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Gospel : "These forgive sins or retain them, whilst they show or declare that they are forgiven or retained by God, for the priest of old put the name of the Lord upon the children of Israel, *but* it was He Himself that blessed them" (Numb. vi. 27).

Thus a sound distinction would be established between "forgiveness" and "absolution," "forgiveness" being in the hands of God alone, who alone can pardon *and* absolve, as in the "Absolution" in Morning Prayer: "He pardoneth and absolveth"; while the Church, though she cannot *pardon* sin, *can* set forth God's sweet promises in Christ as to that pardon, and thus by leading the sinner to faith in God's mercy through Christ looses the chains and shackles of unbelief and timidity or despair, and declares to the sinner that God *does* pardon him if he repents and believes this Gospel, and that so believing he *is* absolved. This sense of "absolve" in the Visitation Service is a good one, and is supported by Bingham, who says the words may reasonably be interpreted, according to the account given out of Jerome and others, as a "declaration of the sinner's pardon."

T. S. TREANOR.

(To be continued.)



## ART. VI.—SELF-DENIAL IN MINISTERIAL LIFE.

### AN ADDRESS TO CANDIDATES FOR ORDERS.

"Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister."—St. Matt. xx. 26.

**I**F ever there was a time when the officers of the Church of Christ seemed in a position to be like the princes of the Gentiles, exercising dominion over their parishes, or like the great ones of the earth, claiming authority over them, that time is certainly not now. Most of you, my brothers, when you go to your districts, will find practically only a small section who are ready to enter into direct relations with you as their spiritual friend. In a large number of parishes where the people are educated and wealthy, they are mostly too worldly to pay you any particular attention. In the parishes where the great majority of our fellow-citizens live—the working classes—the population is so large, it shifts so frequently, and owing to the neglect of older generations it is so materialized and indifferent, that the notion of an inherent spiritual authority, if asserted, would have to most of them no meaning at all. The claim of spiritual autocracy would in any case be bad for yourself, and contrary to the directions of Christ; men have to be persuaded, not commanded; but in the present day there is little opportunity for the temptation to occur. The majority of the parishioners among whom you are to work will not be in any real sense members of the congregation,

and those who do attend the church will know as well as you that Christ's words sweep away all possibility of spiritual domination. The authority of the minister must be shared by the congregation. The mere assertion of a right to teach, a right to govern, a right to decide, a right to pre-eminence, a right to be followed, a right to receive adherence and attention, will be entirely barren. The true attitude for you as you approach the people among whom you are to work is indicated to you by St. Paul: "By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

The fact that you are not called upon to be a lord over God's heritage, still less over those who are indifferent to His Gospel, does not relieve you from a very close relation of responsibility both towards the members of the congregation and the general inhabitants of the parish. You have to be the servant of both sorts, though in different ways. To the first the relation is pastoral, to the second it has more of a missionary character. About the first you will ask yourself: "How can I best build them up in Christ?" About the second your question will be: "How can I best win them for Christ?" It does not absolutely follow that all the regular members of the congregation are already repentant; but you will be neglecting the example of the Apostles in their Epistles if you spend all your time every Sunday in calling them to repent. The fact of their coming to the House of God out of so large a number who do not come shows at any rate an inclination towards God's service which ought to be the sign of better things. You will gradually find out, from personal observation, who are the true servants of God among the congregation, and who are merely professional. But on the whole it is well that in a settled congregation the general aim should be teaching and instruction, always ending with an appeal to the heart, and a reminder of the necessity of a conviction of sin constantly renewed. It is for the most part the people outside the congregation who have to be won to the initial stages of repentance.

This attitude of ministerial service towards those within and without implies, first of all, duties towards yourself, in order that you may be able to commend the truth which you have to deliver.

1. *Remember that your work is spiritual.* All kinds of organizing machinery will come in your way, which would be enough to absorb the whole of your time, all kinds of entertainments, all kinds of clubs, all kinds of meetings and associations. You may be exceedingly busy from morning till night, and not altogether without usefulness, and you may be doing other people's work and not your own. You cannot imagine St. Paul singing a humorous song or a love ballad to attract the

people of Corinth, or St. John organizing the training of a Patmos boat against the crew of the neighbouring island of Samos, in order to provide healthy recreation for the young men. These secular organizations are the work of laymen, or, in some cases, of women. Your parish must be something of a failure if you have produced or attracted no persons capable of undertaking and conducting these useful and humble social operations. We are always talking of work for laymen; and such occupation may be found in committees and organizations. Your work is study, preaching, private prayer, personal exhortation.

