

to the contrary, is it not clear that the morrow is to take care of the things of itself? And can we believe that the petition should be read, "Give us this day the bread of the morrow"? or, as has been said above, could we restrict this prayer to early morning use only, "Give us this day bread for the coming day"? Or, if we could bring our minds to admit such a limitation, would it not be a tautology in so brief a sentence to have "this day" "for the coming day" thus crowded together? Again, "daily bread" can only mean the bread given us each day, as it comes, and is not the same tautology evident?

But derive the word from *οὐσία*, and all falls into order and good sense: *Give us this day bread for our being or support; supply our necessities.* The internal evidence counterbalances the external difficulties, which have been magnified. Before such an interpretation the question of a digamma on the lips of Galilean peasants surely vanishes.

F. TILNEY BASSETT.

DULVERTON VICARAGE,
July, 1888.

ART. III.—"CLERGY AND THE MASSES."—THE CURATE QUESTION.

PART II.

WHATEVER may be said to the contrary, it is a fact, nevertheless, that the best interests of the Church of England, and of religion in general, are clearly associated with all questions touching the present and future supply of candidates for holy orders, and the position and prospects of the present assistant curates. We already number 7,000 licensed curates, and it is estimated, by those well qualified to form an opinion on the subject, that we ought to have almost double that number, in order that all parishes may be fairly supplied; but it has been pointed out, and it will be readily seen, that as the numbers of curates are increased in the Church, so are diminished the hopes of preferment of those who are now in the profession, because the increase in the number of benefices is not proportionate to the number of men ordained each year.

It may be said that, as a rule, if a man does his work fairly and honestly, if he is a man of fair average ability and shows an aptitude for parochial work, if he is a decent preacher, and if he is worth anything at all, he is sure to get preferment in no great length of time. This statement can be easily disproved. The time at which, upon an average, an un-

beneficed man receives preferment depends entirely upon the proportion the number of unbeneficed clergy bears to the total number of clergy. If with a given number of clergy the number of livings be increased, the rate of preferment is accelerated; if it be decreased, the rate is retarded. To take the actual case: when the number of both beneficed and unbeneficed clergy have advanced, if the proportion the number of unbeneficed clergy bears to the whole number be less than before, the time at which each unbeneficed man may expect a living will be shortened, and if that proportion be greater than before, the time will be increased.

Let us take one Diocese, viz., that of Manchester. When this Diocese was formed in 1847, out of every 20 clergymen in the Diocese 4 were curates, or one-fifth of the whole number; while in 1887 the proportion was 13 out of 20, or more than three times as great. Now, if we combine these figures with the fact that the beneficed life of each incumbent lasts about twenty-eight years, we find that on an average a curate received a living in 1848 at the expiration of seven years, while at the present time he must be content to wait eighteen years on the average; *i.e.*, there are now 506 benefices, and 357 unbeneficed clergy, 303 of whom are assistant curates, in the Diocese of Manchester. There will, therefore, be eighteen vacancies on the average each year, and there are 357 unbeneficed clergy for them. This calculation is based on the theory that none but clergy in the Diocese are promoted.

In looking at this subject of preferment, and the position of the unbeneficed clergy, and in estimating the prospects which the Ministry, viewed as a profession, holds out, we must take into our calculations that the largest number of livings, and some of these the most attractive and lucrative, are the benefices vested in (1) private hands, forbidden ground to those who have neither wealthy relatives to purchase preferment nor interest with the patrons. These, therefore, are not open to unprivileged aspirants. We may say the same of the majority of these in (2), the gift of colleges and cathedral chapters. And of those in (3), the gift of the Crown, and these are not a few, they are only open to those who have the master-key of political influence. (4) Lord Chancellor livings are proverbially small in value, but the best are given to friends of the Government for the time being. Another set is in the (5) gift of Bishops and ministers of mother churches (but only some 2,500 out of 14,000), and it is to this quarter that the unbeneficed, and deserving, and friendless, and un-influential clergyman may fairly look for a recognition of his long and faithful services, of his patient self-denial and hard work. Yet of these "loaves and fishes," it may be said, "What

are they among so many?" Far too few to satisfy the many urgent and strong claims which every Diocese presents.

Then it must be borne in mind, too, that of these 14,000 livings, only 8,300 are of the value of £200 a year and upwards. And when a vacancy occurs in any of these, the selection must, for the most part, be amongst the following, viz., 5,700 incumbents of smaller livings, 7,000 assistant curates, and 4,000 other clergy, who, though not engaged in parochial work, do for the most seek preferment. It will at once be seen that, even if Church patronage were administered solely with regard to meritorious service, the chances of a man obtaining a fair income are very remote indeed. But when it is further remembered that a goodly number of livings, which for one reason or another are filled up with young men with undeveloped theological opinions, with "scanty knowledge" and "no experience" ("raw recruits and untrained levies," as Bishop Selwyn called them), it is evident that the chances of a man without interest and influence, political, family, commercial, and otherwise, are infinitesimally small.

