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THOMAS G. BLACKSTOCK,
 for the Applicants
 DATED at Toronto this 26th day of January, 1899.
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INTERESTING PAPER.
The Relative Duties and Responsibilities of Clergymen and Laymen in a Parish.

(Read before the Church Convention, by Mr. James Millman, French River.)

The subject, as it stands, is divided into two parts: one relating to the clergy, the other to the laity. Taking each in the order named, we will first consider briefly "the duties and responsibilities of the clergy," as viewed from a layman's standpoint.

It is a rare thing for laymen to have an opportunity, such as this, to dictate to our spiritual advisers on such matters, a complete reversal of the general order of things. Therefore, lest we be tempted to unduly press the advantages which the opportunity affords, we shall confine ourselves principally to what the Word says concerning the duties of the Ministers of the Cross. In Acts, Chapter 20, we have that touching farewell charge of St. Paul to the elders of Ephesus, in which he says: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God which he hath purchased with His own blood." Likewise St. Peter, in closing his first epistle, exhorts the elders in these words: "Feed the flock of God which is among you taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre but of a ready mind, neither as being lords over God's heritage but being ensamples to the flock." The words used by St. Peter on this occasion lead us to think that he is probably reminded of his commission, received thirty years before from the Master Himself. Having received a threefold avowal of St. Peter's love the Savior commissioned him in those well-known words "Feed my sheep, feed my lambs." This then is the first duty of a clergyman—to provide spiritual food for the souls of those of whom the Holy Ghost hath made him overseer. To accomplish this too much importance cannot be attached to the work of the study. Only by earnest prayer, careful preparation and diligent searching for the highest riches of God, as contained in his word, can the clergyman hope for any measure of success in "feeding the flock." Equally important is a knowledge of the flock. Said the "Good Shepherd," as recorded in John 10, 14, "I know My sheep." How many of our clergy know—in the true sense of that work—their parishioners? Such a knowledge, as we have said, is necessary, yet how is it to be obtained. It is obviously not the work of the study, neither is it the work of the pulpit. In the former, the clergyman labours in preparing food for the souls of his people, in the latter he stands as an ambassador for Christ proclaiming the message of love and warning to dying men. In the study the clergyman's seclusion separates him from his people, in the pulpit his position elevates him above them. To truly know his parishioners the clergyman must be brought into closer touch with them in their every day life. He must, if possible, break through the outer crust of reserve and get at least a glimpse of the inner lives of those committed to his care. As it is the duty of a shepherd to study the habits and peculiarities of his flock in order to provide for their wants, so it is the duty of a clergyman to study the needs of his people in order to govern with discretion. This can only be done by pastoral visitations—a duty trying indeed to the clergy, but which is readily acknowledged as being almost equal in importance to the public preaching of the Word. Here it may be asked, as it sometimes is, what should be the nature of a pastoral visit? To which we reply: let the nature of the clergyman's vocation determine the nature of his pastoral visit. This rule is universally followed in other and lower professions—then why not by the ministers of the Cross. St. Paul, in his charge above referred to, testifies that he taught publicly and from house to house; and if we wish to know the nature of his teaching we have his own words "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." Again it is the duty of a clergyman to protect his people from the intrusion of an enemy. As in the days of the Apostle, so to-day, grievous wolves are liable to enter in not sparing the flock. In what constitutes "wolves" we will leave it for the clergy to decide. They are to be found in every parish; and he is, indeed, a watchful clergyman whose charge

does not suffer as a result of these prowling enemies.

Then the clergyman is to be an example to the flock. Regarding this duty we cannot do better than quote direct from the ordination service as contained in our Book of Common Prayer. Question: "Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves, and your families, according to the Doctrine of Christ; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Christ." (Answer) "I will apply myself thereto, the Lord being my helper." "Other comment we need not make. One more duty we may mention, and in it is included all that has gone before. In John x. 11, we have the Savior's words, "The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." Many examples of this we find if we follow the work of the mission field. Every missionary who devotes his time, his talents, and his work to the great work of evangelizing the heathen, is "giving his life for the sheep" in the highest and noblest sense of the term. But what about our own faithful clergy who labor amongst us day after day, year after year, often with very little to see as a result of their labor and very little to cheer or encourage them in their work? The faithful clergyman searches for wholesome gospel food for his flock, he tries to win their confidence, he endeavours to guard them from the depredations of the enemy—he strives to live an exemplary life after the model of the True Man. In all this he is giving his time, and his talents, yes and "his life for the sheep" in just as true a sense as is the missionary in the far away heathen land. And now what of responsibilities? In Ezekiel, 34 we read of the unfaithful shepherds of Israel who "fed themselves" and "fed not the flocks;" to whom God said, "Behold I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand." A dreadful requirement for those whom it concerns, but with no terror for the faithful minister of Christ. To him duty performed means responsibility ended.

This brings us to the second part of our subject, viz. the duties of laymen in a parish.