2. *Do not indulge yourself in any eccentricity.* There is a clerical self-consciousness which delights in being peculiar. Eccentricity will only be impressive to the weakest minds amongst the people, and will simply be repulsive to the strong, the manly, and the sensible. Some men are led to it by what seems a good motive. "If I only adopt an eccentric costume, then I shall have broken altogether with the world, and shall show that my affections are set on things above." There is often more pride in walking about the streets in unusual garments, which must attract attention, than in submitting to the ordinary rules of custom. Or eccentricity is cultivated to satisfy some private theory. Then it is a sinister indication as to your humility of judgment, and as to your sense of proportion. No man with true Christian modesty would set up his own opinion against that of the Church at large; no man with ordinary common-sense would attribute the slightest importance to such matters. Clerical costume has only grown up in different ages by being a conservative survival of the general dress of some previous generation. In the early days of the Church there was no such costume at all. Cyprian, though a bishop, wore the ordinary dress of the cultivated gentleman of his day, only in sober colours, and discouraged any official garb as ostentatious. You are permitted, perhaps required, by custom to wear a kind of uniform; you are forbidden by common-sense to adopt anything eccentric or noticeable. You will have an opportunity of showing the bent of your mind in this matter, and whether you are a victim to the temptation to eccentricity at the ordination. As we are all amongst friends, and there is nobody present but clergy and candidates, you know we must plainly admit that the affectation of the very much curtailed surplice and the bloated or exaggerated hood is, as a simple matter of fact, neither more nor less than foolishness. The fact is that men of science tell us that this is an age peculiarly liable to nervous diseases and neurotic affections; and you may feel tolerably sure that if ever you should feel the temptation very strong upon you

to do something strange, queer, out of the way, remarkable, or notorious, and you should be unable to master it, and feel as if you must give way to it, what you would need would be to go to an able and kindly physician, who would prescribe to you a diet, a course of medicine, and a system of habits, which would restore you to a more manly and healthy frame of mind.

3. *Give yourself during some part of every day to study.* Do not be deluded by the tempter into thinking that because you have read a few books, or parts of books, for your two ordinations, therefore you know enough for the rest of your life. You must never let a day pass without reading some passage of the Word of God with a commentary. You must not be content with reading the Fifth Book of Hooker, but the whole treatise. You should not take little scraps of Clement, Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, Gregory, at second-hand, but see what it is those men in old days really said and thought, and how many weeds are mixed up with the good herbs even in the best of them. You should know what Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer had to say for the Reformation and the Prayer-Book. You should be familiar with Jackson, Field, Pearson, and Paley, and know Butler's Sermons as well as his "Analogy." You would find great interest and value in looking into Bingham's "Christian Antiquities," and the "Dictionary of Christian Antiquities and Christian Biography." There are all the great ecclesiastical historians and the whole range of evidential literature. You cannot possibly be an instructor of your people unless you replenish your own mind. Besides that, the habit of quietness and of systematic thought which the daily hour of study will give you will be absolutely invaluable in the crowded, hurried, and bustling life on which you are entering.

4. Ask God specially to help you to check yourself in any kind of personal vanity. The temptation to this will be strong. A very large number of the people with whom you will have to deal are simple and foolish; not because they are Christians, but because it is the same in all walks of life, and wherever human nature is to be found. There are some unmarried women particularly who must have somebody to put on a pinnacle. They will be sure to make too much of you, to persuade you that your sermons ought to be published, and that you have many rare and extraordinary gifts. Do not spoil your ministry by connivance at any folly and delusions of this kind. Rebuke it and check it whenever it occurs. Remember that exemplary Archbishop of Canterbury who, after his enthronement, when some excited man in the crowd

asked him to pray for him, turned to him and said, "Brother, pray for me; I need it most." Never talk about yourself or your own performances. Never ask people's opinions about your sermons. Try to make as little use as you possibly can for the present of the capital letter I. Think only of God's glory and the good of souls. Among your greatest recommendations will be your own personal modesty, humility, self-forgetfulness, self-abnegation.

5. Closely allied to this is *the duty of putting aside all ambition, whether for place or esteem*. Do not look out for the most advantageous curacies, or those that are most likely to lead to preferment. Look for those only where you are most needed, and your work is most required. Do not be unhappy if you do not get a parish of your own. According to our present system there is a larger number of assistant curates in full orders than there is of parishes for them to fill. Remember always that it is pre-eminently our duty as ministers to seek the lowest room, to put others forward instead of ourselves. Remember how our Lord reproached those who received honour one of another, and sought not the honour that cometh of God only. Remember how He said: "Be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your Master which is in heaven: call no man your master on the earth, for one is your Master which is in heaven." Self-seeking, pushing, boasting, human distinctions, secret canvassing for promotion, all these are flagrant contradictions of the character of the servant of Christ, especially of the Christian minister.

