

the laity have a representation in the council or convention, a voice in the management of the diocesan affairs, and their vote should be refused only on doctrinal definitions, but is theirs of right in all questions of local discipline and polity. They usually confirm the nomination of a Bishop made by the vote of the clergy. The reverse should be the case, and was so in the earlier elections. The laity nominated, the clergy accepted and presented to the Metropolitan, though there were frequent exceptions to this rule.

The Laity having the purse have this duty and sacrifice as part of their priesthood: "To do good and to distribute forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." [Heb. xiii. 16]. But as the covenant is between God and them by His Ambassador, and He has ordered His ambassadors to live of the Gospel, it is a part of the layman's bounden duty to contribute liberally to the livelihood of the ministry. "Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. . . .

For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. . . . As we have, therefore, opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of Faith." [Gal. vi. 6, 8, 10.] And this support must not be limited to the parish dues, but to the larger needs of the diocese also. The true principle is in the old rule of a common diocesan fund, out of which the needs of Bishop, clergy, and poor were supplied; the present parochial system is later by a thousand years and more. The layman, as a member of the congregation and a communicant, has a right, under the canon of each diocese, to a voice and a vote at all congregational meetings in the elections of vestry and wardens, who are his chosen representatives for all legal ecclesiastical purposes, and in some dioceses votes for the lay delegates to the council or convention of the diocese. He has also a sharing in the priesthood belonging to the whole Church, certain offices to which he may be eligible. His inherent priesthood is discharged by his presence at all services, and by his sharing in all acts of worship. But as Lay-reader, and, therefore, as representative for the congregation in all prayer and supplication, he exercises this; so also as chorister in the worship of song. He should share in the general work of the parish, such as aiding or visiting the sick, in distributing, under the direction of the rector, proper tracts, doing his share of the work in the Sunday-school, helping to form guilds or brotherhoods, and zealously aiding in sustaining them and in giving them efficiency.

These are duties and privileges which belong to his order in the Church. Functions not less important, not inferior in their place to the functions of the Ministry appointed to serve him in all the gifts, graces, and blessings which the Lord has left in His Church for His people. Beyond these limits the layman trenches on the sin of Korah: below these limits he fails of his duty to God and his Saviour, and to the Church he should so dearly love for the sake of his Lord.

Whenever the layman takes an active interest in the parish work the parish will grow, and as his life is moulded by his active Church work, so will his own influence extend, and so will the Church's influence be deepened and broadened. It needs but little consideration to perceive clearly that there is really less, proportionately to their position, in the eloquence and popularity of the Rector than there is in the true, earnest zeal, and in the devout moral courage of the layman, that develops the healthy growth and influence of the parish. Too frequently a parish languishes because of the selfish carelessness of the congregation, who think that they have done all when they have only attended the or-

dinary services with convenient regularity. The devout layman owes it to his own spiritual welfare and to his loving Lord, and to The Church to spend a part at least of that energy which he gives to his daily toil in her service; for he thereby exercises his ministry also.—*Church Cyclopedia*.

PRAYER AND PRESCIENCE.

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The difficulty which some have felt about reconciling the efficacy of prayer with the prescience and prearrangements of God is one which, in our present state, does not admit of full elucidation. But, I think, there are two aspects in which the subject may be viewed, so as to moderate the difficulty, if not to solve it.

And first—nature presents us with a case where the metaphysical difficulty is *similar*, but where no practical difficulty arises in consequence.

It is a settled thing in the purposes of the Omnipotent, whether we shall have an abundant harvest or not, and the event cannot possibly be otherwise than as God has foreknown it; but who declines to sow, or weed, or till on the ground that there will be a harvest if God has so ordained it; and that our labour is useless if He have not? Objection to the use of means, grounded on the abstract truth of God's foreknowledge, would only argue the objector to be a fool.

The analogy, holds good as to prayer. A man who objects to pray, on the ground, that matters are already settled in God's purpose, acts as foolishly as the husbandman who takes abstract truth, instead of plain duty, to be his guide. We are told to labour, and we are told to pray. The duty in each case arises from the command; but the difference is that we see, or *think* we see [for, after all, this latter is nearer to the truth], the link between the labour and the harvest, whereas we do not see the link between prayer and the result.

