

# The Church Guardian

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## DECISIONS REGARDING NEWSPAPERS.

1. Any person who takes a paper regularly on the Post office, whether directed to his own name or another's, or whether he has subscribed or not, is responsible for payment.
2. If a person orders his paper discontinued he must pay all arrears, or the publisher may continue to send it until payment is made, and then collect the whole amount, whether the paper is taken from the office or not.
3. In suits for subscriptions, the suit may be instituted in the place where the paper is published although the subscriber may reside hundreds of miles away.
4. The courts have decided that refusing to take newspapers or periodicals from the Post office, or removing and leaving them uncalled for, is *prima facie* evidence of intentional fraud.

## CALENDAR FOR JULY.

- JULY 5th—6th Sunday after Trinity.  
 " 12th—7th Sunday after Trinity.  
 " 19th—8th Sunday after Trinity.  
     [Notice of St. James]  
 " 25th—St. JAMES. Ap.  
 " 26th—9th Sunday after Trinity.

## THE SACREDNESS OF LAW.

(Extracts from Bishop Huntington's Convention Address, 1891)

Occurrences elsewhere in the Church, not of great importance in themselves but made notorious by sympathizers with disorder, have lately admonished us of the value and sacredness of Church law. In a social and political condition where the popular movement is away from strong government, and from institutions and ordinances that restrain individual liberty, it is not strange if there are impatient outcries at the wisest and most reasonable discipline. Bager, thoughtless, adventurous minds will not only break the bonds of order to carry out their own schemes but a wild element in the community will abet and applaud the law-breaker. In the State or the Church a firm constitution is then reckoned a tyrant; statutes are enemies to progress and chains upon free thought; courts and penalties are despised relics of a superstitious and despotic past and hatred hindrances to a glorious future.

In the vigorous warnings of the New Testament Prophet *anomia*, lawlessness, is the ultimate curse of social man,—anti-Christ.

Ascending from the lowest living type, rank by rank, along with increasing complexity, capacity and beauty, or a constant approach to completeness in form and function, naturalists notice no abatement whatever in respect for order or the prevalence of law. With his penetrating sagacity Aristotle named man *zoon politikon*, a creature born to live in a constructed social system. Absolutist and doctrinaire alike want that degree of equilibrium in the social statics which provides security. Revelation, here as everywhere, meets a universal want. By its two Testaments all civil constitutions are imperfect but legitimate transcripts of the will of the One Lawgiver. Government

is not a device or a compact but a divine charter. We can never understand 'human rights,' however fiercely we may demand them, till we learn that they are correlates of duties and a means of getting duty done. When the Hebrew Leader and Prophet came from the mount with the two Tables in his hands he gave laws from God not only to a caravan and a local commonwealth but to the civilized world. Taking the facts of history and the judgments of great judges as they stand, in the comparison with him Lycurgus and Solon, Justinian and Charlemagne, the Amphictyons and the Cæsars, the Magna Charta Barons of England and the men of the First American Congress, are secondary persons. And because the Fountain of authority is in the Most High, law never lets go its hold. Go as high as you will, even into the Heaven of heavens, liberty never loosens this bond. The rainbow bands round about the Throne. The Celestial life may have the play of music but in the melody there is rhythm. Cherubim and seraphim, angels and archangels and all the company of Heaven move freely, but they move in the measures of an everlasting harmony.

