

of mankind. But his vehemence sprang from no personal acrimony—a sentiment of which, indeed, he was wholly incapable.”

#### PATRONAGE AND PREFERMENT.

##### SECOND PAPER.

In our previous paper we considered what might be the best practical method of dispensing patronage, and making appointments to parishes in our Anglican dioceses. We repeat here that we do not think the mere popular voice is the best method of election; and we may remind our readers that this, too, is the judgment of the two great Protestant bodies which are working side by side with ourselves. In the Methodist Communion the minister is not appointed by the congregation, although doubtless the congregations are, to some extent, consulted. In the Presbyterian body, the minister is called by the people, but the call must be sanctioned and confirmed (perhaps they call it “moderated”) by the Presbytery.

Only in Congregational bodies, like the Independents and Baptists, is the choice made absolutely by the congregation, and this for the very simple reason that there is no other person or body to make it. But we can hardly be mistaken in saying that grave inconveniences have arisen from this peculiarity in the Congregational system. The feeling that there is no court of appeal by which any dispute arising among the members of a congregation, or between the congregation and the minister, has often been experienced very bitterly.

It would not be well, perhaps, to reduce this question to very strict definitions; and therefore we will not pretend to say in what precise manner the wish of the congregation should be considered and the will of the Bishop expressed. We are, however, quite satisfied that both these elements must be recognized in any satisfactory method of patronage. It might be that the congregation should name two or three, and the Bishop make his selection from those so nominated. But we imagine that an elastic rule is better than one which is hard and fast, and therefore, for the present at least, we do not go beyond the general principle. The present rule, according to which the Bishop is merely bound to *consult* certain persons, does not seem entirely satisfactory, more especially as it makes no provision for those persons consulting the feelings of the congregation generally. The rule, however, is, we understand, different in different dioceses.

With regard to actual appointments, there are certain difficulties of a practical nature which sometimes arise in parishes, which possess popular curates at the time of the death of the Incumbents. In some cases the appointment of the curate to the office of rector is desired by the people and refused by the Bishop to the great displeasure of the parish. In other cases the appointment of the curate is made by the Bishop to the great displeasure of older men in the diocese who think that they have a right of succession.

We can hardly imagine a more responsible part of a Bishop's duty than the making of such appointments. When we remember that our Bishops are chosen by ourselves because of their supposed (and generally real) fitness, or comparative fitness for the post; when, moreover, we remember that every reason exists for their making the best possible appointment, we are bound to believe that, whether in refusing or consenting, the overseer of the diocese is doing his best.

There are cases in which a Bishop is bound to refuse the nomination of the curate. He may have means of knowing the needs of the parish and the fitness of the candidate better than the parishioners themselves; and he may know of some one better qualified to fill the post. And it is equally certain that there are cases in which it is just as right and proper to appoint the curate in charge, even when some of the senior clergy think themselves aggrieved at being passed over.

Certainly we have here one of the great difficulties of patronage. Undoubtedly there are cases in every diocese, or in most dioceses, of real grievances. There are men of experience and ability who are qualified for positions of greater importance and dignity than those which they now occupy. But we must not, therefore, lay down the principle that every senior man is to be promoted. Regard should be had, in every case, to the work which a man has done. We do not say always to the success which has attended his work. There are exceptional cases in which good work is done without great visible success. But we must certainly agree that the fact of a man's having done very little in a small parish is no reason for appointing him to do the same kind of work in a larger.

#### FICTITIOUS SINS.

There is a story told of Mr. Spurgeon, which we have never heard contradicted, and which carries a moral of some importance. The famous preacher was remonstrated with on his habit of smoking. He made reply that he found no divine commandment against it, and, as he found sufficient difficulty in keeping the existing commandments, he had no mind to add to their number.

The very able and most eloquent Bishop of Peterborough has been dealing with a similar subject in his own peculiar manner. Very few men seem to have the same power of “getting a rise” out of the foolish people which the Bishop of Peterborough has; and they fare badly at his hands when they meet him in combat. Quite recently the Bishop made some remarks on the Sermon on the Mount, and on the subject of betting; and, whilst strongly condemning gambling in all forms, he took the liberty of asserting that, in certain cases, betting is not sinful. Seriously, in spite of all the abuse heaped upon the Bishop, for he says he awoke one day to find himself infamous, we do not suppose that there are many rational men in the world who would pronounce every slight bet to be an iniquity, although they might condemn the habit, point out the danger of its growing upon one, and denounce the selfishness and greed which lead men to seek for gain at the expense of others.