6. Once more, let me urge you, from my experience of London, to the humble, but necessary, duty of *taking care of your health*. There are a few who have constitutions of iron, and who need neither rest nor relaxation; but they are not many. Most of you also will be living in crowded neighbourhoods, breathing exhausted air, spending most of your time indoors, and in the fatiguing employment of visiting a succession of small rooms and people who claim your sympathy. Unless you make it a solemn religious duty to take a regular weekly rest, and to get a thorough break and change, you cannot give your work its full value. Do not make the mistake of taking the round back, the high shoulders, and the hollow chest as signs of superior sanctity. Whatever it be, a walk in the country, or a run on a cycle, or an athletic practice, some regular exercise, fresh air, and change you must obtain if you are to be fit and ready to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

7. The last personal recommendation I wish to give you is *to be more earnest in prayer*. It is only when it is born and fostered in the spirit of prayer that what you do can be

successful. I do not mean merely the running through certain forms at fixed hours; rather the feeling that in God alone we can do anything at all, and that unless we ask Him consciously, intelligently, spontaneously, earnestly, for His help in our undertakings, there will be no growth or vitality about them at all—"Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." We are taught to think of Him not as a deity to be propitiated by fixed tributes of formal devotion, but as a Father with whom we can converse, and before whom we must bring all our plans and hopes if they are to come to anything. Like the Apostolic Christians, we must exercise ourselves in the constant habit of extemporaneous prayer both in public and in private. Anybody can say a collect, and it may mean absolutely nothing at all; but the outpouring of the heart in sincere, unaffected, earnest, extemporaneous prayer means a great deal: it means that Christianity is to you not a form, but a reality; it means that you have broken with worldly reserve and academic shyness; it means that you are face to face with God, wrestling as Jacob wrestled with the angel, as all men of faith will have to wrestle till the end of time.

II. I must say a few words on your duty to the Church.

1. The first is a word of *loyalty*. Remember that there is no ambiguity whatever about your sailing orders. You receive them on Sunday at your ordination as distinctly as they can be put in words. They are the instructions of the Book of Common Prayer under the supreme authority of Holy Scripture. You have nothing whatever to do with Rome or Geneva; in Sarum, as in the Prayer-Book of 1549, you can have only an antiquarian interest. Your Church has a distinct history of its own, a distinct organization and life of its own, a distinct code of its own, a distinct appeal of its own. Your duty as a faithful Christian is clear: to order your religious life and your devotional habits and your work and practice on the lines of the Prayer-Book, and of that alone. If you are not content with that, you had far better not take orders, for you cannot take orders with a clear conscience. And just as one of the reasons why you are given Hooker to read is his admirable principle that individual common-sense is to be used in the understanding and interpretation of the Bible, so individual common-sense must be used in the understanding and interpretation of the Prayer-Book. Where choice or doubt occurs, you must be guided by long-prevailing custom. The Church of England leaves a great deal to common-sense, and only inserts directions when they are absolutely necessary. A curious instance of a different principle of action is given by the people who insist upon kneeling during the reading of the

Epistle. They adopt this habit because Lord Cairns, in an ecclesiastical decision, declared that where no alteration of attitude was prescribed, the previous attitude must be maintained. Some people did not like the judgment, so by way of protest they adopted kneeling during the Epistle because there was no direction to be seated after the collect. The Church of England left that to common-sense, and common-sense had the witness of universal custom in seating the worshippers during the Epistle. The spirit that kneels by way of protest is not the spirit to bring into the worship of the sanctuary. Be as loyal to the Prayer-Book as you can. Try and carry out its details in the spirit as well as in the letter, and sanctify all with the spirit of humility, faith, prayer, and common-sense. Within the limits of its directions is abundant scope for every possible energy and aspiration of devotion. You are starting fresh, a new generation of priests and deacons. You are tied by no promises, obligations, or traditions other than those to which in the most awful and solemn manner on Sunday you swear your sincere, unreserved, and unswerving obedience. Cast aside, by God's help, all mischievous, perverting, and sectional influence towards one side or another, and be genuinely faithful to the authorized documents of that distinct and independent communion of which God has called you to be a minister.

2. Secondly, *do all you possibly can to promote the unity of the Church within her own borders.* You need not trouble your head about union with Rome or union with Nonconformists. What we have to strive for is *the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace amongst ourselves.* As long as the Church of England is as divided as she is by the wanton wilfulness of her own sons and daughters, we cannot exercise that power for good which we are called upon as a national body to wield, nor have we much right to speak to others about union. The plague and the weakness of the Church are found at the present day in party spirit, party associations, party pursuit of this or that object which stands quite apart from the broad simple truths of the Gospel of Christ. Whenever you are tempted to say to yourself, "I should like to adopt this or that practice, this or that garment, this or that shibboleth; no bishop will prosecute me for it; it is perfectly innocent; it seems to me supremely desirable," you should answer to yourself by God's grace helping you: "No. It will increase the divisions of the Church; it will offend brethren whom perhaps I consider weak; it will widen the gulf between me and other good Christians: all things may be lawful, but all things are not expedient; for the sake of peace and union I will restrain this burning wish of my heart."