We can point to instances where young men of less than eighteen months' experience in holy orders have been presented to livings of £1,000 a year and upwards. Such a state of things would never be tolerated in other walks in life. At the Bar, a barrister of seven years' standing is the minimum standard for almost all appointments. In the Army, the captains commanding a company must be more than three years in the service, and no one would ever dream of appointing an officer of three years' service to command a regiment or take charge of a ship. No man should be appointed an incumbent who has not been at least five or seven years in orders, three years of which he should be effectively employed as a curate in parish work.

It is arithmetically impossible to give all men livings of any kind, and it is arithmetically impossible that existing benefices can afford decent maintenance within a reasonable time for more than one-third of the clergy ordained, there being upwards of 21,000 parochial clergy and some 25,000 clergy altogether, and only some 8,300 livings of £200 a year and upwards. What said Lord Hatherley? "In four years, when Lord Chancellor, he had 127 pieces of preferment at his disposal, half of which were of less value than £150 a year, and for these he had no less than 3,000 applications." The Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol said in three years he had nine vacancies, and for these vacancies he had between 50 and 60 curates in his own Diocese. The late Bishop of Ely said he had no vacancy for two years. The Bishop of Winchester

said "the clergy were rapidly exceeding in numbers the possibility of provision being made for them by livings. In his own Diocese he generally ordained 30 curates a year, while not more than 20 livings fell in during the same period."

Another very important question arises, Are the prospects for promotion better or worse of late years? They can scarcely be better, when we consider that the number of clergy ordained in each year, after deducting those required to fill death vacancies, is greatly in excess of the number of new livings created each year (three to one). But in ascertaining this point more particularly we require to know,

- (a) The total number of benefices in each period.
- (b) The total number of clergy.
- (c) The total number of unbeneficed clergy.
- (d) And the length of the beneficed life on the average, or the number of vacancies each year.

We can arrive at all these with a tolerable degree of accuracy. The average length of the beneficed life is, as we have said, about twenty-eight years. Now let us take representative periods since 1851, for it was about that time the Plurality Act had almost ceased to have effect. In 1851, the total number of clergy was 17,621; the total of benefices, 12,700; and the total of unbeneficed clergy, 4,700; there would be some 450 vacancies in that year, and it would, therefore, take eleven years on the average before all could be promoted.

Calculating in this way, it would take $13\frac{3}{4}$ years in 1861, 16 years in 1871, 17 years in 1875, 18 years in 1880, 20 years in 1882, and upwards of 21 years in 1887, before the whole of the unbeneficed clergy in these respective periods could be promoted. This is taking the Church as a whole; but if we come to particular Dioceses we shall find that at the present time the period required would be upwards of 35 years in the Diocese of London, 14 years in Canterbury, $23\frac{1}{2}$ years in Rochester, 21 years in Winchester, 19 years in Liverpool, $16\frac{1}{2}$ years in Ripon, and 15 years in Durham.

So that the prospect of preferment is more remote in 1861 than in 1851, more remote in 1875 than 1861, more remote in 1882 than 1875, and more remote in 1887 than in 1882. The rate of promotion is, therefore, slowly but surely becoming more and more tardy year by year. And if we go on multiplying clergy during the next twenty years at the rate we have been doing during the last twenty years, then the prospects for promotion must be very remote indeed and more tardy still. Neither must we overlook the supposition upon which these calculations are based; viz., that preferment was distributed either by seniority or by rigid impartiality;

and to this we ought to add another concession—that all livings are of such a value that a man without private means could afford to take whatever was offered to him. All must know that, as a fact, in a multitude of instances preferment did not go by merit and seniority; it was frequently the offspring of political, family and commercial influence, of wire-pulling, and in many instances of purchase. We should be sorry to see preferment go by seniority, but surely parochial experience, work, long service, probity of conduct and age ought to count for something and ought to be recognised sometimes.

