

man, but wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry" of the Church? Fasting and prayer, at these seasons, belong to the laity as well as the clergy. If uniting these duties the prayers of all the faithful are offered, who can measure the benefits which must result, not only in faithful, but also effective service?—*Michigan Church Life.*

MINISTERIAL COMPETITION.

The personal competition of ministers which the present popular notions of Christian unity are bringing to the front is likely to be even worse as a system than the former competition of denominational organizations. If there is no reason or principle why a man should be a Baptist, Presbyterian or Methodist, or any one rather than another, then the field is swept clear for personal individual rivalries, and Church membership is nothing but personal following. No doubt this is what the world wants, and calls charity and progress. There is no element of loyalty to God in it. "Preaching in the Gospel" becomes a trade and any clever man or youthful prodigy may set up a conventicle anywhere, and if he can make himself a little more sensational or notorious than his rivals, will not lack for "audiences." Thus many experiments are tried, the need of a neighborhood for a new church, being chiefly the need of a new trade, that has no trade union restrictions, for a place to exercise itself in. Then comes the spectacle of a temporary furor for the new preacher, tabernacle-building, unlimited expenditure and debt, and final collapse, when the rocket that went up in a blaze comes down as a stick.

What a contrast to this is the Church system which regulates by law every admission to the ministry, and no less by law every organization of a new parish or mission; and gives permanent training to its people, in loyalty not to a priest or "the minister" but to Christ.—*The Church Eclectic, Utica, N.Y.*

THEATRICAL AMUSEMENTS.

The Bishop of Dunham has given some wise counsel to a perplexed soul in his diocese on the question of theatrical amusements. Dr. Westcott says that the theatre has caused him great perplexity from his early days. He can see no reason why dramatic representations should not be so conducted as not only to afford innocent recreation but to do positive good. He feels that the conditions under which they are given, for the most part, in England, are certainly unfavorable to a healthy effect, but, he adds, "this need not be so; and I think that in England the theatre could be made as helpful as the concert-room. I have not been to the theatre since my early boyhood, and I do not think that a play could give me either profit or pleasure. The best acting, as far as I can judge, falls far below my ideal, and for me the excitement would not be good. But I dare not judge others by myself. The only rule I can offer, and seek to follow, is to consider whether I find that a particular amusement helps me to do my work better. Then I can regard it as a gift of God to be used with a view to His service."

"THE COLOR OF A STOLE."

There is one phrase that has done so much service of late in casting a reflection upon those who would show a reverent care for holy things, that we think it might be treated as "worn out" now, and entitled to a rest. The expression is, "the color of a stole," the implication being that he who cares for the color of his stole can have no mind for anything higher or more important. The color of vestments was surely of some importance when the book Leviticus was written, and the order of the Jewish ritual set forth. It was surely of importance when St. John wrote the Apocalypse, and gave to the church his vision of the Heavenly order. Some years ago the Bishop of Litchfield wrote these words: "The care of sacred things is not an idolatry of inanimate matter, but a recognition of the unseen God to Whose service they had been dedicated. It has been deemed worthy of record in the Gospel that had when Christ ended his reading. He closed the book and handed it to the minister, to be, no doubt, deposited in the proper place, to be preserved from injury and desecration. No event ever happened on earth more awful than the Resurrection, yet it was a work not unworthy of the care of the Angels, even at the solemn season, to lay the linen clothes by themselves and wrap the napkin that was about the head in a place by itself. Even the linen cloth which had touched the most holy sin-offering was holy in the sight of those heavenly ministers."—*Michigan Church Life.*

THE BISHOP OF DERRY ON THE EXTERNALS OF RELIGION.

Sometimes they were told that the externals of religion were not of importance, and that when we have the true spirit of worship, that it does not matter what the Church is like. He seemed to think that this view was particularly due to a body over whose bier he did not think a tear had ever been shed by a bishop, cleric, or layman. He referred to the late Irish Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and one had only to see many of the old churches constructed in the ugly, bare, and cold form of architecture, with an utter absence of ornament of any kind, to understand their ideas of beauty. Now there were weakness in human nature, and whilst some things were of lesser importance than others, because of their lesser importance some people seemed to think they were of no importance at all: yet it would be found that they were of importance.

NO WISE MAN WOULD SAY

a fair church was without its importance, or that music was not a substance of spiritual and godly religion, or deny that it affects and stirs up the heart. These and other matters are the externals of religion. The Bible is a great library of books, it is composed of the Old and New Testaments, and the Old Testament must be admitted to be of some authority; and if they took a pencil and paper and went over it and made a note of how much of that book was taken up with a description or reference to the services in the temple, the descriptions of it and of the tabernacle, he thought they would come to the same conclusion that he did—that it was equal to eighty-two chapters—all describing the

EXTERNALS OF RELIGION;

or equal to something like half the New Testament, or equal to the four gospels. It was rather a severe draft on a man's common sense to tell him that these eighty-two chapters did not mean anything. But if it be said that they referred to a time that is past, and not to the present—that all those ceremonials had been abolished: well, let them then

TURN TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

whose authority could not be denied: turn to the Revelations where they had the glimpses given St. John the Evangelist of the New Jerusalem. There they had description of the grandeur and splendor, the ceremonies and processions of the spiritual worship, the music of countless harps, all for the glory of the Son of God; and when they read of this great vision, and tried to contemplate the great sea of admiration washing against the throne, were they to say they had no authority for the externals of religion?—*From a Sermon preached at the re-opening of Killymard Church on December 23rd, 1891.*

DEATH OF THE DUKE OF CLARENCE AND AVONDALE.

Early in the morning of the 14th of January 1892 the cable bore to all parts of the great British Empire, the inoutrful news of the death of the eldest born of him who stands next in order as its ruler; and the beloved grand son of a beloved Queen and Empress. From the time that it became known that angel of death, hovered, over the palace at Sandringham and that he—whom the nation had been expecting shortly to greet with loud and hearty rejoicing was battling for his life, with the foe, alike of prince and peasant, and who spares neither. Earnest prayers were offered to Him with whom are the issues of life and death, that the dreaded calamity might be arrested and the sick restored to health. But in his wisdom He has determined otherwise, and none may question his decree—And now in all parts of the Empire—in the homes of rich and poor—from the lips and hearts of men of every colour, there may be heard the voice of mourning, and mingled with it of loving sympathy and earnest prayer for the bereaved family. A world's sympathy will be extended to our Queen, heavily stricken in her advanced years. OUR QUEEN, and yet somehow enthroned in the hearts and affections of almost all the world, but possibly the tenderest deepest feeling must be towards the Prince of Wales and his beloved Consort, who has so endeared herself to the people of England, who mourn the loss of their first born, (and in the arms of the Prince—"beloved son." As no position of eminence and human greatness can secure indemnity from the ills and sorrows of this common and earthly life, so thank God no such position excluded from the free and full enjoyment of that peace which the world can neither give nor take away. And so we join our humble voice to that of millions of others, in deep and loyal sympathy and in earnest prayer that the God of all Comfort may be with our rulers in this hour of deep affliction. Nor would we forget her, who by reason of her own virtues, as well as because of sadly disappointed hopes, merits only next to their Royal Highnesses, the sympathy of all. Her Serene Highness the Princess Victoria Mary—the affiancée of the deceased Prince.