

**CLERICAL COLLOQUIES:
ESSAYS AND
DIALOGUES ON
SUBJECTS SACERDOTAL**

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Clerical colloquies: essays and dialogues on subjects sacerdotal by Arthur Barry O'Neill

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ARTHUR BARRY O'NEILL

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ESSAYS AND DIALOGUES ON SUBJECTS SACERDOTAL

BY

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FOREWORD

WHEN a performer on the public or private stage, having sung his song, delivered his monologue, or played his solo on piano or violin, makes his bow to his audience and retires behind the scenes, he is naturally interested in the quantity and quality of the plaudits that greet his effort. His wish being father to his thought, it sometimes happens that he mistakes a brief round of perfunctory applause for a genuine recall, and forthwith responds with an unsolicited encore. In much the same way an author may misinterpret the generous praise lavished on his first work as a demand on the part of his readers for the publication of a second one; and I am possibly presumptuous in calling this book a sort of encore more or less justified by the critical handclappings which greeted a volume of similar scope published in 1914¹. Yet the assurances received from scores of ecclesiastical dignitaries, that the volume in question is really worth while and calculated to do not a little good, may well excuse one's ambition to make another venture in the same field, especially as these assurances have been corroborated by the Catholic press in reviews, of which the following extracts—the first from *America*, the second from the *London Tablet*—are typical: “. . . The kind of book of which you say at once that no one can afford to be without it; certainly no priest or clerical student. A nice combination of humor and common sense and the wisdom of experience. . . .”

¹“Priestly Practice.”

"A thoroughly satisfactory work. Priests in search of a really good book on priestly life and duties, full of sound advice conveyed in an attractive form, should lose no time in procuring a copy of this publication."

Unlike the former work, the present volume contains only two essays that are reprints. "The Priest a Gentleman" and "The Priest and the Press" have appeared in recent issues of the *Ecclesiastical Review*, and are reproduced with the gracious permission of that periodical's reverend editor. The author's purpose in those two chapters, as in all the others, has been to furnish the ordinary workaday cleric with some "spiritual reading" material that is practical and helpful, without being dull, prosy, heavy, or ultra-ascetic.

A word should be added in reference to such criticism of priestly faults as appears here and there in the following pages. I disclaim any pretension whatever to pose as an exemplary and authoritative censor of my clerical brethren, and I ask the reader to believe that there is nothing of the "pride that apes humility" in the statement that the severest strictures in the book are addressed, primarily and principally, to the one priest with whose personality and habits I am most thoroughly conversant,—myself. To be quite candid, while the most censorious paragraphs in the volume were being written, my typewriter's keys seemed to be continually clicking out, with exasperating iteration, the one refrain: "*Me-di-ce, cu-ra te-ip-sum—Phy-si-cian, heal thy-self.*"

A. B. O'N., C. S. C.

Feast of the Epiphany, 1916.

PREFACE

(TO THIRD EDITION)

THE first edition of this book was disposed of so rapidly that, when the second edition was published, only a few Catholic periodicals had enjoyed the opportunity of pronouncing on the work's merits or defects. Since that time, however, the book has been welcomed in the majority of Catholic editorial rooms in this country, Canada, Great Britain, Australia, South Africa, and India; and to the appreciative reviews and notices which it has received is no doubt due in great measure the present necessity of issuing yet another edition.

Typical instances of the kindly nature of these reviews or notices may prove not uninteresting to new readers of the volume. The *London Catholic Times* says, in part: "This book, intended for the priesthood, is one of the most delightful books of its class that have come under our notice for many a year. It is a gathering of essays and dialogues, varying considerably one from another, and of such keen interest for pastors of souls that when the fifteen chapters have all been carefully perused we rise from the literary banquet with an appetite for more!" Not less interesting, perhaps, is this extract from the late Joyce Kilmer's review of the book in the *New York Times*: "The author's touch is so light and sure, his knowledge so comprehensive, and his style so charming that it is to be hoped that he will further develop some of the themes in this book and put his cross-sections of clerical life into the form of short stories and novels."

Solemnity of St. Joseph, 1920.

