

**OLD ANGLICANISM
AND MODERN
RITUALISM**

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Old Anglicanism and modern ritualism by F. Meyrick

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F. MEYRICK

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BY THE REV.

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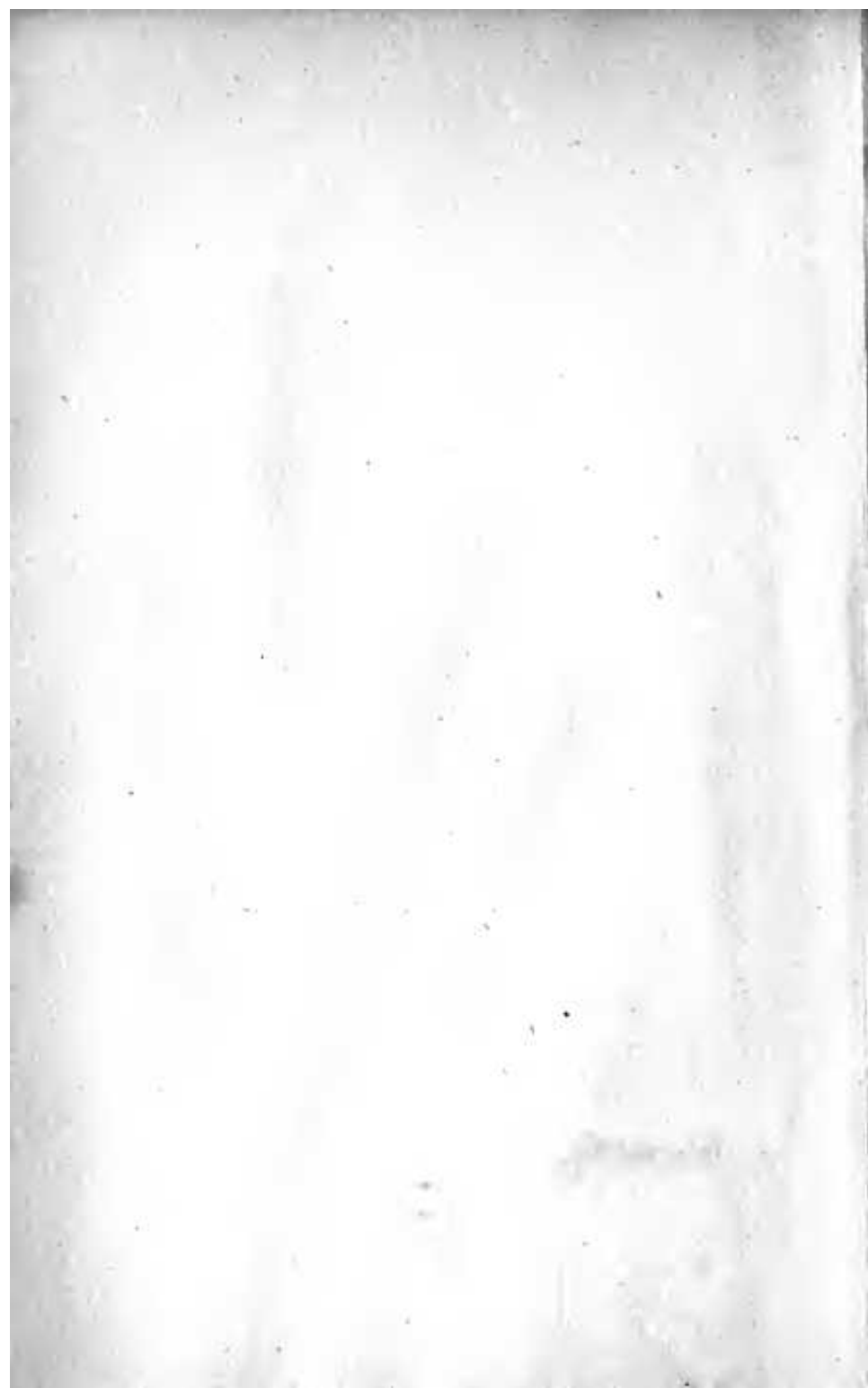
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CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. RICHARD HOOKER	I
II. BISHOP ANDREWES	25
III. ARCHBISHOP LAUD	69
IV. BISHOP COSIN	93
V. BISHOP JEREMY TAYLOR	123
VI. BISHOP BULL	175
VII. BISHOP BEVERIDGE, ARCHBISHOP BRAMHALL, ARCH- BISHOP USSHER, BISHOP HALL, BISHOP PEARSON	203
VIII. OLD ANGLICANISM IN CONFLICT WITH RITUALISM	229
INDEX	251



PREFACE

RITUALISM has very commonly been regarded by English Church people as a system of ceremonial practices supposed to enliven and brighten the Church services. Looked at in this light, it has been condoned by many to whose taste the practices did not appeal, as harmless to congregations and as giving to clergy who liked ceremony a greater interest in their routine of work. 'They will get tired of it when the novelty has worn off,' laymen have thought with a half-kindly, half-contemptuous smile, 'and meantime we will let it alone.' Of late, however, the Church has awakened to the apprehension that the Ritualist ceremonialism has a very definite doctrinal meaning, and that Ritualist ceremonies are not introduced as a matter of æstheticism but to teach a faith. What is that faith? Is it the faith of the Church of England

☛ Preface

or is it something different? Is it the faith deliberately adopted by the Church and accepted by the State as the Church's doctrine in the sixteenth century, or does it go behind the Reformation? Lord Halifax and the English Church Union do not allow us any doubt on this point. They claim as their own the doctrines and practices of the pre-Reformation Church except where they elect to dispense themselves in respect to a doctrine, such as the Papal Supremacy in its extremest form, or a practice, such as the celibacy of the clergy. They claim their right to hold all doctrines which they think proper to designate as Catholic; but the one Mediæval dogma around which their whole ceremonial system clusters is that of the Objective Presence of Christ in the Elements (as distinct from His Presence at the Ordinance) in the Lord's Supper. This they teach by word of mouth in sermons, hymns, and children's Eucharists, and this it is that gives a meaning and explanation to their multiplied ceremonies, which fall into order only when looked at from this point of view. But it was to testify against this very doctrine that Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley laid down their lives at the stake, and it

Preface 50

was pre-eminently in opposition to it that the English Reformation was founded. It is seen, moreover, that this central doctrine of Mediævalism brings with it all other Mediæval teaching and a contempt and depreciation of the Reformation.

Have such sentiments as these ever prevailed in the reformed Church of England before? Not in the sixteenth century when Cranmer, Latimer and Ridley died to resist them and the Elizabethan divines, represented by Jewell, firmly repudiated them. Not in the eighteenth century when the Church and nation had settled down to an unimpassioned Protestantism. Not in the seventeenth century, as, I believe, is proved to demonstration by the following pages.

Then there is no precedent for the disloyalty to the principles of the Reformation, the acceptance of Mediæval doctrines and the adoption of the ritual and ceremonies naturally accompanying those doctrines such as we see now prevailing and called by the ill-chosen name of Ritualism.

Englishmen, lay and clerical, are firmly resolved not to narrow the comprehension of the Church of England, but they are equally resolved that the bound-