

THE RELATIONS OF THE CLERGY TO THEIR VESTRIES AND CONGREGATIONS.

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Questions and contentions which have arisen during the past few years, and which are constantly arising in quarters where the Church and Church usages are but imperfectly understood, suggests as a subject for consideration *the relations of the clergy to their vestries and congregations.*

It is the teaching of inspiration that the servant of the Lord should not strive; and in the ideal Church occasions of contention would never arise. The priest ministering in holy things would both by word and deed so reproduce the example of the Great High Priest of our profession that all within the reach of his influence would take knowledge of him that he had been with Jesus and learned of Him. Provided, ere the grace of Holy Orders was conferred, to be apt and meet for learning and godly conversation, he would ever exercise his "ministry duly, to the honor of God and the edifying of His Church." "Lawfully called" to the "function and ministry" of "the holy Office of Priesthood," the solemn exhortations, warnings, and promises of the Ordinal would be ever held in remembrance. The "glory of God's Name," "the work of the Ministry," the "perfecting of the saints," the "edifying of the Body of Christ" could be accomplished through the truth of Christ's doctrine as exemplified by the priest's "word and good example" and through his "innocency of life," until priest and people, each and all, should "come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

We are reminded, by the words of the Great Shepherd, and Bishop of souls in the gospel of the Ordinal that "the Office of a Priest in the Church of God" is that of a *shepherd* and not an *hireling*. No one receives the laying-on-of hands in conferring the priesthood without being solemnly reminded not only into "how high a dignity," but also "to how weighty an office and charge," he is called. It is to be a "messenger," "watchman," "steward of the Lord"—"to teach and admonish, to feed and provide for the Lord's family; to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for His children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ forever." Is it strange then that the priest is required to have ever "printed" in "remembrance how great a treasure is committed" to his charge in the congregation to which he is appointed to administer? "For they are the sheep of Christ," he is reminded, "which He bought with His death, and for which He shed His blood." The Church and congregation "where the priest shall serve, "is His Spouse, and His Body." "And if it shall happen that the same Church, or any member thereof, do take any hurt or hindrance by reason of" the priest's "negligence," we are reminded of "the greatness of the fault and also the horrible punishment that will ensue." Again the monition is to labor, study and prayer are the part of the priest that he himself may neither "offend nor be occasion that others offend." The priest is required to give himself "wholly to this Office," to sanctify "his own life and the lives of his family," and to "fashion them after the rule and doctrine of Christ," that "they may be wholesome and goodly examples

and patterns for the people to follow." The "truly called" priest promises "in the Name of God and His Church" to teach the doctrine of Holy Scripture alone, and "to minister the Doctrines and Sacraments, and the Discipline of Christ as the Lord hath commanded and as this Church,"—not the Church of Rome, not the Church of England even, but the Church in these United States—"hath received the same," and his, too, not in the exercise of his individual judgment adding to or taking from the authorized and appointed formularies and standards of the Church, but, in short, simply "*as this Church has received the same.*" He is bound to be diligent in driving away "all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word." He is to be "diligent in prayers and sacred studies." He is rightly "to frame and fashion" his life and the lives of his family "according to the Doctrine of Christ." He is "to maintain and set forward quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people," and he promises reverently to obey the Bishop and canonically constituted ecclesiastical authorities, "following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting to their godly judgments."