So repugnant is anything like strict discipline to the popular taste that the most vociferous and bitter outcries are heard at arraignment, court and sentence. By a transparent but well nigh universal fallacy the whole purport of the proceedings is lost sight of in a blind, mawkish sympathy with insubordination which becomes a contempt of justice and indifference to truth. It is one phase of the Jacobin destructionism which takes sides instinctively with the accused, fills the criminal's cells with luxuries, would make felony, adultery and murder heroic, and resorts to every dubious expedient to shorten retribution. Examples are at hand in absurd misrepresentations current among liberals when the 'trial of a Clergyman for heresy takes place. The phrase itself is misleading, as are some of the technical terms borrowed from legal and judicial sources and applied canonically and officially for convenience to action for a breach of ordination vows. The case is actually simple enough. At his ordination in this Church a Clergyman provides himself on his own motion with an advantage, a position, a title, a prerogative, a livelihood, a dignity, which in kind or degree he could obtain in no other way. In exchange for it he gives his explicit pledge of a specified conformity, under the most solemn of sanctions. The covenant is mutual and voluntary. The contract is clear and indubitable. Afterwards it is broken by non-fulfilment in one of the two parties. The covenant is *de facto* dissolved. What is it that the other party does? It takes back what it had conditionally bestowed, takes it back wholly or partially, finally or temporarily, in the exercise of a considerate, patient, carefully guarded judgment, protected on either side by the solemn forms of law. It discharges itself of a one-sided or defunct responsibility. It places the man it had invested with a momentous stewardship back where he was before, now that he consents to be no longer a faithful steward. And this is his 'punishment.' Otherwise his character, opportunities, reputation, are untouched. His 'offence' is 'guilt' in the sense and only in the sense that his promise has been violated and that his trust is abused if he stays. His liberty of thought is not subject to penalty. His opinions are not punished or punishable. His convictions are not forfeited like stolen goods. He is free to the world, and the world is wide. He is a coward if he complains. The Church has done with him precisely what is done every day without surprise or censure in every department of the world's business; and this is what that world in its fatuity, its jealousy, its bitterness of spirit, its passionate demand for all rights but the rights of the Kingdom of God, reviles or caricatures, as its mood may be.

The question set open is not a question pertaining to any doctrine of the Christian Faith

or any form of Ecclesiastical Polity. It concerns a much larger circle of interests, the moral integrity of all business transactions, the honor of all commercial relations, the binding sanctity of promises, the very foundations of financial security and social welfare. Judging by the flippancy of a considerable portion of the newspaper press this obvious discrimination between the theological and the moral elements of the subject seems to be utterly confused in a vague passion for universal self-direction, a spite at fixed religious convictions, and an indifference to truth which has it for a favorite maxim that it is no matter to character what a man believes. I have before me an editorial article in what may be called one of the leading daily papers of the country which is an elaborate attempt to justify a professed minister of an honest Gospel in discrediting before his congregation the beliefs and requirements of the Christian body which he has sworn to conform to, whose laws he has sworn to obey, from which he has received his credentials to stand where he stands at all, and to which he owes his only warrant to exercise the office he continues to hold; and this is pompously set forth as a proof that his mind is 'occupied and his course directed by larger considerations than the police ordinances' of the Church,—a Church but for whose accepted authority he would be a layman in a hall dependant on nothing but his personal name and speech for a hearing. Probably this shallow immorality was put into print with no perception that its practical operation would be to upset the supports on which that particular newspaper, and every other, rests for its existence. Suppose the editor opening an issue of his journal some morning should see in it a column inserted by his assistant assailing his party, discarding his policy, sneering at his 'prejudices' and generally exhibiting a 'mind occupied with larger considerations than the ordinances' of the editor's and proprietor's office. How long would this liberal-minded assistant keep his place? The newspaper-press is serviceable within its limitations and to be respected wherein it is respectable. Of late it has in some quarters developed a disposition to instruct the community on subjects as to which it is not informed, and to dictate or forbid measures beyond the range of its education. Abuses of that sort work their own cure. Among other decaying superstitions is that of a former time that the opinions of a periodical, secular or religious, are other than those of a citizen of average intelligence who has chosen this line of enterprise for a livelihood, having views on many topics of equal weight with those of gentlemen occupied in other industries. It is for this reason that sensible Churchmen are apt to regard the dogmatism of the press very much as these men of the world regard the dogmatism of the pulpit; are as little inclined to accept editorial direction in the training, qualifications and management of clergy, the legislation of conventions, the decisions of councils, or the methods of theological science, as they are to intrude themselves into the mysteries of news gathering or the making up of columns and subscription lists; are in fact quite unlikely to displace the wisdom of ages, the learning of great scholars, the experience of experts and loyalty to the King of a Kingdom which is not to be moved, for crude conceits or the speculations of the hour. It is not with gusts of popular favor or personal reputation or any 'Church of the future' that we are concerned but with the revealed Will and anciently ordered House of Him who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever. What sober minded servant of that Master, I wonder, can look out over the vast half tilled heritage, this half-done husbandry, and not be persuaded that we have enough indisputable truth, enough settled and established church instrumentalities, enough liberty, enough flexibility, enough ornament, enough variety, to equip us for our appointed service in proclaiming Christ and the