader's hands requires a few pages of explanatory introduction.

It consists of eighteen papers, on subjects of deep interest to all Churchmen in the present day. About some of these subjects a wave of most unsatisfactory opinion is spreading over the land. About all of them there is a painful amount of ignorance and uncertainty in many minds, and myriads of Churchmen seem unable to say what they think and what they believe. On each of them this volume will be found to contain some plain and positive statements, based on Scripture and the authorized formularies of the Church of England.

Three of these eighteen papers have already appeared in a volume which I published some years ago, entitled *Knots Untied*. The papers I refer to are those on "The Church," "Worship," and "Baptism." For reintroducing them in the present volume I make no apology. They are subjects which could not be well omitted from it, without making the work incomplete as a systematic manual for Churchmen on doubtful or disputed points.

My object in sending forth this volume at the present time I will state without any hesitation. I send it forth because of the critical position in which the Established Church of England stands in consequence of her "unhappy divisions." It is my firm conviction that, notwithstanding a great outward show of zeal, and a perfect plethora of ceremonial machinery and talk, our good old Church is "in great danger." About the twofold nature of that danger I wish to speak very plainly.

I. The first and chief part of the danger of the Church of England arises from the continual existence among us of a *body of Churchmen who seem, if words and actions mean anything, determined to unprotestantize the Church of England*, to re-introduce principles and practices which our forefathers deliberately rejected three centuries ago, and, in one word, to get behind the Protestant Reformation. That there is such a body of Churchmen,—that hundreds of them from time to time have shown the tendency of their views by secession to Rome,—that for many years their proceedings have called forth remonstrances and warnings from most of our bishops,—that the eyes of all Christendom are fixed on this body, and men are watching and wondering whereunto it will grow,—that Romanists rejoice in its rise and progress, and all true-hearted Protestants in other lands grieve and mourn,—all these, I say, are great patent facts, which it is waste of time to prove, because they cannot be denied.

The zeal, earnestness, and self-denial of this body of Churchmen I do not for a moment dispute. But I cannot at all admit that they have any monopoly of these qualifications. Nor can I admit that any quantity of zeal and earnestness confers a licence to introduce “divers and strange doctrines “and practices into our parish churches, and to overstep the limits laid down in the authorized formularies of the Church of England.

But the point to which I want to direct the special attention of my readers is this. It is an unhappy fact that the chief subject of contention between the school to which I have referred and their opponents, has been for several years the blessed Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Scores of clergymen have adopted the practice of administering the Lord’s Supper with usages which have been almost entirely laid aside for 300 years,—usages to all appearance borrowed from the Church of Rome,—usages which even Archbishop Laud in the plenitude of his power never dared to enforce,—usages which, to the vast majority of thinking men, seem intended to bring back into our Church that most dangerous of all Romish doctrines, the sacrifice of the Mass.

The legality of these new usages in the administration of the Lord’s Supper has been made the subject of repeated trials before the highest Law Courts of this realm. The final result has been that almost all have been pronounced distinctly illegal, and that every clergyman who persists in wearing a chasuble, or burning incense, or having lighted candles on the Communion table, or mixing water with the sacramental wine, or elevating and adoring the consecrated elements, is doing that which contravenes the doctrine of the Church of England, is putting a sense on the “Ornaments Rubric” which the highest Courts of the realm distinctly condemn, and therefore is breaking the law.

But now comes a miserable fact, which constitutes the present greatest danger of the Church of England. Some of those clergymen who have adopted these novel usages in the Lord’s Supper refuse to pay the slightest attention to the judgments of the Law Courts, or to the admonitions of their bishops. In the face of the *contemporanea expositio* of three centuries, which certainly confirms the interpretation of the Ornaments Rubric given by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council,—in the face of the utter absence of anything in our Communion Office to confirm their novel views, in the face of their own solemn vow and promise to obey their bishop,—they persist in their own way of administering the Lord’s Supper, and for the sake of things which they themselves must allow are *not essential* to it, they seem prepared to rend in pieces the Church of England. And in all this, worst of all, they are aided, backed, countenanced, and supported by hundreds of clergymen who never dream of breaking the law themselves,

but seem to regard these law-breaking brethren as martyrs, and as excellent, worthy, and persecuted men, who ought to be let alone! If all this does not constitute a most dangerous state of things, I know not what is danger to a Church. Without some change I am convinced it will sooner or later be the ruin of the Established Church of England.

