

Now, with our experience of Convocation, what should we say are the chances of an agreement between the Upper and Lower House of each Convocation respectively, in the first place; and in the second, between the two Convocations themselves? Certainly, if it is wished to put a drag upon any measures touching the Church, the advocates of this theory have found a most effectual one. Moreover, on this hypothesis, the clergy of the province of York ought not to be bound by any Canons to which they have never formally assented in their Convocation,—a startling conclusion.

Next, as to the second proposition, which forms what I may call the minor premiss of the Ritualistic syllogism. It is difficult for ordinary minds to understand how the Public Worship Act, which only makes a change in judicial procedure, and otherwise leaves the law where it was before, can be called an Act touching matters spiritual. But the Ritualists say, "You have fundamentally altered our position. You have made us liable to be tried in a new Court, for the Court over which Lord Penzance presides is not the Court of Arches." Why? Because (and this seems to be the great stumbling-block) the Judge derives his authority not, as formerly, from the Archbishop of Canterbury, but from the two Archbishops, subject to the approval of the Crown, the supreme Head of the Church. To such an objection need we answer more than this?—"If this change so transforms the Court of Arches that it can be called the Court of Arches no longer, then is Convocation, since 25 Henry VIII., ch. 19, unworthy of the name; it is Convocation no longer." For this statute enacted that Convocation could be summoned only by virtue of the King's writ, whereas previously the clergy had maintained that it was called together solely by the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury. To this Act, however, did they yield submission and assent. But (since want of space forbids me to argue at length against these two, as I believe, fallacious propositions) even supposing that we grant both premisses, can we for a moment admit that this is a case where disobedience and resistance to the law are justifiable?

I suppose there is hardly any man who would not admit the truth of the three following propositions:—(1) That, as a general rule, true in an overwhelming majority of cases, it is the duty of the subject to obey the law; (2) that if he believes any particular law to be a bad one, he ought, by all good means, to endeavour to procure its repeal; (3) that disobedience and resistance to the law are only justified as a last resource in the most extreme cases. Now, does the Public Worship Act fall under this last head?—that is to say, can a small number of the clergy pretend, in the face of the opinion of the majority not only of the nation, but of the Church itself, including the Bishops, that this is an Act so flagrantly iniquitous that it justifies them in bidding defiance to Parliament and the Courts established by its authority? Sir, as a member of no sect, as an advocate of a thorough and universal tolerance, I ask, simply as a citizen and a member of society, are not these priests, who in other days would probably have been found zealous preachers of the doctrine of passive obedience, and who now raise a cry for liberty,—are they not in truth crying, not for liberty, but for licence? Would they not be wiser men and better Christians if they were to withdraw from a Church which is essentially, as a State Church, subject to State control, of which they have voluntarily become ministers, and which, at most, claims to bind them only so long as they affect to call themselves her trustees? They would then be free to agitate for the disestablishment which they seem to desire, in common with, though probably from very different reasons,

AN UNATTACHED.

THE PUBLIC WORSHIP ACT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—Mr. Harper agrees with many members of the E.C.U. that a Court has been "erected" under the Public Worship Act. Allow me to point out that this is not the case. That Act dealt with the constitution of existing Courts, but did not erect a new one. In Section 7 it enacts that the Archbishops may, subject to the approval of her Majesty, appoint a certain person as "a Judge of the Provincial Courts of Canterbury and York." This is not erecting a Court, but adding a Judge to existing Courts. When certain members of the E.C.U. ask triumphantly what Lord Penzance would have been if Sir R. Phillimore had not resigned the office of Dean of Arches, the answer is plain,—a Judge in the Arches Court. I presume that Sir R. Phillimore and Lord Penzance might have sat together to hear cases in the Provincial Court of Canterbury. The addition of a Judge does

not abolish the old Court and erect a new one. When additional Judges were appointed, some few years ago, to hear election petitions, the addition did not make the Court of Queen's Bench and the other Courts new Courts. From the time of his appointment under this Act, Lord Penzance was an Ecclesiastical Judge, with right of succession to the office of official principal in the Provincial Courts.

Allow me to touch on another point. Many of us were startled at the terms of the inhibition. Lord Penzance, a layman, in his own name suspends *a sacris*. I don't like this, but I find that the grievance is not to be charged to the Public Worship Act. It is of far older standing. The Dean of Arches, though a layman, always suspended *a sacris* in his own name.

I was relieved when I found that neither had a new Court been erected, nor a new form of inhibition invented. You, Sir, may smile at this, but you often respect what you evidently consider to be prejudices and weaknesses, and I think there are not a few clergy who will feel with me.—I am, Sir, &c., J. W. F.

THE GORHAM CASE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—In your article on the Hatcham case last week, you state that the Archbishop of Canterbury "went down" to institute Mr. Gorham, after the final decision had been given against the Bishop of Exeter. I think you will find that this was not the case, but that the then Dean of the Arches (Sir Herbert Jenner Fust) instituted Mr. Gorham, acting for the archbishop, as his "official principal." The scene was a curious one, the Bishop of Exeter having appended to the letters of appointment a long protest, which the Dean of the Arches indignantly tore off and threw on the floor. I would not have troubled you with this correction, but for the importance which attaches to precision in connection with these matters at the present time.—I am, Sir, &c.,

A COUNTRY JOURNALIST.

"PROVE ALL THINGS."

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—I am deeply gratified to learn from his last letter that your correspondent, "P. C. W.," has such a perception and practical hold of the duty of intellectual honesty as made it needless, so far as he is concerned, to call special attention to it. I should not have troubled you with a reply, if he had not, as it seems to me, fallen into a mistake, apparently trivial, but perhaps fraught with serious consequence. He says, "It was put in very short words long ago by a greater reasoner than either Professor Clifford or myself, as, 'Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.'"

Now, there is reason to believe that the English New Testament printed by Messrs. Eyre and Spottiswoode is not an original work, but a translation from the Greek. The words Πάντα δοκιμάζετε τὸ καλὸν κατέχετε, although clear enough, are not all of them "very short."

A wicked story is told of the late Dr. Montagu Villiers, Bishop of Durham. On being consulted by one of his clergy about a passage in the Greek Testament, it is related that he opened an authorised version, saying, "Let us turn to the Holy Original." If this opinion is really spreading, what is to become of the Revision Committee?—I am, Sir, &c., W. K. CLIFFORD.

RELIGIOUS TEACHING AND THE BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL BOARD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF THE "SPECTATOR."]

SIR,—The article in your last issue on the Birmingham Religious Education Society gives such a singularly inaccurate representation of its constitution and work, that as one of the honorary secretaries, I ask permission very briefly to reply.

The Society was formed in 1873, in consequence of the dissatisfaction felt at the incompleteness of the religious instruction which had until then been given in the Board Schools, and to the anticipation that the majority of the new Board, then about to be elected, would decide to exclude all religious teaching from the ordinary school routine. The Society is a purely voluntary association, paying rent to the Board for the use of the rooms during the time its teachers occupy them. Those children are taught whose parents choose that they should attend. The instruction given includes the truths which are held in common by the Churches generally known as Evangelical. Here is ground upon which various religious denominations can act together, and they have done so, without even the least approach to a misunderstanding. When the writer of the article refers to the turning-on of