

ART. VI.—THE SHARE OF PARLIAMENT AND CONVOCATION IN THE REFORMATION.

Concluded.

ON November 28, 1554, a strange scene was witnessed in Parliament. The legate, Cardinal Pole, had obtained from the Pope the concession that all who were in possession of alienated Church lands might keep them as an equivalent for reviving the recognition of the Papal supremacy. The legate met the Parliament, and harangued them in presence of King Philip and Queen Mary. Next day the two Houses voted almost unanimously their repentance for their schism, and their desire to be received back into the unity of the Catholic Church. The day after, November 30 (St. Andrew's Day), they appeared before the Cardinal and desired absolution on their bended knees. The Cardinal, rising with extended arms, pronounced the absolution of the nation, and its entrance again into union with Rome. Convocation, like Parliament, had petitioned for absolution, and on December 6, 1554, a week later, they appeared before the Cardinal at Lambeth and were solemnly reconciled.

An address was passed shortly after by the Lower House of Convocation to the Bishops for the punishment of heresy. The Bishops at once obtained from Parliament the revival of the statutes 5 Richard II., st. 2, c. 5, and 2 Henry IV., c. 15, as well as 2 Henry V., c. 7. It was under the last of these that Bishop Stubbs thinks that most of the Marian murders took place.

The Church of England, says Archdeacon Perry, was thus thrust back into the condition in which it was before 1529. All the gains of the Reformation—gains which had been acquired at so great a cost—were wrested from it; its nationality was again obscured, and the vast mass of superstitious follies and abuses implied by the name Rome was again heaped upon it. The effects of this retrogressive step, so glibly voted by the Parliament (and the Convocations), were now to be witnessed; and amidst the fearful scenes of the next four years was to be generated in the breasts of Englishmen that indelible hatred of "Popery" which was to be at once the support and the difficulty of the Anglican Church of the future.

On her accession, Queen Elizabeth, like Edward and Mary, proceeded at first by proclamation and the appointment of commissions. "In the proposals for the religious settlement no mention was at present made of taking counsel with the Convocation, as it was well known that nothing in the way of reforming views could be hoped for from that body. Every

element of this sort had been fully weeded out of it by Queen Mary, and both Upper and Lower Houses were completely of accord to maintain the most extreme dogmas of the old religion. The Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury immediately framed resolutions in favour of transubstantiation, the propitiatory sacrifice of the altar, the supremacy and Divine authority of the Pope, and the right of the spirituality alone to determine things relating to the faith, sacraments, and discipline of the Church. These resolutions the Lower House sent up to the Bishops; but even Bonner did not dare to present them to the Queen. The dread of *præmunire* was strongly present. The resolutions, except the two last, were signed by the two Universities."

Elizabeth's first Parliament restored to the Crown all its ancient jurisdiction over all courts and persons. It gave Elizabeth the same power of visitation and of appointing commissions for the exercise of that jurisdiction as had been granted to her father in the time of Thomas Cromwell. The general Visitatorial statute is still unrepealed. Mr. Dibdin (Brewer's "Church of England," p. 294) and Hale ("Royal Supremacy") have pointed out that the Visitatorial power still continues. If so terrible a misfortune, for instance, were to occur as any Archbishop of Canterbury in future days joining the Church of Rome, and refusing to resign, it is probable that this is the only power that could deprive him.

The Act was two months before Parliament, and contained clauses repealing all the Acts made about religion in the reign of Mary, and reviving those passed in the reigns of Henry and Edward; restored *congé d'élire*; enacted penal clauses against maintainers of Papal supremacy; and ordered all clergymen, magistrates, officers, and public functionaries to take an oath of loyalty to the Queen's supreme jurisdiction in things temporal and spiritual.

After a great debate on religious and ecclesiastical matters had been held in Westminster Abbey, an Act was passed declaring that, whereas at the death of Edward VI. there remained one book of Common Prayer, this book is re-enacted with certain minute alterations specified as made therein. The second book was accordingly revived, and remains in substance to this day the choice of the English nation. Strenuous opposition was offered in the Lords, as the Bishops urged that the clergy were altogether opposed to the English book. The Act of Uniformity establishing it was, however, passed on April 28, 1559.

In compliance with the power given to the Crown, commissions were now issued for the Provinces of Canterbury and York to test the feelings of the clergy. Including fourteen

Romish Bishops, only 189 of the clergy are said to have refused the new laws and to have been deprived, and of these six were Abbots.

The last Parliament and Convocation with which we have to do in this rapid sketch met on January 12, 1563. On the 29th, at the Chapter House of St. Paul's, the Bishops sanctioned the Thirty-nine Articles, reducing their original number (forty-two) by three. The Lower House—excepting, perhaps, a small minority—signed after some demurrage. The Queen gave her ratification a year later. The Articles carried with them the approval of the Prayer-Book and the Supremacy. They were finally accepted and enacted by Parliament in 1571 (13 Eliz., c. 12).

It is interesting to notice that the lapse into Roman heresy under Queen Mary was by an Act (1 and 2 Philip and Mary, c. 6) that was passed before the restoration of the papal supremacy by a later Act (c. 8) of the same session. As Professor Corrie says: "The Queen imprisoned Judge Hales for enforcing the then existing laws respecting public worship, arbitrarily deprived thirteen Bishops of their sees, and intruded others into their offices, without reference to any other authority except the royal will" ("Church and State in England," p. 130). Queen Mary took quite as personal a part in the settlement of religion as Henry VIII., Edward VI., or Elizabeth.