I hear so many foolish and unreasonable things said about the perilous position of matters, which I have tried to describe, that I think it my duty to offer a few remarks to all men of practical common sense, which may serve to clear the air, and be useful to some.

(a) I sometimes hear it said that the ecclesiastical lawsuits of recent times about the Lord's Supper ought never to have been instituted,—that law-breaking clergymen might easily have been kept in order by their bishops,—and that those who instituted legal proceedings were “persecutors” and troublers of Israel. How the law *could* be ascertained without a carefully-prepared argument before competent judges I fail to see. What likelihood there was of modern law-breakers paying any attention to Episcopal admonitions I leave all calm observers to consider. But as to the hard names and bitter epithets heaped on prosecutors, I regard them with sorrow as unworthy of the lips from which they come. Englishmen, who remember that the true doctrine of the Lord's Supper was the very point for which the Marian martyrs went to the stake, ought surely not to be surprised if many people are extremely sensitive about the least attempt to bring back the Romish Mass. I for one do not wonder. Thousands of people, I believe, would put up with many ceremonial novelties who would resist to the uttermost any innovations in the Lord's Supper. The words of Bishop Thirlwall in his last Charge are worth remembering:—“The persons who instituted these proceedings, though to their adversaries they might appear persecutors, could not but look on themselves as simply acting on the defensive, in resistance to an unprovoked and unlawful aggression, and for the purpose of resisting what to them seemed a tremendous evil.” (Thirlwall's Remains, vol. ii. 306.) It is easy and cheap work to call names, and revile opponents as “persecutors.” But the plain truth is, that those who break the law and refuse to obey their bishop are the real persecutors of the Church.

(b) I have heard it said frequently that the interpretation of the famous Ornaments Rubric, laid down after careful and deliberate inquiry by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, is altogether incorrect, and therefore ought not to be obeyed. I have even heard it said that their last decision (I refer to the Ridsdale case) was one “of policy, and not of justice.” I hear such sayings with considerable indifference, and call to mind the old adage, that “Defeated litigants always blame the Court in which they fail.” But broad assertions are not arguments. It is easy for some angry divines to say

superciliously that leading English lawyers, of proved intellectual vigour and long experience, are incompetent to handle ecclesiastical subjects, to analyse the language of documents, and weigh the meaning of words in formularies, and that they know nothing about rubrics and Church history, and cannot grasp such matters. But who, I should like to know, will believe all this? The immense majority of thinking men in the House of Lords or the House of Commons,—in the Temple or Lincoln’s Inn, in the City or the West End,—in Oxford or Cambridge,—in Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, Sheffield, Nottingham, or Bristol, will never believe it for a moment, and will think poorly of the sense of those who say such things. As for the unworthy insinuation that eminent English judges of spotless character would ever stain their judicial ermine by deciding ecclesiastical questions in a party spirit, from reasons of “policy rather than justice,” and from impure motives, I will not condescend to notice it. I pity alike the men who can make such insinuations, and the men who can believe them.

