

# The Church Guardian

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## TO SUBSCRIBERS IN NEW BRUNSWICK, AND NOVA SCOTIA

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## "PRIEST IN THE CHURCH OF GOD."

There exists in many of the Clergy of the Church, reflected in the Laity amongst whom they minister, a wondrous fear of, and shrinking from, the use of the term applied by Her to the second Order of the Ministry—"Priest." Some studiously avoid it: and others have affirmed that there is no recognition of anything like the Priestly character in the Prayer Book. Whilst we quite sympathize with the feeling which induces these, in most cases, "good men and true," to desire to avoid everything which appears to savour of the errors of the Roman system, we cannot see reason for abandoning the word used throughout our Prayer Book, and in the Church Catholic, as the distinctive title of the second Order of the Ministry. And we wonder still more at finding objection to its use on the part of those who, in receiving the Office of the Priesthood, followed a Form for the "Ordering of Priests," and whose Commission runs: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a PRIEST in the Church of God now committed unto thee by the Imposition of our hands: whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven: and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful Dispenser of the Word of God and of His Holy Sacraments." This very Commission marks the recipient off as differing from the man-made ministers of man-made churches: it is the conveyance to him of the Commission once given, but given for all time, by Him who is the Head over all, even Jesus Christ Himself. Its use marks him as claiming to possess and exercise authority in the Church of God lawful and different to that possessed and exercised by those—however good and true and faithful in their own way—who have not received Episcopal Ordination: and if this be not recognized and be not true, then the Bishops and Priests present at an ordination, and using and consenting to the use of such terms as those quoted above, and concluding with the Invocation of the Holy

Trinity, are deceivers of themselves and others: and those consenting to such imposition, and kneeling as in God's presence to receive His Commission, are willing participants in a mockery and a sham. We cannot think that the interests of the Church are served by any false delicacy on this question. Either the Orders of the Church are all that is claimed for them by her services and system, or her position is utterly untenable, and her priests are shams; and it is a gross injustice to the ministers of the multitudinous denominations surrounding her to exclude them from participating in her services.

## OUR SYNODS.

Judging from the reports of the proceedings in several of the Synods of this Ecclesiastical Province, the Provincial Synod would seem to be regarded in some degree as an *Appellate Tribunal*, for the settlement of local or diocesan differences. This, it seems to us, is a mistaken theory. In so far as both Diocesan Synods and this General Assembly of the Church are creatures of the civil authority, their powers are regulated by the Synod Act, 19 and 20 Vict., cap. 141, and each has an independent and fixed jurisdiction: that of the former being limited and local, and of the latter general, and in the interest of the Church in the Ecclesiastical Province as a whole. Up to the present time we are not aware of any action on the part of the Provincial Synod which would constitute it a General Court of Appeal, although it is quite possible that by the assent of the several Dioceses such action might be taken as would—even without further legislative interference—clothe it with such power. But having *original*, and to some extent at least *exclusive*, jurisdiction over the subjects assigned to it by the Act already referred to—viz., those relating "to the general management and good government of the Church"—it would seem that action in regard to any matter which affects the Church at large, though also possessing diocesan aspects or qualities, would inherently appertain to and be vested in the General Assembly. Such a matter we believe the possession and exercise of the Degree-conferring power to be; and this view apparently has already been accepted by the Provincial Synod, since it appointed a Committee in 1880 to examine and report as to several matters cognate thereto. Doubtless, therefore, the whole question of Diocesan Theological Colleges and their power to confer degrees will be taken up at the approaching Synod: when we hope and pray such a decision will be arrived at and such regulations be made as may best subserve the interests of the Church at large in maintaining a high standard of education for her Clergy, and in upholding the value of Divinity Degrees, by preventing any unnecessary increase of the bodies having and exercising the power of granting them. We would also hope that some practical advance will be made either towards the amalgamation of all the Universities into one, or for providing some means whereby one and the same standard of examination before a Joint Board for the whole Province may be had, and the degree thereafter conferred bear the *imprimatur* of the whole Church.

## SPIRITUAL LIFE AND DEVOTEDNESS.

Although the circumstances and conditions under which Clerical work is carried on in this Ecclesiastical Province no doubt differ widely from those surrounding the Clergy in England, an article under the foregoing title which appeared in *Church Bells* of July 16th, over the initials G. V., is so full of practical wisdom that we think it will be read with pleasure and profit, and we give it in full:—

Amidst all that has been attempted by way of Church Defence, and amidst very much more that must be attempted if the Church is to preserve her present position, there is one principle which is of more value than all other things put together. It is the possession, by the clergy more especially, and to a large degree by the laity also, of a depth of spiritual life and devotedness which, in its thoroughness and reality, cannot be assumed, but which can become the possession of any one by the power of the Holy Spirit alone. The clergy have certainly the right to *claim* this heavenly, this Divine, and unspeakably blessed gift, because, having 'been moved by the Holy Ghost to take to themselves the office of the ministry,' and having been duly set apart and ordered to their calling, it may not be doubted that He Who hath called them to this will not refuse them the necessary qualifications for the thorough discharge of their work. The clergy have no right to be in doubt upon this subject; their faith unquestionably enables them to realize the presence and the power of God in their life and ministry. It ought not to be otherwise. But do not the solemn, stirring, and saddening times call for a great evidence on the part of the clergy, and of the faithful laity also, of much more spiritual life and devotedness than is now generally made manifest?

Although it is the duty of the clergy, in common with their lay brethren, to take some share in matters political, it must be owned that the truest Church Defence by the clergy consists more in their *thoroughness of spiritual life and devotedness to their high and holy calling in Christ than in anything besides*. As the Rev. S. Stone (whose hymns have done so much for the Church) well rings it out:—

While their loyal hearts go singing,  
Prayer and praise for battle song,

the clergy will do far more for the Church's safety by much increased spiritual work to their flocks than by any other efforts. They can make the people to perceive and know that within each parish there be frequent, if not daily ministrations of means of grace. Their constant, though often wisely brief, instructions at short services, will produce a right effect on the minds of many of their parishioners, and the oftener these opportunities of a short service and instruction occur the more likely is it that all the folk will appreciate them.

Let, however, a very extreme case be supposed. Let it be imagined that a clergyman shall repair to his parish church in town or country—say thrice a week besides Sunday, or perhaps even daily; toll the bell and say the Office appointed. Let it be supposed that he goes there *alone*, that not one person appears in the church for months together, and that he is ridiculed and laughed at for his persevering efforts. Is it too much to say that three results are certain to follow? One, that he will himself greatly profit spiritually by reading of the word of God and by prayer in this manner? Another, that his people will profit by his supplications for them? And a third, is there any doubt that in the course of a few months he will seldom find himself alone in the use of the daily office, of course presuming that the hour selected is reasonably convenient?