But what we specially desire to draw attention to is the Bishop's vigorous speech on the subject of unreal and fictitious sins. “For rashness and mischief,” he remarks, “there are few things to compare with the manufacture of artificial sin. To say of anything which we cannot prove to be clearly sinful that it is sin, is to risk serious injury to the conscience and the morals of those who hear us—this danger and this injury, that when they come to discover that what we have denounced as sin is really no sin, men lose confidence in our teaching and warnings as to what may really be sins. We have been, in such a case, hanging out false lights and may, alas! have by so doing caused more than one grievous shipwreck of faith and morals. How much of real Sunday desecration, for instance, has arisen from the reaction against false and extreme Sabbatarian

teaching—how much of hardness of heart and contempt of God's Word and Commandments from the reaction against false and extreme interpretations of the letter of Scripture! . . . Rashness for rashness, such false teaching, such confusion between right and wrong, is infinitely rasher and more dangerous than teaching which aims at ‘distinguishing things that differ,’ and endeavors honestly to give a reason for that distinction; which, at least, tries to address itself to the intellect as well as to the conscience of men, instead of doing rash and wild violence to both of these.”

The Bishop of Peterborough has spoken many eloquent words, and put forth some very weighty utterances at different times. But we doubt whether his Lordship has said anything more important or more necessary for these times than the words quoted above from his recent article in the *Fortnightly Review*. If it is one of the greatest evils and sins to call evil good, it is an evil only second to that, if it be second, to call good evil. To confuse the conscience is to undermine the whole moral character and life; and many of the sins of the age are chargeable upon those who have bound upon men's shoulders heavy burdens which they were unable to bear.

Take the case of a child which has been taught that the taking of recreation on the Lord's Day is a positive sin. There are children who have accepted such teaching and have grown up narrow and morose in their religious temper, and have thought this moroseness to be a necessary note of religion instead of being, as it is, opposed to the whole spirit of the Gospel. And the people who have imposed these superstitions have boasted themselves as scriptural and spiritual! But the case of the child which has got to believe this ultra-Sabbatarianism, but could not conform to it, was if possible worse; for this child went to bed on Sunday evening with the guilt upon its conscience, a guilt which was, to the poor child, quite real, although it came from the commission of an artificial sin, and a guilt which did as effectually separate the child's heart from God as if it had deliberately lied or stolen. Of such teaching and of such teachers what can be said, but: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do?”

Take one other case, the case of dancing. Every thoughtful person knows that there are dangers connected with all amusements, especially those which bring crowds of people together, and more particularly those which involve keeping late hours and being in ill-ventilated rooms. It is well that these dangers should be pointed out. A reformer of our social system who should induce dancers to part at an earlier hour and to dress in a manner more conducive to health, would be a benefactor to the coming race. But nothing can be more monstrous than to denounce dancing as sinful, or even as unsuitable for a Christian man or woman. Dancing, *per se*, is no more sinful than riding on horseback. The Son of God, when he was depicting the joy in the Father's house at the return of the Prodigal, said that the elder brother, as he drew near to the house heard the sounds of “music and dancing.” But the teaching of Christ means no more for these fanatical teachers than they please that it shall mean. When there are found men of some sort of learning who will maintain that the wine used at Cana was unfermented and non-alcoholic, we need not be surprised that men of the same school will declare that to be sinful which the Lord Jesus spoke of as the symbol of heavenly joy.

There is no greater foe, at once to spiritual religion and to real goodness, than this narrow,

J  
inhu  
merc  
to, n  
can  
liber  
one  
othe  
fana  
It is  
your

Th  
the v  
a dra  
Whe  
kind  
genit  
that  
trium  
them  
as fir  
tic in  
“ ]

writ  
dedic  
durin

“ F  
B  
And  
W  
All

“ F  
poem  
ing h  
old a  
dying

“ I  
I  
O  
H  
F  
R

The  
knows  
glorio  
glorio  
templ

“ Su  
Ar  
And  
W

But  
Tc  
Whe  
Tt

Twil  
Ar  
And  
W

For  
Th  
I ho  
W

This  
imagin  
ded wi  
haps v  
transc  
title p  
calling  
the ho  
circle;  
moral  
and hu  
a wag  
with  
trainir  
cation.

\* Wor  
by Pri  
1890.