(c) I hear it said sometimes, that spiritual questions ought to be left to spiritual men, and that a Court composed mainly of laymen, like the Judicial Committee, is incompetent to try theological cases. This at first sight appears a very plausible idea; but I do not think it will bear the test of calm consideration. No doubt the present Court of Final Appeal, like every Judicial Court composed of men, may have its faults and imperfections, and the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts may possibly have suggested some improvements. But if the Judicial Committee of Privy Council is to be set aside in ecclesiastical cases, and a so-called *spiritual* Court set up in its stead, I doubt extremely whether a better Court, and one which will satisfy the laity, can possibly be constructed. It is easy to find fault with an institution and pull it down, but it is not always so easy to build a better. Where are the constituent parts to come from? Who are to be the new and improved judges? I declare I look over the land from north to south, and from east to west, and I fail to discover the materials out of which your “re-adjusted” Court of Appeal is to be composed. There may be hidden Daniels ready to come to the judgment-seat, of whom I know nothing. But I should be glad to know who they are.

Shall we ask the State to sweep away the present Court of Appeal, and compose one of bishops only? I am afraid such a Court would never give satisfaction. If there is any one point on which the *Guardian* and the *Record*, the *Church Times*, the *Rock*, and the *English Churchman* are entirely agreed, it is the fallibility of bishops! Each of these papers would tell us that several English prelates are anything but wise and orthodox, and are not trustworthy judges of disputed questions. But if this is the case, what likelihood is there that the whole Church would be satisfied with their judi-

cial decisions? Last, but worst of all, the private opinions of almost all English bishops are so well known that they are not fit to be judges of disputed ecclesiastical questions. Their decisions would be foregone conclusions.

Shall we turn away from the bishops, and compose the new Court of Appeal of deans, University professors, and select eminent theologians, picked out of Convocation? Again the same objection applies. He that can run his eye over the list of English deans, or the professorial staff at Oxford and Cambridge, and then talk of forming out of that list an unexceptionable tribunal, acceptable to all parties, must be a man of faith bordering on credulity. As to the “select eminent theologians,” I have yet to know who is to have the selection. The very divines whom one school of Churchmen would choose, are men whom another school would not allow to be sound “theologians” at all.

The fact is, that the favourite theory of those who would refer all ecclesiastical causes to *clerical* judges, is a theory which will never work. It sounds plausible at first, and looks well at a distance, but it is utterly unpractical. Laymen, and legal laymen, trained and accustomed to look at all sides of a question, are the only material out of which a satisfactory Court of Appeal can be formed. Ecclesiastics, as a rule, are unfit to be judges. We do not shine on the bench, whatever we may do in the pulpit. If there is one thing that bishops and presbyters rarely possess, it is the judicial mind, and the power of giving an impartial, unbiased decision.¹

(d) I have heard it said sometimes, that the matters for which the recent

¹ “The composition of a purely ecclesiastical tribunal to be substituted for the present ‘Court of Appeal’ in cases of heresy, is a problem beset with such complicated difficulties, as to render it almost hopeless that any scheme will ever be derived for its solution, which would give general satisfaction; even if there were not so many who would reject it for the very reason that it appears to recognize a principle—the mystical prerogative of the clergy—which they reject as groundless and mischievous.” (Bishop Thirlwall’s Remains, vol. ii. p. 135.)

“That the members of the Judicial Committee would ever consent, or be permitted, to renounce their supreme jurisdiction, and exchange their judicial functions in this behalf, for a purely ministerial agency by which they will have passively to accept, and simply to carry into effect, the decision of a clerical council,—this is something which I believe is no longer imagined to be possible, even by the most ardent and sanguine advocate of what he calls the inalienable rights of the clergy, so long as the Church remains in union with the State on the present terms of the alliance. But if they do not take up this subordinate position, the principle of the ecclesiastical prerogative in matter of doctrine, which to those who maintain it is probably more precious than any particular application of it, is abandoned and lost. The Church will, in their language, continue to groan in galling fetters, and an ignominious bondage.” (Bishop Thirlwall’s Remains, vol. ii. p. 137.)

