

**AIDS FOR DETERMINING
SOME DISPUTED POINTS
IN THE CEREMONIAL OF
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

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Aids for Determining Some Disputed Points in the Ceremonial of the Church of England by
William Goode

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WILLIAM GOODE

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IN
The Ceremonial
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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	Page
Introduction	1
SECTION I.	
The Principle on which the Legality of Church Ornaments, Vestures, Ceremonies, and Gestures is to be determined	3
SECTION II.	
The Meaning of the Rubric on Ornaments at the Commencement of the Prayer Book.....	11
SECTION III.	
General Power of the Bishop in regulating the Mode of conducting the Service.....	15
SECTION IV.	
Place and Position of the Minister.	
(1.) Place where the Common Prayers and Lessons are to be read....	16
(2.) Place where the Litany is to be said or sung	17
(3.) Place where the former part of the Communion Service is to be read, when there is no Communion.....	17
(4.) The Position of the Minister at the Prayer of Consecration in the Holy Communion.....	18
SECTION V.	
On the manner in which that part of the Service that is directed to be "read," or "said," is to be uttered.....	20

SECTION VI.	
Gestures and Postures, such as Crossing, &c.....	Page 24
SECTION VII.	
Vestures.—	
(1.) Vestures for Reading Prayers, or Ministering the Sacraments....	29
(2.) The Dress for Preaching.....	39
SECTION VIII.	
Images—that is, Statues or Pictures of Saints, Crucifixes, and Crosses—in Churches.....	49
SECTION IX.	
Lights on the Communion Table	76
SECTION X.	
Furniture of the Communion Table	82
SECTION XI.	
On mixing Water with the Wine used at the Holy Communion.	87
SECTION XII.	
On the Mode of delivering the Bread and Wine to the Communicants.	89
SECTION XIII.	
On the Sermon being preceded and followed by a Prayer.....	91

AIDS FOR DETERMINING, ETC., ETC.

INTRODUCTION.

THE present circumstances of the Church of England have induced me to expand some notes, made several years ago, upon certain matters of Ceremonial order in our Church, and place the result before the Public. I have limited myself to those points which, from the efforts made in some quarters to re-introduce among us practices more suitable to the doctrines and worship of the Church of Rome than to those of our own Church, have lately become subjects of public interest. And my object has been, to state fairly and impartially the evidence we possess for the determination of the questions here discussed; as it should ever be recollected in the consideration of such matters, (in which there are tendencies to both extremes among us,) that they are questions of *fact*, to be determined without any regard to theological prepossessions.

I have not noticed the subject of "Altars," having published long ago on that point,* and the question having been since determined by an elaborate Judgment of the Court of Arches. It is now a settled point, that our Church allows only of Communion Tables, and prohibits both Altars and Credence Tables, and has carefully expunged even the word "altar" from the Book of Common Prayer.

I cannot conclude these prefatory remarks without expressing my regret (a feeling shared with me, I suppose, by many

* Altars prohibited by the Church of England. Two Parts. 8vo.

others) at the unsatisfactory state in which many of these points of ceremonial order remain in our Church.

So far, indeed, as concerns doubtful points of ceremonial order, the Preface to the Book of Common Prayer clearly gives a power to the Bishops and Archbishops to determine them upon appeal, as I shall show hereafter. But unfortunately such a determination is not a *permanent* settlement of the question even in the particular case in which it is given; and such Episcopal determinations might introduce any thing but uniformity among us. But our 80th Canon distinctly recognizes the power of the Crown to explain such points, when it directs Parishes to get the Prayer Book of James I. "lately explained in some few points by his Majesty's authority, according to the laws and *his Highness's prerogative in that behalf.*" And this was said of "explanations" that added the most important doctrinal part of the Catechism. I am no advocate for making the prerogative extend so far as that, especially in a matter settled by Act of Parliament. But for explanations of doubtful points of order, with the proper ecclesiastical advice, the Church might, I think, be thankful. And I will add my humble conviction, that it would have reason to be thankful, if a similar power of dealing with the Rubric were given to Her Majesty to that which was conferred upon Queen Elizabeth by the Act of Uniformity of 1559. No man, who knows anything of the history of our Reformed Church, could object to the exercise of such a power by the Crown, as opposed to the principles of our Church. The authority of the Sovereign in points of ceremonial order, was the constant argument of the earlier Bishops against the Puritans.

But on this subject I shall not here enlarge.

SECTION I.

THE PRINCIPLE ON WHICH THE LEGALITY OF CHURCH ORNAMENTS, VESTURES, CEREMONIES, AND GESTURES, IS TO BE DETERMINED.

By the Preface prefixed to all the Common Prayer Books issued in this country by public authority from the first of Edw. VI. inclusive, we are informed that some of the ceremonies that had been previously in use in our Church were "*abolished*;" and reasons are given "why some of the accustomed ceremonies be *put away*, and some retained and kept still." No enumeration is made of those so "*abolished*" and "*put away*;" and, consequently, the only sure guide we have as to those that are retained, consists of the *positive* directions to be found in the Rubrics and other authoritative documents of our Church, as to the rites, ceremonies, and gestures to be used in the public services of the Church. In fact, the Act of Uniformity, authorizing the first Book of Edw. VI., expressly limits the things retained to "those things which be retained in the said Book;" and extols the advantages which would "ensue upon the *one and uniform rite and order* in such common prayer, and rites, and *external ceremonies*." (§ 1.)

It is obvious, then, that under these circumstances,—that is, the *tacit "abolition"* of various ceremonies in use here before the Reformation,—*the absence of an express prohibition of any rite or ceremony is no justification for its use by a Clergyman of our Church in conducting public worship.*

Still further, *any rite or ceremony not expressly appointed by the Book of Common Prayer, is, by the Acts of Uniformity, directly forbidden in the public services of the Church.* These Acts are 2 and 3 Edw. VI. c. 1, applying originally to the first Prayer Book of Edw. VI., which was confirmed and made to apply to the *second* Prayer Book of Edw. VI. by 5 and 6 Edw. VI. c. 1. This Act having been repealed by Mary, was revived by Queen Elizabeth's Act of Uniformity, 1 Eliz. c. 2.