Not much has been said upon the pecuniary question except in general terms. We have 14,000 beneficed clergy partly provided for by the ancient endowments of the Church, but there are these other parochial clergy—the assistant curates—who devote all their time, thoughts and energies to their respective parishes, and for them we have no fixed and certain provision; *i.e.*, we have one-third of the whole body of parochial clergy unprovided for. The clerical profession is not like other professions. A curate is not permitted to improve his income by doing other work outside his parochial duties. Public opinion is against this, and the laws of the Church will not permit it. These curates are paid in two ways: (1) By stipend, which they receive from their respective vicars; (2) By prospect of obtaining a benefice. Now, the average stipend of all curates is about £130 a year, but after working for twenty-five years it is only £119 a year; and after this he begins to decrease in marketable value at the rate of £5 every five years, and when he is sixty to sixty-five years of age he may think himself very fortunate if he can get a curacy at all. Again, after a certain time in life his prospects grow worse; for, in the first place, as a rule an old incumbent does not want an old curate as his colleague; secondly, a young incumbent does not want an older curate than himself as a colleague; and thirdly, in large parishes, particularly in large towns and manufacturing districts, incumbents want young men full of vigour, strength, energy, and enthusiasm; the consequence being that the older men have to drift away into the country districts, where the work is not so great, but where, unfortunately, the income is not so great either. With such an array of facts before us, is it not the bounden duty of our fathers-in-God to take the subject up vigorously, and point out to the laity of England their duty towards this new class of Church-worker? Might this not be made one of their diocesan subjects?

We have been committing two mistakes in this century: (1) We have multiplied the clergy more rapidly than we have

multiplied the benefices; hence we have upwards of 10,000 unbeneficed clergy. (2) We have spent more money upon buildings than upon men and the due provision for these men in the ministry; *e.g.*, we have spent some £45,000,000 sterling on buildings during the last forty-five years, and we have done comparatively little for the living element of the Church. The consequence is we have exhausted our resources to a great extent on bricks and mortar, and we have neglected the flesh and blood; hence we have such a large body of men totally unprovided for—a body which the Church cannot possibly do without. We have done a great deal for Church fabrics; we ought now to do something substantial for those who are to minister in them. It would be a fatal mistake to have grand, noble, and magnificent churches, and at the same time have a feeble and weak-kneed ministry to officiate in them. It is not the case yet, but if we do not look ahead it will be the case. Then our intelligent and educated laity would despise such feeble ministrations; they would cease to attend public worship; the religious tone of the country would sink; irreligion and scepticism would abound; and worse results would soon follow.

It may well be regarded as the weak point of our Church's system that it entirely overlooks what should be the obvious necessity of maintaining something like a due proportion between the permanent posts which she has to offer and the increased number of clergy whose services she requires. For years past our whole energies have been spent on building grand churches and providing more curates, without any reference to what was likely to become of those curates in the long-run. Many and many a parish send their £50, £60, £80, and £100 a year to multiplying curates, but do not give one guinea towards keeping up their incomes, when, by reason of age and long services, their stipends are getting beautifully less. Many and many a parish send their £20, £30, £40, £50, £60, and £70 a year to either the S.P.G. or C.M.S., and whose missionaries get their £300 a year and upwards, and yet the self-same parishes do not contribute £1 a year towards making the stipends of curates at home, who have worked twenty-five years and more, equal to those just entering upon their work. We do not desire that less should be given to foreign missions, but we do desire that more should be given to home missions. Men cannot do their work as they ought to do if they are hampered and harassed with worldly cares. It is the most short-sighted policy to have an ill-paid and crippled clergy, and it is only repeating an oft-told maxim, that the more money a faithful, earnest, zealous, and hardworking clergyman has at his command, the greater the amount of work he is

able to carry on, the greater the influence he is able to exert, and the greater the amount of parochial machinery he is able to put into his parish. Additional curates, rather than additional means of supporting them, has been the cry for many years past, and the clergy themselves are not the least offenders in this respect. It would almost seem that we had more confidence in working the Church by means of assistant curates than we had by incumbents. One reason is, curates are cheaper than incumbents. Let us get this fact thoroughly impressed upon our minds; viz., "more unbeneficed clergy" is synonymous with "slower promotion," and "slower promotion" means a larger number of old curates whose incomes and prospects get worse as they grow older.

From what has been said, we may fairly draw the following conclusions :

1. That the existence of a large body of unbeneficed clergy, many of whom have been more than twenty years in orders, is not due to the shortcomings of either patrons or curates.

2. It is not due to patrons, who can only make promotions as there are vacancies. It is not due to curates, for if each deacon who has been ordained during the past forty years had been a parish priest like Dean Hook, and possessed his organizing power, or a preacher like Wilberforce, Magee, or Liddon, the proportionate number remaining as curates would have been precisely the same as now.

3. It is due to one cause alone; viz., to the change that has taken place in the relative numbers of the beneficed and unbeneficed clergy; and for this the Church as a corporate body is solely responsible.