objectors to decisions about the Ornaments Rubric contend are mere matters of taste. The whole question, forsooth, is one of æstheticism and ornamentation! Why wrangle and quarrel, some say, about such trifles? I wish I could believe this view. Unhappily there is strong testimony the other way. With the party of whom I am now speaking, the whole value of ceremonial consists in its significance as a visible symbol of doctrine. The evidence of leading men before the Ritual Commission, the language continually used in certain books and manuals about the Lord's Supper, all tend to show that the question in dispute is, whether in the sacrament there is a propitiatory sacrifice as well as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and whether there is a real *presence* beside that in the hearts of believers. These are not trifles, but serious doctrinal errors, and points on which I am persuaded the bulk of English Churchmen will never tolerate the least approach to the Church of Rome. To use the words of the late Bishop Thirlwall, "The real question is, whether our Communion Office is to be transformed into the closest possible resemblance to the Romish Mass." (Thirlwall's Remains, vol. ii. p. 233.)²

(e) Last, but not least, I hear it sometimes said, that obedience to rubrics ought to be enforced all round, and that it is not fair to require one clergyman to obey the Ornaments Rubric as interpreted by the Privy Council, while another clergyman is allowed to neglect another rubric altogether. This is a favourite argument in many quarters, but I am unable to see any force in it. In matters like these there is no parallelism whatever between acts of *omission* and acts of *addition*. To place on the same level the conduct of the man who, in administering the Lord's Supper, introduces novelties of most serious doctrinal significance, and the conduct of the man who does not observe some petty obsolete direction, of no doctrinal significance at all, is to my mind contrary to common sense. But, after all, complete and perfect obedience to all the rubrics is simply impossible, and I do not suppose there is a single clergyman in England who observes all. The three first rubrics in the Communion Service are illustrations of what I mean. Moreover, the change of laws and customs, and the large liberty now allowed to a clergyman, have rendered some ancient rubrical requirements

² The following evidence was deliberately given by that well-known clergyman, the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, vicar of Frome, before the Royal Commission on Ritual:—

"2606. 'Is any doctrine involved in your using the chasuble?' 'I think there is.'

"2607. 'What is that doctrine?' 'The doctrine of the sacrifice.' "2608. 'Do you consider yourself a sacrificing priest?' 'Distinctly so.'

"2611. 'Then you think you offer a propitiatory sacrifice?' 'Yes, I think I do offer a propitiatory sacrifice.'

obsolete and inexpedient. A certain discretion must be allowed to a bishop in the nineteenth century in deciding what rubrics the circumstances of the Church require to be observed. If I ask one clergyman to obey the ruling of the Privy Council about the Ornaments Rubric, and to discontinue the use of the chasuble, the incense, the lighted candles, and the like, I do so because of the immense importance of maintaining Protestant views of the Lord's Supper, and the deep jealousy which prevails among the laity about the appearance of anything like the sacrifice of the Mass.—If I decline to ask another clergyman to have daily matins, and vespers, and saints' day services, in some huge, overgrown, poor parish, in a mining district, or at the north or south ends of Liverpool, where ninety-nine out of a hundred of his parishioners cannot possibly attend such services, I decline, because I think his time, in the short twelve hours of the day, might be far better employed. He can spend his day more usefully, in going from house to house among his people, than by reading prayers in an empty church. He can do far more good by doing things which were flatly forbidden 240 years ago (when our rubrics were last settled),—by non-liturgical services in unconsecrated rooms, by Cottage Lectures, by Bible Classes, by Young Men's Meetings, by Mothers' Meetings, by Temperance Meetings, by Prayer Meetings, and other well-known modern means of usefulness. And when men tell me that my balances are unjust, and that it is not fair to interfere with the one clergyman and to leave the other clergyman alone, I hear the accusation with indifference. I believe I am doing that which is best for the Church of England, and most likely to advance her interests.

I leave this weary subject here. For dwelling on it at such length, and trying to discuss it from every point of view, I make no apology. The position of the Church is so critical, and the danger so great, that a bishop has no right to hold his peace. Without some change of weather, or change in men's minds, or change in the management of the ship, I see nothing before us but disaster and damage to the Church of England.

