

opinion and ruling in regard to them. Where the rubrics are clear and explicit the Bishop takes it for granted that loyal clergy and people need only to have the rule pointed out to them. Where the meaning of the rubrics is obscure, the Bishop is willing to give such information as he possesses as to their intent and if needful authoritative directions. But after all there is considerable liberty allowed by the Church to her devout children. Rigid uniformity in all the details of worship is neither to be expected nor desired. On the contrary it would be well if in little things and, perhaps, in some large things, a difference of practice could exist without troubling the peace of any good conscience. About some matters all persons and parties seem to be agreed. For instance, there is no rule in the Prayer-book as to what a worshipper shall do when first entering the House of God. A common instinct of reverence, however, bends the knees of all believers, and bids adoring hearts ask the blessing and grace of God. In some churches the people rise as the clergyman enters to begin divine service. This is not intended as a special honor to the man, but as a recognition of his character as an ambassador of the Most High. When the clergyman has his private devotions in the vestry room the rising of the congregation makes the beginning of the service prompt and orderly. Another custom, that of kneeling when the Clergyman kneels at his preparatory devotions, indicates the spiritual sympathy of the people with their pastor and is both natural and reverent. Some congregations stand at the presentation of the alms, signifying their participation in the solemn offering of these to Almighty God. Other congregations stand until the alms-basin is presented to them, and then each person as he makes his offering, kneels in recognition of the fact that at best he is an unprofitable servant of the Great Master. Considering the contemptible gifts that are sometimes slipped into the alms-basin, possibly kneeling is the attitude that might frequently be most honestly assumed. But either standing or kneeling is to be preferred to the easy indifference that can hardly be separated from the posture of sitting. The congregation should certainly stand during the administration of Holy Confirmation until the Lord's Prayer. The practice introduced in some places of the congregation joining in the General Thanksgiving, as in the General Confession, is without warrant, as the "Amen" printed in italics at the end of it shows that it is a response to be made by the people and not by the Minister. The custom of beginning the sermon by the Invocation of the Holy Trinity is commendable, taking as it does the place of the special prayer still heard in the English pulpits, and reminding both preacher and people that a sermon is not a mere literary or intellectual "effort" or "production," but an official promulgation of the Gospel, in which the herald is to be careful to deliver the word of God and not his own notions. Little peculiarities of persons or parishes ought not to annoy any one. True reverence, real faith, deep love, show themselves in manifold forms, and ordinarily are easily interpreted.—*The Diocese of Pon du Lac.*

A clergyman in Diocese of Huron writes (also renewing subscription): "To myself THE GUARDIAN is always a welcome visitor. I like its tone, and the selections are admirable. Your column on Temperance I find useful and helpful. When you agent visits us he shall have any help I can give him."

THE BISHOP OF LONDON ON CHURCH CHOIRS, AND WORK FOR THE CHURCH.

We commend the following remarks of Dr. Temple, taken from his address at the last annual meeting of the *Lay Helpers' Association* for the Diocese of London, to the thoughtful and prayerful consideration of all, whether Clergy or Laity, who are engaged in the work of the Church in any of its departments. The Bishop is reported to have said:

I want rather to say a word or two of a somewhat more serious complexion, which I have no doubt you have heard before, but which I cannot avoid, as Bishop, perpetually reiterating in the ears of all those who are engaged in such work as ours. And, in the first place, I want you to consider that, whatever work you may do for the Church, the great work which a Christian has to do, the primary work which every layman and every clergyman has to do in the Church, is *to live a Christian life.*

'I will refer to such work as is now so exceedingly valuable, much more valuable than it was fifty years ago—the work that is done by those who sing in the church choirs. What admirable service it is! what a great help to true devotion! how very much it does for the services of the Church! how many there are who find that good music soothes them and lifts them up, and removes out of their minds worldly thoughts, and makes them enter into devotion more earnestly! how many profit by what is done by church choirs in almost every church in the Diocese! But at the same time, let me remind you that a man is generally chosen into the church choir, *not* because he is a very good man, but because he has a good voice, and there is very real danger that to such a man the possession of a good voice may seem more than the possession of a Christian life. There is very real danger, and the man himself is not always aware *how very much the service is spoilt if his own character in no way corresponds to what he is doing.*