4. This being the case, it is clearly the duty of every member of the Church to seriously consider the position and prospects of the unbeneficed clergy, and make some better provision for them; and this can be done in the following ways :

(a) Take measures for the increase of permanent posts in populous districts, to which curates may be promoted; spend less money upon building fine churches, and a little more on endowments; raise up good, plain, churchy-looking mission chapels, and with this have a great national fund—national and yet diocesan—for the purpose of giving at least moderate fixed incomes to the fresh incumbents in our great towns. Again, some better provision for the retirement of the old and infirm beneficed clergy is greatly needed; better than what is given by the Resignation Act, which may only be a third of the income of the living. This does not afford, in the majority of instances, sufficient to live upon; while at the same time it is a

great tax upon the successor, and tends to cripple him in his work.

(b) Stop the sale of next presentations altogether; for, whatever arguments may be used in its favour, there is one argument conclusive as a reply to all others—that it withdraws yearly, from the already too narrow list of preferments to which an unfriended yet deserving man may reasonably aspire, an alarming number of benefices, and throws them upon the market to be scrambled for by the highest bidder, who succeeds more by the weight of purse than keenness and strength of conscience. No wonder that now and again, if not very often, a very awkward, square man gets in a round hole.

(c) Another most important reform would be an Act of Parliament making it illegal to appoint a clergyman to any benefice, either in public or private patronage, until he had been five or seven years in orders, and thus have served a kind of apprenticeship to his work, and have become fairly acquainted with his business. It is a most astounding thing, and one difficult to understand, why in all other departments of knowledge and practice lessons must be learned and experience must be gained, whereas in the Church of England, by some mysterious process, a man is fit to take charge of a parish and a cure of souls immediately he has received priest's orders, simply because he happens to be the son of his father. When young men of little or no experience are preferred to livings, it is hard to say where most injury was done and who was the greatest sufferer—whether to the Church at large, the particular parish, or the incumbent himself.¹

(d) Under the influence and example of the Episcopate, a considerable number of both public and private patrons might probably be induced to set apart livings exclusively for curates who for a given number of years may have borne the burden and heat of the day in our great towns.

(e) Last, but not least, promote a sustentation fund, to supplement from public liberality the wretchedly insufficient

¹ Chancellor Espin in a very able article on the Church Patronage Bill, in the *CHURCHMAN* of May, 1887, says: "A very young clergyman ought not to be allowed to occupy a position which requires qualifications scarcely ever to be found in the very young. There is no one result of the existing system of purchase which has been more often complained of than the facilities it is found to afford for placing a young man with command of money in preferment which is beyond the reach of men who have served the Church nobly for years. The proviso that a presentee should be at least five years in holy orders would have done something to abate a galling sense of injustice in some good men's minds, and would, moreover, have given some of them somewhat better chances of promotion than they now have."

stipends upon which senior curates are supposed to exist, such increase of stipend to take effect after twelve or fifteen years' service; and for such an object why not through every Diocese have a special Sunday set apart for special collections? and why should not such an object form one of the special subjects recommended by our Bishops in their lists of diocesan institutions to be supported?

If we had such means of guaranteeing our assistant curates a stipend of £200 a year when they had been twelve years in orders, with an increase of £10 a year till they reached £300, we should have a sufficient supply of good and suitable men, and the Bishops might raise, instead of being compelled to lower, the standard of fitness, and the Church would command the services of a large proportion of the highest and best intellects of the time, and men would be content to work on almost regardless of preferment. One of the most singular anomalies connected with the curate system is the entire absence of any progressive increase of stipend corresponding to more matured experience and more lengthened service. In point of fact, there is not only no increase, but there is an actual decrease. It does seem a scandalous thing that men who have been working for twenty-five years and upwards should be receiving stipends of 30 to 40 per cent. less than those who are just entering on their work.

Of all the schemes for securing a good supply of efficient and suitable candidates for the ministry, of paying the older servants of the Church better, and of ensuring them some adequate means of support, there are none better calculated to do this great work than the Curates' Augmentation Fund, but, sad to say, it is not supported as it ought to be, and this is partly because its aims and objects are not sufficiently known, and they never will be, unless our Bishops take the matter up more vigorously, and unless more of the beneficed clergy will allow the cause to be pleaded from their pulpits, and unless the clergy in general make the laity more thoroughly acquainted with the position and prospects of curates. This Society is the only one of the kind in England, and therefore it has a strong claim upon the sympathies and support of both the clergy and laity.

J. R. HUMBLE.

ART. IV.—THE DIVINE IMAGE IN WHICH MAN WAS CREATED.

IT would not be easy to weigh too keenly the Mosaic statement that man before the Fall was created in the image of God. Whether it be used to throw light on the purpose and