Just here I may remark that it is not so rare a thing for us, as laymen, to have our duties and responsibilities pointed out to us; therefore, more freedom can be used among ourselves as we consider for a few moments what those duties are. In the first place, brother laymen, their name is Legion, for they are many. We will try not to increase their numbers; yet fidelity to ourselves demands that we pass none by unnoticed. Resuming the figure of shepherd and sheep, as employed in the consideration of the former part of our subject, it follows, that if it is the duty of the shepherd to feed the flock, it must be the duty of the flock to accept the proffered food. But how often, like silly sheep, we reject the wholesome food offered to us, not from any aversion to the food itself, but from indisposition on our part to receive it. There is a tendency, in these days, for the ordinary layman to desire intellectual food in preference to spiritual. Let us guard against the tendency as one, containing a snare that threatens to entrap not only our laymen, but the clergy as well. The result of it can be easily discerned in the cities of the neighbouring Republic, where many pulpits cater to the wishes of the people, by the discussion of the popular subjects connected with Society and the State.

Again: if it is the duty of the shepherd to know his flock, it must be the duty of the flock to know their shepherd. The Savior said not only: "I know my sheep" but adds: "And am known of mine." Thus, we perceive that the knowledge spoken in the former part of the subject must be mutual; and indeed it must be, if the best results are to be secured. Yet how few of our laymen know, or take any trouble to understand, their spiritual leader. Is it not this lack of mutual knowledge that causes many of the petty differences between clergy and laity in our parishes?

If we had more hand grasping hand in mutual greeting—heart going out to heart in mutual sympathy, each feeling the sanctity of the tie that exists between clergyman and layman—well, it might lead to what some would call undue familiarity on the part of the laity, but, not of that sort which produces contempt. It might also bring to a nearer level minister and people, but it would be bringing them together as co-workers in the interests of the parish and for the honor and praise of God.

Again: it is the duty of a layman to strengthen the hands of his pastor in every possible way. We are all familiar



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with that incident in the life of Moses, when, his hands growing weary, they were upheld by Aaron and Hur in order that the children of Israel might prevail over Amalek. Let the clergy answer if they do not have an Amalek to contend with to-day, and if they do not find this strengthening of their hands by the laity a true means of success in the conflict. This strengthening of our pastor's hands may be done in many ways. One way is by prayer. In nearly all his epistles the great Apostle, St. Paul, asks for the prayers of the brethren. To pray for our clergy is one of our first duties; and until we have learned it, we need not wonder if we do not receive a blessing from their ministrations. Another way of strengthening our clergyman, is, by contributing liberally toward his material support. It may seem hardly necessary to point out this fact; and yet the majority of our laymen do not appear to realize it as they should. Some, indeed, give as liberally as their means will permit, others, with greater advantages, give sparingly. Some give, I regret to say, not according to their ability, but according to the ability of their pastor to fill the office of his ministry. How much better it would be, and what a wonderful impetus it would give to parish work, if all our laymen could be brought to recognize the duty of giving as God hath prospered them, both to the support of the pastor and the parish. Another part of a layman's duty is to strengthen his clergyman by lending assistance to any work that may arise having for its object the promotion of truth or the advancement of the spiritual or material welfare of the parish. It seems to me that in our Church of England—or perhaps I should say—as far as my experience goes—the laity are very backward in embracing opportunities of usefulness along with spiritual lines. I do not say, nor do I believe, that our laymen are more lacking in the knowledge of Christian truth, than the laity of other Christian communions.—then, why this backwardness in taking part in the dissemination of the truth? Is it because our clergy are capable, single handed, of doing all parish work along these lines? Is it because they do not wish for our aid? The future hope of the Church is in the young men and women,—the boys and girls. Is it the duty of the clergy alone to instil into the minds and hearts of the rising generation a knowledge of, and a love for, the church of their fathers? Some of our clergy have a special gift of winning the confidence of the young; but even such must find it practically impossible to do this necessary work without neglecting other duties equally important. Then is it not the duty of laymen to lend a hand? Opportunities for work of this nature surround us on every side. Look at the Sunday School with its small attendance of pupils and discouraged staff of teachers. The layman's duty is to see that it is revived; show that you are interested in the work either by teaching or encouraging those who teach. Let your children see that you are interested, send them to the school, or, what is the better, go with them. Many men and women have blessed God for the teaching of their childhood as received in the Sunday School. Then, there is, or should be, some other society connected with the church, which it is the duty of laymen to support. It may be missionary in its nature, it may be simply for social and intellectual improvement. So long as its object is in harmony with the teaching of the church, the society affords the layman an opportunity, which it is his duty to embrace, of helping his clergyman and strengthening his parish. These, then are a few of the duties devolving on a layman in a parish. Time will not permit us to deal with any more. Love for our church will enable us to make an honest effort to comply with these duties. Knowledge of our church, will produce this love. The knowledge that we share equally with the clergy in the responsibilities for the welfare of the parish will give us a deeper interest in our clergy and constrain us to cooperate with them in all things connected with parish work.

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