What the end of the present distressing strife is likely to be, it is impossible to say. There is not the slightest sign of abatement in the activity of extreme Ritualists. Every year they seem to act more boldly, and to be more insatiable in their demands. The fierce, violent, and intolerant tone of their advocates on Congress platforms,—their openly avowed desire to get behind the Elizabethan Reformation, and to restore the first prayer-book of Edward VI. to public use,—their contemptuous refusal to exhibit the slightest sympathy with the recent Luther Commemoration,—their habitual disobedience to legal decisions and Episcopal admonitions,—all these are painful symptoms which he who runs may read. They are symptoms which almost justify the suspicion that the ultimate design of extreme Ritualists is

to procure the repeal of the Gorham decision, and all the Privy Council judgments which have gone against them,—to turn the evangelical clergy out of the Church of England,—to bring back and legalize Mass in our Communion,—to cancel the Act of Settlement which requires our Sovereigns to be Protestants,—and finally, to bring about reunion between the Anglican Church and the Church of Rome. That such are the latent intentions of the extreme Ritualists, is the firm conviction of not a few quiet observers of the times. Whether their suspicions are correct or not, I am not prepared to say. But I must say that it does not surprise me that such suspicions exist.³

For my own part I do not wish to be a black prophet. I have great faith in our Church's tenacity of life. She survived the temporary suppression of Protestantism in the reign of Bloody Mary. She survived the overthrow of Episcopacy and the proscription of the Liturgy in the days of the Commonwealth. She survived the expulsion of 2000 most able clergymen in 1662 by the Act of Uniformity. She survived the secession of the nonjurors, when William III. came to the throne. She survived the loss of the Methodist body in the last century. She has survived the departure to their own place of Manning, Newman, Oakley, Faber, the two Wilberforces, and many others in our own day. If she is faithful to Protestant principles, I believe she would survive the secession of the whole "English Church Union," if they left us next year? But I cannot bring myself to believe yet that the great majority of the members of that body would actually leave the Church of their forefathers, on account of things which they themselves must allow are not essential to the Lord's Supper. Many of them, I suspect,

³ The following extract from the Scotch *Free Church Magazine* for April 1884 is worth reading. It is a common saying that lookers-on sometimes see most of the game:—

"That Romanism is spreading in England is notorious; and to us it seems little less than treason in those who think the Mass idolatrous to consent on any terms to be silent. Says the *Church Review*:—"The thing which English Catholics have in hand at present, and are likely to have in hand, as their principal work, for at least one generation to come, is the restoration of the altar, the re-establishment of the Mass in its seat of honour, as the sun and centre of Christian worship. Till this great work has progressed much further than it has at present, it would be waste of time to emphasize too strongly doctrines of great importance indeed, but of less importance than that of the Eucharistic sacrifice. But unless the Catholic revival is to come to an untimely end—a catastrophe which there is no reason faithlessly to anticipate—the future will see in our restored public worship unmistakable marks of the belief of the Christian Church in the efficacy of the intercessions poured forth by blessed Mary and all saints at the throne of grace, and of our real communion (that is, mutual union) with them in the acts which we perform as members of the one body of Christ.'"

are utterly blind to the logical consequences of their movement. Like the followers of Absalom, they have joined it “in their simplicity, and know not anything.” But while I shrink from imputing treachery and disloyalty to the leaders of extreme Ritualism, I shall never shrink from declaring my conviction that their movement endangers the life of the Established Church of England.

II. The other pressing danger of the Church of England which induces me to send forth this volume is one of a very different kind. It consists in the rise and progress of a *spirit of indifference to all doctrines and opinions in religion*.

A wave of colour-blindness about theology appears to be passing over the land. The minds of many seem utterly incapable of discerning any difference between faith and faith, creed and creed, tenet and tenet, opinion and opinion, thought and thought, however diverse, heterogeneous, contrariant, and mutually destructive they may be. Everything, forsooth, is true, and nothing is false, everything is right and nothing is wrong, everything is good and nothing is bad, if it approaches us under the garb and name of religion. You are not allowed to ask what is God’s truth, but what is liberal, and generous, and kind.

