

These are some transcripts of an exchange of letters between **Bishop Edward King, Bishop of Lincoln between 1885 and 1910**, who had been prosecuted for 'ritualism' (eg use of incense, lights, facing east at the altar away from the congregation,) before the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1889 but not punished on his promise of no further disobedience to the Archbishops, and **Revd. Edward Rivaz Fagan, Rector of Wold Newton 1896-1916**, who with William Wright was an enthusiastic advocate of such practices. These letters were kept in the vestry and Rectory until being deposited with the early Parish Registers in the County Archives by the then Rector, John Hordern, in 1964 .

In fact incense had been used at Wold Newton from Candlemas 1898, (the thurible and boat came in early 1898) and the following account of the service of dedication for the organ on April 25th of that year from William Wright's diary shows that incense was used in the Bishop's presence.

Monday 25th April. The eventful day. Stray peeps of sunshine about 11, busy over last minute preparations, Bishop arrives about 1.15, have lunch at once, the Bishop and the Rector sitting on Mother's right and left, Chaplain next to me, Mrs Fagan too unwell to be present. After lunch Bishop retires to the library. Parsons and their wives go to Church and robe at 2.45. I preceding Bishop and chaplain meet clergy at Porch and go in solemn procession up to Choir, I as thurifer, Parsons as boat bearer, Custance's man cross bearer, 8 clergy in robes make a respectable procession. After beautiful sermon by Bishop, solemn Te Deum sung before altar, and recessional hymn 'Heavenly Jerusalem' about 30 folk in to tea.

Riffel Alp

Hotel

August

19 '99

My dear Dr Fagan,

You have no doubt seen the decision of the Archbishops with regard to the use of Incense and lights.

They do not express any condemnation upon these things in themselves, and therefore they do not condemn the use of them in other Branches of the Catholic Church, but not for us of the Church of England with our Prayer Book as it now stands. Their decision is that Incense and Processional Lights should not be used and they accordingly require the Clergy not to use them. I cannot doubt that it will be in the wisdom of every clergyman whom it may concern to accept their 'decision' and I am writing to you as your Bishop to request you to do so, and trusting to your loyalty, I shall be particularly obliged if you will let me know by the end of September that you have complied with my request that I may make it known at the Diocesan Conference.

May God guide and bless you in your work *in the same Prayer we desire*

Yours sincerely
E. Lincoln

Folkestone

Aug

30 99

My dear Dr. Fagan,

Your loyal and kind letter has just reached me here from abroad. I write at once to thank you. I return to Lincoln on Friday. If you write again before the end of September it will be quite in time.

May God guide and bless you in your work.

Yours sincerely
E. Lincoln

Wold Newton Rectory

27/9/99

My Lord,

In reply to your letter of August 19 requesting me to discontinue the use of incense in my church I beg to inform you that I feel it my duty to comply therewith but only inasmuch as there is no express direction to use the same in the Book of Common Prayer. I am still fully convinced that the use of incense during the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist is according to the mind of the Church of England as expressed in the writings and by the practice of many of her loyal, pious and devoted sons, and more positively expressed in the third paragraph of the Preface to our current Prayer Book and in the fourth paragraph of the 30th Canon.

You must allow me further to express my surprise and disappointment that your letter contained no message of sympathy from you for my faithful Communicants *and* my hope that you will use a like personal pressure with those Clergy in your Diocese who are remiss in observing the plain directions and clear intentions of our Prayer Book.

Earnestly praying that God may grant complete freedom to His Church in this country in matters of Ceremonial and Discipline and trusting her actual or imaginary fathers may soon be revived.

I am yours respectfully and obediently in our Blessed Lord

Edward R. Fagan.

Old Palace

September 29th 99

My dear Dr. Fagan,

I thank you for your letter and for your promise of Obedience.

I am sorry that your good people should think me wanting in sympathy. It is not really the case. I have felt a good deal for the difficult position in which they are placed. They will discover I hope upon due consideration see that Incense has not been condemned as being wrong in itself but is not provided for in the present Prayer Book as it now stands. If some persons had not aroused suspicions by their excessive teaching and ritual probably incense might have been left alone like other things which are not expressly provided for in the Prayer Book. We are suffering from the excesses of others. This is hard to bear but in the end may I hope lead to a closer following of the Truth and so to a closer and stronger Unity.

May God guide and bless you and your people.

Believe me yours sincerely

E. Lincoln.

Old Palace

Oct 30th 99

My dear Dr. Fagan,

Thank you for your letter. I have been thinking over what you say. I can understand the desire to retain some use of incense that the idea may be kept before the people, and I do not know I have the authority to forbid the use of it as you suggest, and as it has been, I believe, allowed in some places, but for myself I should not do I because I think it is unreal to say it is so used for 'fumigation' and it seems to take away from the teachings of the Obedience which should be gladly and willingly given, I feel sure that we shall better serve the Church by a frank straightforward obedience such as English people understand and value, than by insisting on that might possible be within our rights. You know how sincerely sorry I am that my few good People should be distressed.

With thanks

against.....

E. Lincoln

Undated extract of (presumed) draft of letter from Fagan to Bishop King

You will be aware that in several Churches in several Dioceses (London, Rochester, Chichester, Oxford etc etc) Incense is now offered silently and during a hymn immediately before the Choral Celebration of the Holy Communion, such use being tacitly or positively sanctioned by the several Dioceses.

As the single Communicant, or indeed Parishioner, was in any way offended when we used Incense and as several of our Comm.cts greatly desire its restoration, even if only in the above way, I propose to offer it on next Easter day unless it is your express and deliberate wish that we should not do so. I should mention that all our Dissenters (except one family who live at some distance and whose children have never attended Sunday School) sent their children regularly to the Choral Eucharist with incense all the 15 months we used it.

Earnestly trusting we may have at least your tacit approval of thus keeping this Catholic adjunct before English Church people.

I am etc.

Old Palace.

Apr 2 1900

My dear Dr. Fagan,

As you are good enough to ask me I must say that I hope you will not introduce the use of incense to your purpose. It may be legal so to use it but it is surely far better to be clear of any suspicion of not feeling quite open and above board. It would give a handle to people to say we're saying one thing and trying to do another. When people's suspicions are once aroused, one cannot be too careful to avoid all excuse for offence. I therefore hope that you will not press the point. With all good wishes for yourself and your people,

Yours sincerely

E. Lincoln.