Now, without dwelling upon the fact that the true link, in either case, is the will of God [for neither answer nor harvest would follow, except he granted it], it may be observed in the second place, that our seeing or not seeing the link of connection, is not the important thing; the fact upon which we are to rest is, that *there is a link somewhere*, whether we see it or not.

God is pleased to tell us that there is a link between labour and harvest; He is also pleased to tell us that there is a link between prayer and blessing. The fact that he has said it is our security; and our seeing or not seeing the link cannot affect that security.

To take an illustration which, I think, has been used by Chalmers:—between God, as the Great Ordainer, and any blessing which He is pleased to bestow, there is a chain of secondary causes some of which we see, and others which we cannot see—a chain of links, let us suppose, of which some are above the clouds, and some beneath them; every one of these is needful in its place; and the omission of any one, or the introduction of any other, may change the whole result. Let this chain, for example, begin with mercy in heaven, and end with a harvest upon earth. Let love, and law, and prayer, be links beyond our sight; let rain and sunshine, and labour, be links within our view. It is plain that if any of the latter are taken out of the chain, there will be no harvest; and, in like manner, if any of the former are taken out of the chain, the result may be affected in the same way. *How* the omission may alter it, or *why*, God does not tell us; but He says it *does* alter, and our ignorance is not knowing the *why* or the *how*, is a poor argument against our

use of any link prescribed by him who knows all causes, and can command them.

In a word, prayer is as much commanded as a necessary link to blessing, as labour is, as a necessary link to fruitfulness. Our not being able to see *how* it is a link, in either of the cases may prove our ignorance, but cannot disprove God's plain declaration. It may prevent us from seeing what we would wish to know, but cannot release us from performing what we ought to do.

We labour, and we see that the harvest follows; but a hidden link may be put in—an insect, or an overcharge of electric fluid—and there is no harvest in consequence of that new link. In like manner we pray; and that puts in a hidden link where we cannot see it; and we get a blessing which, but for that link, would not have come to us.

I think these analogies are sufficient to satisfy any reasonable mind as to the difficulty of reconciling prayer and prescience; but for the full solution of the question, we must wait till the time comes, of which the Lord Jesus says—"What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

A CAPABLE MINISTRY.

A correspondent of the *New Zealand Church News* propounds a question of general interest, viz.,—"How may the Diocese best produce a body of clergy capable of fulfilling the demands which are, or ought to be, made upon them?" and answers it thus:—

Synopsis.—I. By selection of candidates fit for the ministry. (a) physically, (b) morally, (c) socially, (d) intellectually, (e) spiritually.

II. By proper training of such candidates *preparatory* to ordination.

III. By continuation of such training *after* ordination.

I.—By selection of candidates fit for the ministry. A high standard of requirements will inevitably rise the status of the clergy. What are some of these requirements?

(a) A candidate should be physically strong, without defect; active, and energetic.

(b) His moral character must be unimpeachable.

(c) It will give him weight with all classes if he be a gentleman in the truest sense of the term.

(d) He must possess intellectual powers up to the standard required for the B. A. degree.

(e) He must have a personal love for God, and for the souls of men.

II.—By proper training of such candidates *preparatory* to ordination.

[a] He must pass through the theological course prescribed by the Board of Theological Studies.

[b] He must take the B. A. degree.

[c] It is advisable that, before ordination, he should have some experience in parish work under the guidance of a clergyman.

[d] His mind must be brought into contact with the questions of the day, and he must be well versed in the literature of the past. He must be a student of *men* as well as of *books*.

[e] He must be a man of habitual prayer and meditation,—"studious in reading and learning the Scriptures," and the Book of Common Prayer; well instructed in, and loyal to, the principles, doctrines, and practices of the Church of England.

III.—By continuation of such training *after* ordination.

The deacon must serve his first two or three years under the eye and direction of a clergyman who himself has the above qualifications [I., a, b, c, d, e; II., a, b, c, d, e]; who himself has been properly trained; and who has the gift of training deacons in their work, and of preparing them for the priesthood.