(a) We may see the danger in the vastly altered tone of public feeling about Romanism which has appeared in the last forty years. There is no longer that general dislike and aversion to Popery which was once almost universal in this realm. The edge of the old British feeling about Protestantism seems blunted and dull. Some profess to be tired of all religious controversy, and are ready to sacrifice God’s truth for the sake of peace.—Some look on Romanism as simply one among many English forms of religion, and neither worse nor better than others.—Some try to persuade us that Romanism is changed, and not nearly so bad as it used to be.—Some boldly point to the faults of Protestants, and loudly cry that Romanists are quite as good as ourselves.—Some think it fine and liberal to maintain that we have no right to think anyone wrong who is in earnest about his creed.—And yet the two great historical facts, (a) that ignorance, immorality, and superstition reigned supreme in England 400 years ago under Popery, (b) that the Reformation was the greatest blessing God ever gave to this land,—both these are facts which no one but a Papist ever thought of disputing fifty years ago! In the present day, alas, it is convenient and fashionable to forget them! No doubt this altered tone of public feeling has been furthered immensely by the proceedings of the extreme Ritualistic party in the Church of England. That energetic and active body has been vilifying the Reformation, and sneering at Protestantism, for many years, with only too much success. It has corrupted, leavened, blinded, and poisoned the

minds of many Churchmen, by incessant misrepresentation. It has gradually familiarized people with every distinctive doctrine and practice of Romanism,—the real presence,—the mass,—auricular confession and priestly absolution,—the sacerdotal character of the ministry,—the monastic system,—and a histrionic, sensuous, showy style of public worship;—and the natural result is, that many simple people see no mighty difference between the Church of England and the Church of Rome. Besides this, the spurious liberality of the day we live in helps on the reaction of feeling. It is fashionable now to say that all sects should be equal,—that the State should have nothing to do with religion,—that all creeds should be regarded with equal favour and respect,—and that there is a substratum of common truth at the bottom of all religions, whether Buddhism, Mohammedanism, or Christianity! The consequence is, that myriads of ignorant folks begin to think there is nothing peculiarly dangerous in the tenets of Papists any more than in the tenets of Methodists, Independents, Presbyterians, or Baptists,—and that we ought to let Romanism alone, and never expose its unscriptural character. One thing at any rate is patent and obvious to every observing eye. Whatever the cause may be, public feeling in England is strangely altered about the Church of Rome.

(b) We may see the danger again in the widely-spread disposition to make cleverness and earnestness the only tests of orthodoxy in religion. Thousands of professing Christians nowadays seem utterly unable to distinguish things that differ. If a preacher or lecturer is only clever and eloquent and earnest, they appear to think he is all right, however strange and heterogeneous his sermons or lectures may be. Popery or Protestantism, an atonement or no atonement, a personal Holy Ghost or no Holy Ghost, future punishment or no future punishment, High Church or Low Church or Broad Church, Trinitarianism, Arianism, or Unitarianism, nothing comes amiss to them,—they can swallow all, if they cannot digest it! Carried away by a fancied liberality and charity, they seem to regard doctrine as a matter of no importance, and to think everybody is going to be saved and nobody going to be lost. Their religion is made up of negatives; and the only positive thing about them is, that they dislike distinctness, and think all extreme and decided and positive views are very naughty and very wrong

These people live in a kind of mist or fog. They see nothing clearly, and do not know what they believe. They have not made up their minds about any great point in the Gospel, and seem content to be *honorary members of all schools of thought*. For their lives they could not tell you what they think is truth about forgiveness of sins, or justification, or regeneration, or sanctification, or the Lord's Supper, or baptism, or faith, or conversion, or inspiration, or the future state. They are eaten up with a morbid dread of

CONTROVERSY and an ignorant dislike of PARTY SPIRIT, and yet they really cannot define what they mean by these phrases. The only point you can make out is that they admire earnestness and cleverness and charity, and cannot believe that any clever, earnest, charitable man can ever be in the wrong! And so they live on undecided, and too often undecided they drift down to the grave, without comfort in their religion, and, I am afraid, often without hope.