Church and State had thus done their parts, says Perry, in re-establishing the condition of things in the matter of religion which had been rudely broken up by the disastrous reign of Mary. The Romanists had been clearly shown that, in spite of the threatening aspect of foreign affairs, and the strength which they could still count upon in the country, the Government of the Queen was strong enough to enforce their submission, or leave them exposed to considerable peril. On the other hand, the more fanatical reformers had learned that the Queen and the country, as represented by Parliament, were determined to uphold the ancient Church of the land, purified as it was from its main defects, and not to run into the eccentric courses of the foreign reformers.

That Elizabeth was right in appointing a commission of divines to review the Prayer-Book of 1552, and in waiting for the subsequent confirmation of a Convocation in which the Romish elements would be in a minority, is clear, since it was a return to the *status quo* as regards that great monument of the joint work of Church and State recently overthrown by violence. The alterations were slight; but that of the Eucharistic service helped to reconcile the Romanists who attended the reformed service for twelve years after the

Convocation which accepted the Act of Uniformity, until, indeed, the Bull of Excommunication issued by Pope Pius V. inaugurated the dissident Roman Church in England.

In all this retrospect we see much that is abnormal and irregular, and that we regret. But we must remember that what we are looking at is a great and intelligent people struggling and heaving with various measures of success to break through the meshes of a dark and heavy spiritual tyranny, and to arrive at the truth and simplicity of the Apostolic and primitive age. At such a period it is impossible that everything should be smooth, orderly, and constitutional. In all we may see the overruling hand of God, making the best of frail human errors and mistakes, and guiding the event to the happiest issue of which the circumstances and materials admitted. At one time the Parliament takes the lead, at another the King; or, again, the Council, or the Archbishop, or the Convocation. For the general result we can be thankful, even while we cannot approve all the steps. What Professor Burrows says of the reigns of Henry and Edward is true of the whole period: "The restoration of the Church of England to the primitive model was effected by the joint action of clergy and laity. It cannot, however, be doubted that as Henry VIII. and his Parliament, representing the laity, exercised a powerful influence upon the clergy, which drew them reluctantly into line with himself, so the Council and Parliament of his successor, along with the young King, led the way to the more complete Reformation and Establishment which exists in the present day. The doctrinal formulæ, which thus became the law of the land, were, however, all prepared for the laity by Bishops and divines, of whom Cranmer was by far the chief."

One great lesson we may with perfect impartiality draw from the whole survey, and that is that the clergy without the laity are a maimed and ineffective portion of the Church of Christ. In the times of Holy Scripture the Apostles associated with themselves the unofficial members of the Church. In primitive times the laity had the due influence through the principle of election. It was when the clergy separated themselves from the laity and became lords over God's heritage that error, superstition, and professional narrowness and blindness set in with an increasing tide. However roughly the influence of the laity was reasserted at the Reformation through King and Parliament, we may rejoice that it made itself felt. Had the Reformation been left to the clergy alone, we should probably have remained as Papal as the Church of France or the Church of Spain. The other alternative would have been the sweeping away of all the ancient landmarks by a flood of

reforming enthusiasm, as in Scotland, Switzerland, Holland, or Scandinavia. Is it not better to be as we are, reformed, no doubt, somewhat roughly, but shaped by God's good hand into a Church which maintains its continuity with the past, is Catholic in all the essential points of Catholic unity, and has the courage to find its own way back to primitive practice and truth? May we not be thankful to be the Christian adaptation of the ancient unbroken body first planted in these islands, moulded into its present condition of peace and prosperity by the agonized life-struggles of a wise and understanding people?¹

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Reviews.

Religion. PAR G. DE MOLINARI. Pp. 260. Paris: Guillaumin et Cie.

M. DE MOLINARI is known as one of that band of French Roman Catholics who are striving to reconcile the great mass of their indifferent countrymen to the Church of Rome. In so far as their efforts tend to disseminate a form of Christianity, they are a very welcome relief from the so-called "realism" which pervades French writings generally, each in their kind, but there is grave matter for doubt whether France will ever be converted by ultramontanism. The French Church is becoming more and more ultramontane. Père Didon is more so than was Gratry, the Comte de Mun than Montalembert. What will be the end of these things it is not difficult to tell. It is madness to think that logical France will ever become superstitious again.

In one respect our author recognises the impossibility of Papal claims meeting with recognition. He is afraid that his book will please neither the enemies of religion nor its habitual defenders on this very account. For he is opposed "on principle" to an established Church. His aim is to show the gradual growth of religion among men, to prove that religion is a human necessity, that it has a part to play in the future of still greater importance than in the past, but that in order to effect this it must be always freed from state control.

It is easy to see that by this argument a great deal more may be meant than is readily apparent. If by freedom from state control it is meant that a foreign power, such as the Pope, may have the liberty to make the most stringent regulations for those Frenchmen who regard him as the Vicar of Christ, without any sort of restraint or supervision from the paternal government of the country, that would only be going from one state control to another. Everything lies in understanding terms, and using them always with the same meaning. If M. de Molinari means a really "free" church, under the regulation of no one but its own members, well and good; but if he implicitly defines "free" as under papal dominion unchecked by any restraint, that is an altogether different thing. However, he does not openly declare himself on this question. His position is this: There is no "established"

¹ I have had the advantage on several points in this paper of consulting my learned friend Mr. J. T. Tomlinson.