'I have heard choirs where the music was very good—very good in the sense of being accurate—sweet voices, well in tune, close in time, but, nevertheless, somehow or other, there was the lack of devotional spirit, and I could not help feeling that the choir, although they were giving us all this music, *were not themselves serving God at the time; and I am certain, whenever that is the case, the choir in the end does more harm than good.* I am quite sure that in such work as that where a man has to take a real part in the service of the Lord, unless he himself is reverent and devout in spirit, unless he himself has some sense of the presence of God, *he is not fit for the work at all.* How important it is to be always bearing this in mind! how important it is to the work which he is professing to offer to God! I beg of you to consider such things as these.

'If a man's own life does not correspond with his teaching, what is all his teaching worth? what is that sort of preaching? Who can really value it? Nay, more than that, you may depend upon it that sort of preaching, whether by clergy or laity, makes no true impression on the spirits of those who hear him; and there will be many who will gather around him, and who will listen to him, and who will enjoy listening to him, and will find it very interesting; and all the time, if you could look into their hearts, you would see that they were exactly realizing what was said by God Himself to those who came to the prophet Ezekiel.

They looked upon him as one who had a pleasant voice, and played upon instruments. It was very pleasant to see this remarkable prophet in his wonderful imagery. And they went away, and very likely they said, "What a wonderful prophecy was that! How he did give his whole mind to what he said! What a wonderful piece of imagery it was—what a description—what a power! Was there ever such a man before?" And then, after the excitement of the day is over, there is no spiritual result whatever.

'And that is the case if a man, when he is preaching, has nothing within him from which the preaching comes. If the inner life of the man does not correspond to the words he has uttered, what is the good of it? He fancies God's people flock to him; he fancies he is doing great service. It is the merest dream. He is no more doing service to them than if he went to witness a play of Shakespeare's; he is doing no more service to them than if they went to hear a band play in the Park. It is pleasing to them to listen. Do they live any better lives afterwards in consequence? Are they drawing nearer to God by it? Are there many who give up bad habits in consequence of what he says? We find little evidence from such preachers and teachers as these that their work has been really blessed, and the secret is always the same. If there be permanent success, it is always due to the fact that there is a spiritual life within. If there be no spiritual life *within workers, their success is only for a time*, and it passes away and belongs only to the present world, and has no connection with the future to which we look.

I wish to lay great stress upon this; it is always a danger that besets all those who undertake work of this sort. They are inclined to judge by the visible results, and are necessarily led to think that success is contained in popularity. It is the greatest possible snare. I would far rather be one who could go among his neighbours and persuade this man to give up his drinking habits, and that man who is a good man, but careless, to go to Holy Communion, and that man to look a little more carefully after his children, and the other man not to lose his temper with his wife, and another man to try whether he cannot restrain his tongue—far more service is done by such quiet work as this when it comes from a man who feels that the Lord has called him—called him, as it were, to be His own. Far more work is done in that way than by what is more rosy and more effective in appearance.

'And you may be sure that the thing which is needed to make the Lay Helper's Association a great power in this Diocese is that it should be penetrated through and through with this spirit, and that all of us should make it the first thing with us, if we are to serve our brethren if we are to serve the Church, to begin by looking to our own personal lives, and by seeing that we are living close to God. This is the serious aspect of all our work. This is far more important than any other advice that can be given. I know that it is not my own. I know that every one of you must have thought it over for yourselves. Now, it is of the most vital importance that we should, on all occasions when we meet together, strengthen one another in the certainty that the spiritual life is the true source of all spiritual power, and that when the Lord means any man to do work for Him, the man must look to see whether the Lord is working in him first; for if the Lord is not working in him, then the Lord is not marking him as the man that is to be used in His service.

Everything we do of ourselves is only the wood, and the hay, and the stubble, which the judgment of the Lord shall burn away with His fire from heaven, but not the gold, and the silver, and the precious stones which the Lord always desires to build on the foundations that He hath laid.