

# **CLERGY AND CHOIR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649550722

Clergy and Choir by Charles R. Hodge

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**CHARLES R. HODGE**

**CLERGY  
AND CHOIR**



# CLERGY AND CHOIR.

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— BY THE —

REV. CHARLES R. HODGE,  
Of the Diocese of Chicago.

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MILWAUKEE:  
THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.

1881.

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TO  
MY CLERICAL BRETHERN,  
WHO ARE SO OFTEN ENGAGED  
IN WRESTLING WITH THE  
"CHOIR PROBLEM,"  
THIS ATTEMPT  
AT A SOLUTION  
IS  
Sympathetically Inscribed  
BY  
THE AUTHOR.



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## PREFACE.

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The following extracts are copied from letters received at various times, within the past two or three years, from certain of my brethren of the clergy, whose reasons for writing thus to me are doubtless sufficient and satisfactory to themselves:

"I need your advice, ever so much, about our choir. Nothing serious, but they don't get on, in a musical way."

"My first and—so far—only conflict, has been with my choir—a very fine quartette, by the way. At the rehearsal for my first Sunday's service, I thought I would go around to the church and give them a list of the hymns that I wanted sung for that Sunday. I thought that I detected a certain indefinable air of—well, of resentment about it; at least I was told that it was the custom of my predecessor to allow the choir to choose their own hymns for Sunday services. I declined to be guided by Mr. M—'s custom, not particularly caring to have a sermon on "repentance" followed or preceded by a hymn on "the Holy Scriptures," or on "Praise," or "Heaven." I wonder what you would have done under the circumstances—I presume you would have done as I did. I referred them to the Canon on Church Music, which is printed in the front of the hymnal they use, and told them that such was the law of the Church, by which clergy, choir and laity in general are bound."

"How am I to get my choir to sing as they ought? More particularly the men; the women do well enough. Their voices don't seem to harmonize."

"If I should decide on having a vested choir, *where could I put them?* You know my church well enough to know that the chancel is altogether too small for such a choir; it would have to be enlarged—but how? Please draw me a plan, or, better still, run down here for a day."

"You remember the boy I had to scold the Sunday you were here? I have trouble of the same sort with him continually. What would you do with him?"

"How does the 'Choir Club' get on? Tell me something about it, or send me a copy of the Constitution."

I could present many more, but these will suffice. Such letters, as well as frequent oral requests for counsel on the many phases of

the "choir problem," finally induced me to attempt the preparation of a series of letters of advice, upon all possible cases that would come to my mind. Very early in its preparation the epistolary form was abandoned, on account of its clumsiness, and the result is the following pages.

Nothing but the manifest need of such a work would induce this venture on my part; nor would even that excuse it, were it not for the long and intimate experience, both as boy and man, with choirs of all descriptions and varieties at its back. And again, it has been represented to me that the fruits of such an experience as mine has been, in this matter, ought not to be regarded as my private property, and this representation has also had its influence.

There is nothing in the entire range of Church literature, to my knowledge, which touches upon all these points. The few books that have been published on the subject of Vested Choirs are excellent; but they all appear to take for granted, as being well understood, certain points on which there is, in reality, dense ignorance.

In conclusion, I must express my obligations, as also my sincere thanks, to two of my brethren, for contributions, at my request, on certain phases of "the problem," which will be found in their proper places, duly accredited.

If this book will, in course of time, be found helpful to any of my brethren, it will have fully accomplished the purpose designed in its preparation.

CHARLES R. HODGE.

{ *Grace Church Rectory,*  
{ NEW LENOX, ILL.  
{ Feast of the Circumcision of Christ [Jan. 1], 1891.