The explanation of this boneless, nerveless condition of soul is perhaps not difficult to find. The heart of man is naturally in the dark about religion, has no intuitive sense of truth,—and really NEEDS instruction and illumination. Besides this, the natural heart in most men hates exertion in religion, and cordially dislikes patient painstaking inquiry. Above all, the natural heart generally likes the praise of others, shrinks from collision, and loves to be thought charitable and liberal. The whole result is that a kind of broad religious “agnosticism” just suits an immense number of people, and specially suits young persons. They are content to shovel aside all disputed points as rubbish, and if you charge them with indecision, they will tell you,—“I do not pretend to understand controversy; I decline to examine controverted points. I daresay it is all the same in the long run.”—Who does not know that such people swarm and abound everywhere? And who does not know that anyone who denounces this state of things, and insists that a clergyman should be loyal to the articles of his Church, is regarded as a narrow, party-spirited, ungenerous person, quite unsuited to the nineteenth century?

(c) We may see the danger, lastly, in the demand which many are loudly making for the adoption of a general policy of toleration and forbearance within the pale of the Church of England. Such a policy, we are gravely told, is the true remedy for “the present distress.” Every clergyman is to be allowed to hold and teach and do what he likes. No one is ever to be called to account either for his ceremonial actions at the Lord’s table or his sermons in the pulpit. Every school of thought, however extreme, is to be tolerated. No prosecutions in any Court, whether spiritual or secular, are to be permitted. The model for the Anglican Church is to be Israel in the days of the judges: “Every man is to do what is right in his own eyes” (Judg. xxi. 25).

The mere fact that such a monstrous policy as I have described finds acceptance with many Churchmen is, to my mind, one of the greatest perils of the Church of England; and, like extreme Ritualism, its adoption could only have one result. That result would ultimately be disruption, disintegration, and disestablishment. You could not possibly have two or three distinct churches within one communion. It is amazing to me that the advocates of

this notable policy of universal toleration do not see that it would infallibly end in our Church being broken to pieces.

No doubt, at first sight this policy of universal toleration looks very specious. It suits the temper of the times. What more likely to provide peace and stop quarrelling than to declare the Church a kind of Noah's ark, within which every kind of opinion and creed shall dwell safe and undisturbed, and the only terms of communion shall be willingness to come inside and let your neighbour alone? Nevertheless, I must confess my utter inability to understand how the policy could ever be carried out without throwing overboard all Articles and Creeds, without doing away with all subscriptions, in short, without altering the whole constitution of the Church of England.

Whether this state of things will ever be sanctioned and allowed I cannot tell. Nothing in these days is impossible. Nothing is too absurd to concede and allow in the present mania for complete freedom of thought, and absolute liberty of opinion. I will only ask my readers to consider carefully what the practical working of the new system would be.

What would be the position of *the laity*? At present the English lay-churchman, wherever he lives, or moves to in England, may justly expect to find a certain degree of uniformity in the services and sermons of the Parish Church. No doubt he may find more singing and surplice-wearing and outward ceremonial in one place than another. One clergyman may give more prominence to one set of verities than another. But, on the whole, the diversity is generally within limits.—There will be an end of all this when the reign of universal toleration begins. He will be startled to hear from one pulpit that much of the Old Testament is defective and uninspired, or that there is no such person as the devil, and no future punishment. If he moves to another parish, he may be astonished to see the Lord's Supper administered with a sacrificial dress, and accompanied by incense and lighted candles in broad day, and adoration of the consecrated elements. If he dislikes all this, he must not complain! However much aggrieved, he will be told that this is the famous policy of toleration, and that he must submit! Will the laity be content and satisfied with this state of things? I doubt it extremely. There would be general grumbling all over the country. Myriads of the middle class would leave the Church, and become dissenters.

