

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

JUST as this Edition is passing through the Press, (but too late for any lengthy notice,) *The Church Times*' review of my book has appeared. It is most of all remarkable for its angry abuse, baffled rage, and personal insult. An attempt is made to prove that I am inaccurate on a few matters of but slight importance; but even if *The Church Times* were correct in all the instances cited by it—which is by no means the case—the general character of the book for accuracy as to facts would not be affected. The Ritualists have now said their worst against *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement*, and it is a comfort to feel that I have nothing to fear from it. I am preparing a full reply to my critics, which will shortly be published.

W. W.

LONDON, September 23rd, 1898.

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

IN sending a third and cheaper edition of this book to the Press, I desire to express my thankfulness to God for the large circulation to which it has already attained. It has, of course, been severely censured by the friends of those whose misconduct and disloyalty it exposes, but, so far as I am aware, no one has even attempted to prove that it is in any way inaccurate as to its statement of facts.

W. W.

LONDON, *July 18th*, 1898.

P R E F A C E.

I HAVE written this book at the request of an eminent Dignitary of the Church of England, noted for the liberality and breadth of his views of religion. He represented to me the need of a work which might be the means, in God's hands, of opening the eyes of loyal Churchmen to what is going on underneath the surface; and, as I have had exceptional opportunities for studying this aspect of the Ritualistic question, I have, though with not a little anxiety, complied with his request. I have written in no narrow-minded or party spirit. There is not, I believe, a single expression of my own opinion in the volume which will give offence either to Evangelical Churchmen, Broad Churchmen, or old-fashioned High Churchmen of the school of the late Bishop Samuel Wilberforce and Dean Burgon. I have little doubt that men of all these parties will agree with what I have written. Ritualists and Romanizers will, of course, not agree with me at all. Those who work in the dark do not love the man who seeks to drag them forth into the light of day.

I have taken every pains to be fair towards those whose conduct and teaching I criticize. I would not willingly misrepresent them in any way whatever. It was my anxiety

to be fair and accurate, which induced me to adopt the plan of allowing these secret workers to tell their story *in their own words*. And, therefore, I have given full references and proofs for everything, taken from the writings of the Ritualists themselves. All my authorities are Ritualistic, with the exception of, perhaps, a score, whose testimonies were necessary for my purpose. The italics in the quotations are, with a very few exceptions, my own, not those of the persons quoted.

It is a significant fact that secrecy has largely characterized the Ritualistic Movement, even from the first year of its existence, when it was known by another name. Abundant proofs of this fact will be found in the following pages. Secret Ritualistic Societies have now come into existence, and they are increasing in number every year. At present the Church of England is literally honeycombed with Secret Societies, all working in the interests of the scheme for the Corporate Reunion of the Church of England with the Church of Rome. These secret plotters are the real wire-pullers of the Ritualistic Movement.

A great deal of that which was strictly secret in the early days of the Oxford Movement has now been made public by means of the Biographies and Letters of some of the principal actors. I have endeavoured to utilize the revelations made in those publications in the following pages. They are scattered here and there through many volumes, and no attempt has hitherto been made to bring them together in one book. But my principal authorities have been the secret and privately printed documents of the Ritualists themselves. From these I have been able to give reports of speeches delivered in the secret meetings of

Secret Societies, and of Semi-Secret Societies, several of them by men who have since risen to positions of eminence within the Church of England. In these secret gatherings they expressed themselves with a freedom which they have never adopted in their public utterances.

The Secret History of the *Priest in Absolution* is here given for the first time. Lord Redesdale's exposure in the House of Lords, in 1877, of that very indecent Confessional book for the use of Ritualistic Father Confessors, raised a great storm of indignation throughout the country. His lordship was not an Evangelical, but—as the present Bishop of Winchester informs us in his *Life of Archbishop Tait*—“a sober and trusted High Churchman of the earlier sort.” Of course, the exposure produced a terrible commotion in the ranks of the Secret Society of the Holy Cross, which was held responsible for the book. The Brethren of that Society held many occult meetings to consider what they should do under such adverse circumstances. I have given full reports of these secret gatherings, as printed for the use of the Brethren only. I think most sober-minded Churchmen will admit, after reading the speeches delivered by prominent Ritualistic clergymen on those occasions, that the proceedings of the Society were by no means characterized by straightforward dealing, but that, on the contrary, they were decidedly cunning and Jesuitical. In this connection I have necessarily had to comment largely on the Ritualistic Confessional; but I have carefully abstained from writing anything which would offend the modesty of any Christian man or woman.

Of necessity much has been left out of this volume which I should have been glad to insert. There are intervals in

the Secret History of the Oxford Movement which have yet to be filled up, when the documents necessary for the purpose are forthcoming.

It is hoped that this volume may be the means of proving to many Churchmen, who have hitherto taken no interest in the Ritualistic question, that the contest now going on within the Church of England, and which, unhappily, threatens to rend her asunder, is not one about trifles. There are many men and women who love to hear the best music sung in our Churches, and wish to have the services conducted with the utmost possible reverence, who do not wish to surrender the priceless privileges of the Reformation, including freedom from Papal tyranny, in order that their Church, and the Church of their forefathers, shall, instead of going forward, return to the corruptions of the Dark Ages. It is hoped that this volume may enable many to see that behind the Ritual, and the outward pomp and grandeur of Ritualistic services, are the unscriptural doctrines which that Ritual is designed to teach, and which our forefathers found unendurable. All loyal Churchmen, by whatever name they call themselves, should unite in ejecting the lawless from their ranks, after an effort has been made to secure their obedience. Things are rapidly drifting towards a state of Ecclesiastical Anarchy. Indeed, in thousands of parishes, Anarchy already prevails, where Ritualistic priests persist in making their own whims and fancies their supreme law, and in doing only that which is right in their own eyes. I think it was Sydney Smith who said, of the Tractarian clergyman of his own time, that "He is only for the Bishop, when the Bishop is for him." It is so still; but with this unfortunate difference,—as a

rule, the Bishop "is for him:" Episcopal smiles and favours are heaped on the secret plotters whose work is described in this volume; and the leaders of the State vie with the Bishops in promoting those who are systematically law-breakers.

The influence of public opinion needs to be brought to bear upon this question. Compromise is out of the question. Either our Rulers in Church and State must unite together in maintaining law and order, or the Church of England will cease to be the Established Church of the nation. I am not pleading in any way for the narrowing of the existing boundaries of the Church of England, as defined in her formularies and laws. No considerable body, at present, wishes for anything of the kind. But I do maintain that law and order ought to be *supreme* in the Church, as much as in the State, and at present this, unfortunately, is not the case. At present the extreme Ritualists are a law unto themselves. There is not in existence a tribunal to whose Judgments they will yield obedience, when they come into collision with their own superior judgments. Reasonable men would say that it is better to have even imperfect tribunals than no tribunal at all; and that it is wise to obey those which exist until efforts for their reformation are successful. But this does not appear to be the opinion of the Ritualists. Better that all English Church law and order shall go down than they should cease to do as they like. Bearing in mind their whole-hearted efforts for Corporate Reunion with Rome, as described in the two last chapters of this volume, when a state of loyalty and obedience to the Pope would again come into existence in the Church of England, does it not

look very much as though the Romanizers were bent on upsetting all law and order within the Church of England, and producing a state of Anarchy, solely in order that on the ruins may be erected the law and order of the Pope of Rome?

W. W.

LONDON, *September 4th, 1897.*