It is with those pre-requisite conditions and promises that one is permitted to "receive the Holy Ghost for the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God" by the laying on of a Bishop's hands. It is thus, and thus alone, that we are admitted to this "Office and Ministry, appointed for the salvation of mankind." In marked contrast with other religious pastors and teachers, "the Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God" is *not derived from the people*.—in fact, is not of man or by man, but is *of God and from God*. It must be borne in mind that in the ordination office the Bishop does not by the laying on of hands merely make a minister of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. The language of the Ordinal is plain. It is "a Priest in the Church of God" that is made. The "Office and Work of a Priest in the Church of God," or, as the shorter form of conferring this ministry expresses it, "The Office of a Priest in the Church of God," is conferred by the laying on of apostolic hands. The Priestly Office is, then, independent of man's control save in so far as limitations and conditions are expressed in the precedent promises and requirements of the Ordinal. In what are known as the "Spiritualities" inherent to, and consequent upon, his office the priest is responsible, not to man, but to the "Bishop and other Chief Ministers of the Church," and to the constitutions and canons ecclesiastical, general or diocesan, which have been made and set forth by the Church. Such is the Church's theory of the Priesthood. Such is the underlying principle of our canon law and ecclesiastical decisions. The rules and regulations, the principles and practices, the judgments and opinions of the religious bodies around us whose claim and foundation principle is that the ministry is man-made, and consequently dependent upon the people,—the creature being of right subject to his creators,—cannot apply to the clergy of the Church. It is clear that we believe in a *God-made ministry*, for "it is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons," and this three-fold ministry comes to us from the Apostles commissioned by the Son of God with the words "As my Father hath sent Me, so send I you."

The relations of priest and people are, therefore, defined and determined *not* by the precedents of the religious bodies around us, *not* by the Bishop's individual opinions or preferences, *not* by the personal fancies or prejudices of the parishioners or of the vestry, but by law. The judicious Hooker has told us of immutable law that "its seat is in the bosom of God." Ecclesiastical or canon law dates its origin and its principles back to the Church's earliest days. Older even than the common law is this law of

the Church of God. As in the mother-land Holy Church, the Church of Magna Charta, the Church of England is older than Parliament or the State itself, so questions of ecclesiastical nature, rise in this age of ours, are determined by canons adopted in the first centuries of the faith and in accordance with principles derived from the Word of God. This antiquity of ecclesiastical rule and precedent gives a dignity and importance to Church questions and the controversies of to-day. In their adjustment questions may be involved and principles considered as old as Christianity itself.

TO BE CONTINUED.

ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR ON GAMBLING.

On the afternoon of Sunday 8th May in *St. James' Hall* London England, at a conference of the ANTI-GAMBLING LEAGUE, before a very large audience Archdeacon Sinclair delivered a most striking address, which was emphasised by his excellent mode of enunciation and appropriate gestures. Though young, he looked every inch an Archdeacon, and his oration was interrupted by frequent bursts of applause. Plunging at once into his subject, the Archdeacon said they were met together to protest against an evil which was always present in a complex civilisation, and which at present seems to be specially ruinous to the less educated part of the community. The connection between thieving and gambling, which the Archdeacon proved on the highest authority, showed how strong the tendency was between one and the other. He said that there was an appalling increase in betting and similar forms of speculation amongst the working classes. The gambler's losses, Dr. Sinclair said, were always the losses of his home, but his gains were never a gain to his wife and family, because he was essentially selfish. They were there to protest against gambling, not to interfere with any manly sport or recreation. It was the spirit itself that they deplored, not the mere incidents on which it fed its unwholesome appetite. There were men connected with the turf whose names were synonymous with the highest principle. Why was gambling wrong? was a question which was often asked them. First, because it was selfish. The law of Christian love was that they should seek the good of other rather than their own. Secondly, because it created a taste for the vulgar and debasing. Betting, said Charles Kingsley, tempted him to company and to passions unworthy of a scholar and a Christian. Thirdly, because it maddened and unsettled the mind, making a man unfit for regular work. Perpetual excitement had the same effect upon the mind as the excess of strong drink and gluttony had upon the body. Fourthly, because it was ruinous. The gambler never knew where to stop. Nothing could be more calamitous to young men than when they commenced to gamble to win for the first few times. Fifthly, and this, Dr. Sinclair thought was one of the most solemn reasons, because it was an immoral use of money. Sixthly, because it was the enemy of true manhood. To get money without work, or right to it, sapped up the moral fibre of a man. It aroused vain and flighty hopes; it unfitted a man for the discharge of humble and regular daily duty. Lastly, because it was utterly unreasonable and unutterably silly. Every gambler expected to win, but it was not possible that everyone could win. It was inevitable that the majority of gamblers must lose. Could there be anything more insane than when the multi-