III. Lastly, *you have a special duty towards your people.* You have to put yourself on a level with them, and throw off all worldly superiority. Any advantage you have over them must be one of character and of duty, not of privilege. You have to treat them in reality as brothers and sisters, not merely by a convenient and meaningless conventionality. If you wish to win their hearts you must give them your own. However uninteresting and unprepossessing they may be, you must make them feel that they have, not your condescending notice, but your genuine sympathy. They must feel that you have real affection and friendship for them, not merely lumps of advice when they seem to require it. And that affection must be disciplined, wise, and Christian. Nothing is more sickening than spiritual flirtations, ministerial philandering, or doting favouritism. Such blemishes are frequently met in instances of unwise ministerial life, and as they are an indication of a nature only partly regenerate, so they are terrible hindrances to ministerial usefulness. It is nothing of that kind that St. Paul meant when he said, "I became all things to all men, if by any means I might save some." The kindly spirit towards all needs to be restrained and guided by discretion. But remember that it is your prerogative to exercise it towards all. As far as your duties are concerned, "do not forget," as old Bishop Lonsdale, of Lichfield, used to say to his benefited clergy, "that you are the vicar of everybody. Remember that you have duties to Dissenters as well as to Churchmen. Try to bring men together."

Well, you are going forth in God's name to this new and responsible life. On you and such as you will depend very largely the character of the English Church in future years. Eight of you are going well-equipped and prepared to preach the everlasting Gospel, like the Apostles themselves, to pagans and heathen. You take your lives in your hands, and encounter difficulties and privations enormously greater than those which surround us at home. Some of those who have sat here within the last few years, bright with hope, have already left their bones beneath the blazing pestilential sun of Africa. We like to have you with us on these occasions: it gives reality and point to our own resolves for work. We are glad that one of you has had the honour so many times in succession of heading the list, and reading the Gospel in the cathedral. I am sure that all those who are ordained with you will give you their constant prayers that your lives may be spared, and that you may be permitted to do much for the extension of the kingdom of Christ. That will be a bond of union, and will give you a sense of support when you are far away from home, and scattered into all the quarters of the earth—by the dreamy

lakes of Uganda, or the busy markets of Hindustân, or the unknown towns of many-peopled China. In that way the others can share your severer labours, and keener disappointments, and more imminent risks. But on all let me urge the same spirit of complete self-devotion: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister." Humility, that is the privilege of the Christian, especially of the Christian officer. Self-sacrifice, that is the watchword of the Christian life, above all of him who is called to serve in holy things. Self-will, self-importance, self-conceit, self-seeking, ambition, those are the sacrifices that we of all men are called upon to make. God grant that this may be the spirit in which you receive your commission! At this great festival of the gifts of His Spirit, may you be impressed and animated by this ideal! "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."

WILLIAM SINCLAIR.

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## Notes and Queries.

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### NOTE ON 1 PETER V. 13.

ALFORD and, I believe, most modern commentators dismiss very decisively the idea that the Babylon from which St. Peter wrote his first epistle was the Egyptian Babylon which occupied the site of Fostat, or old Cairo. Alford admits that this view is "the tradition of the Coptic Church, and it is supported," he says, "by Le Clerc, Mill, Pearson, Calov, Pott, Buston, and Graswell." W. B. D. (William Bodham Donne), in Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Geography," tells us that this Babylon was a fortress or castle in the Delta of Egypt, upon the right bank of the Nile, in lat. 31° N. (? 30° N.), and near the commencement of the Pharaonic Canal, from that river to the Red Sea; and that it was the boundary town between Lower and Middle Egypt, where the river craft paid toll, ascending or descending the Nile. Diodorus ascribes its erection to revolted Assyrian captives in the reign of Sesostris, and Ctesias carries its date back to the times of Semiramis; but Josephus, with greater probability, attributes its structure to some Babylonian followers of Cambyses in B.C. 525. In the age of Augustus the Deltaic Babylon became a town of some importance, and was the headquarters of the three legions which ensured the obedience of Egypt. In the "Notitia Imperii" Babylon is mentioned as the quarters of Legio XIII. Gemina.

Is, then, Alford right when he speaks of "an insignificant fort in Egypt called Babylon"? When we remember that St. Mark is universally believed to have preached in Alexandria and the neighbourhood; that he was with St. Paul at Rome when he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians (chap. iv. 10), and in Asia Minor when St. Paul wrote his Second Epistle to Timothy, and that, therefore, it would seem most improbable that he was so far east as the Assyrian Babylon; when we remember