

Did You Know? An Anglican Glossary

The Credence Table

The little credence (*credentia*) table that replaced the stone shelf or alcove of very early churches holds the wine, water and bread (container of wafers) until the priest is ready for them. It is difficult to believe that this helpful piece of furniture could have been so strongly objected to from the early days of the Church of England through the 19th century.



1641: A committee of the House of Lords declares that the credence table is an “innovation.” **1742** Rev. C. A. Wheatley (author of *A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer*): “In the ancient Church they had generally a side table near the altar. . Now . . we have no side table authorized by our Church.” **1845** Dr. Daniel Wilson, bishop of Calcutta: “I prohibit altogether stone altars, credence tables and other popish usages.” **1852** Dr. Edward Maltby, bishop of Durham, on hearing that the church in Henworth had a *credentia* and a *sedilla*: “I hereby order and direct the same to be removed.” **1855** Rev. W. H. Pinnock (author of *Laws and Usages of the Church and the Clergy*: “There can be no doubt that the introducing of a credence table is *illegal*; and would in many cases, if persevered in, be attended with mischievous consequences.”

The credence table has survived with no “mischievous consequences.”