What would be the position of *the English clergy*? At present, in spite of much friction and jarring, the great majority of the three schools of thought, high, low, and broad—manage to get on pretty amicably, and respect one another. There is a common bond of union in loyal love to the Church of England, and a cordial desire to hand her down uninjured to their children.

There is a common determination to abide within the limits of our creeds and formularies, and not to transgress them. There is a common dislike to the furious zealots of either extreme, who are striving by addition or subtraction to depart from the old paths. There will be an end of all this when the reign of universal toleration begins! When the mass on one side, and avowed scepticism on the other, are formally sanctioned by authority, it is vain to suppose there would not be a large secession of some conscientious clergy from our communion. Others who did not secede would draw together for protection, and crystallize and solidify their own peculiar views, and refuse to recognise any others. In short, there would be a multiplication and increase of our “unhappy divisions,” which would endanger the existence of the Church of England, and shake it to the very centre.

What, above all, would be the position of *our English Bishops*? At present they make a solemn promise, at their consecration, that they will be “ready, with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God’s word, and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same.” Once let the much-praised policy of universal toleration be accepted and formally authorized, and I fail to see the slightest use in this promise. Some of a bishop’s clergy will hold a Romish view of the Lord’s Supper, and openly call it the Mass. Others will be content with the views of the prayer-book, and indignantly repudiate incense, chasuble, a material presence, an altar, and a sacrifice. Some of his candidates for ordination will hold doctrines which cannot, by any ingenuity, be reconciled with the Articles, and coolly write them down in their examination papers. Others, with equal coolness, will offer sceptical statements about inspiration and the atonement. What, then, is the unhappy bishop to do? He will be able to do nothing at all. He must be an “honorary member of all schools of thought.” He will be obliged to smile on all with equal complacency, and to license, institute, and ordain anybody or everybody, without asking any questions at all, or requiring any declarations, promises, vows, oaths, or subscriptions. If the Church of England long survived such a chaotic state of things, it would be a miracle indeed. When there are no laws or rules, there can be no order in any community. When there is no creed or standard of doctrine, there can be no church, but a babel.

Such are the pressing dangers which appear to me to beset the Church of England in the present day. On one side there is the danger of relapsing into Popery, and going back behind the Reformation. On the other side is the growing danger of total indifference to sound doctrine, under the specious garb of liberality, and unwillingness to think any earnest man is wrong. In short, at the rate we are going now, the end of our good old Church, unless

God interferes, will be either Popery or infidelity.

In view of these two great dangers, I now send forth this volume as a humble contribution to the treasury of truth, and a protest against error. The principles it contains I have held and advocated for more than forty years, and I never felt more convinced than I do now that they are Scriptural principles, Church principles, true, trustworthy, and worthy of all acceptance.

If this volume is the means of opening the eyes of any who have been led astray, or of checking any who are wavering and disposed to leave the old path, I shall be abundantly repaid for the labour which it has cost me, amidst the many demands on a Lancashire bishop's time.

What the final result of the present state of things will be I do not pretend to predict. There is immense vitality in the Church of England, and I do not despair. But it is grievous to see how many faithful laymen are thoroughly weary and sick at heart, and ready to forsake the old ship. Some are turning from church to chapel, and becoming dissenters or Plymouth Brethren. Some are beginning to advocate disestablishment, and to ask what is the use of a church without discipline or creed. Some few are disposed to flirt with scepticism, and to doubt whether there is such a thing as "truth." I entreat such men to be patient. I ask them to believe that the true Churchman occupies an impregnable position so long as the law is unaltered, and I invite them to arm their minds with the principles which this volume contains.

J. C. LIVERPOOL