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ancient literature are "inadequate for a satisfactory induction."<sup>1</sup> The analogy of other early races is not referred to.

The most natural thing now would be to attempt to form an estimate as to the relative value of these two theories, and to offer some suggestions with regard to them; but this would require an article for itself, which we hope to contribute to some future number of this magazine.

W. O. E. OESTERLEY.

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### THE DEARTH OF CANDIDATES FOR HOLY ORDERS.

ONE of the most serious problems in modern times is the lamentable lack of men seeking ordination in the Church of England. The dearth of curates is appalling, and the needs of the Church at home and in the mission-field are most keenly felt. The question is being seriously asked, What are we to do? The population of our country is rapidly increasing, missionary work is making great strides, and, naturally, a large increase is required in the number of workers. Instead of the increase we should expect, there is a steady decrease, as the ordination statistics show. Many parishes are undermanned, many incumbents have to wait a considerable time before they can obtain the assistance of a colleague, and thus much valuable work is crippled for lack of workers to carry it on. There is no dearth of men—as such. Men are plentiful enough. Almost every profession or calling in life is overstocked, and the competition is most keen in obtaining positions in the labour market. Yet, curiously enough, in the Church of England to-day the demand for workers by far exceeds the supply. The solution of the mystery must come from within. There is evidently not sufficient attraction to draw men to the ministry, or else there are grave hindrances that come in the way. At any rate, the question must be faced, and obstacles, if there are any, removed.

Some have attempted to solve the difficulty. Truths have been stated, shortcomings laid bare, and reforms suggested. It is undoubtedly true that there are two leading causes for this shortage. One is the lawlessness in the Church of England at the present time; the other is the Higher Criticism. So much has already been written upon these topics

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<sup>1</sup> P.S.R., p. 221.

that reference to them shall be very brief. With regard to the first of these, one pictures a young man at college having to map out his future course. He has a leaning towards the ministry, and an earnest desire to serve God; but he has to take an all-round view of the situation. If he is ordained, then the ministry of the Church of England must be his profession and life work. What are his prospects? He sees a lack of law and order. He sees dissensions that threaten to rend the Church asunder. Some predict Disestablishment. He wonders what the end will be, and he sees but little promise of promotion. This last is, of course, a mercenary view of the matter; but, in choosing a profession, men have to look at it in all its bearings. The student, having considered the matter carefully, and often prayerfully too, comes to the conclusion that he must strike out a different line for himself, and strive to serve God as a layman rather than as a clergyman.

The Higher Criticism is also a very real hindrance to many. A young man, brought up in the faith of his forefathers, finds, on studying theology, that many eminent professors and others are engaged in a critical study of the Bible that, to him, endangers the Word of God. Doubts are expressed respecting the date and the authorship of many of the books in the Bible, etc. It appears as if the Bible is being mutilated. All this has led many a student to hold sceptical opinions, while others have abandoned all opinions, being so thoroughly unsettled that they hardly know what to think. Suppose an earnest young fellow, unaffected by these criticisms himself, was anxious to enter the ministry, he would at once be confronted with the difficulty, What can I teach or preach? If I adhere to my own convictions, I shall be classed as old-fashioned and behind the times, and I cannot advocate these new notions. In this way many are lost to the Church who would have done good and true work in it but for these hindrances. Having briefly touched upon two leading points that deter men from seeking ordination, I turn to one of a different kind altogether, and which I have never seen advocated—that is, the question of age.

Some men are prevented from taking up a clerical life because of the uncertainty and difficulty of promotion. They see a considerable number of elderly men in the ranks of the unbeneficed clergy. It is commonly accepted as true that for promotion one requires good influence at one's back, or else particular gifts of brilliancy or genius to bring one to the front, and a large number of men who would be able to render good service to the cause feel that they have neither the one nor the other, and despair of getting on in a clerical calling.

Can nothing be done to help remedy this evil? I think a partial remedy might be found if the time for holding a benefice were limited; or, in other words, if an age limit was fixed in the Church of England. That this is no new idea, we shall find by reference to the Old Testament scriptures. When God directed Moses concerning the Levitical priesthood, He fixed an age limit for the priests. In Numbers iv., verse 1, etc., we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Take the sum of the sons of Kohath from among the sons of Levi, after their families, by the house of their fathers, from thirty years old and upward even until fifty years old, all that enter into the host, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." The age limit is also mentioned in verses 23, 30, 35, 39, 43 and 47 of the same chapter, showing, by the frequency of repetition, that God looked upon such a step as necessary. Now, wherein would lie the benefit of such an age limit? The answer would be twofold: (1) It would insure that the service of the tabernacle should be performed by men in the prime of life—giving God their best; and (2) it would provide for all those who were eligible by age to take their turn in the service of God. Would not something of this kind be useful now? In the Church of England to-day we find a large number of incumbents of advanced age hardly able to continue their duties, and a large number of unbeneficed men eager for preferment. Could nothing be done in connection with an age limit to adjust this inequality?

It is true we have an age limit for entrance into the ministry. In the preface to the Ordination of Deacons we read: "And none shall be admitted a deacon except he be twenty-three years of age, unless he have a faculty. And every man which is to be admitted a priest shall be full four-and-twenty years old." I need not quote further, since my point would not affect the position of Bishops or any cathedral dignitaries; but there is no limit of age at the other end for exercising the office of the priesthood. It is one of the most pitiable sights to see an infirm vicar of eighty years of age or so struggling to fulfil his duties, which require the energy and vigour of a man in the prime of life. It is cruelty to the man, and it is an injustice to his parishioners; and yet the vicar cannot retire—in spite of the one-third allowance—as such retirement would only mean starvation to himself and seriously hamper his successor in many a poor living. From the quotation above from the Ordination Service, it will be noticed that the age for entering the ministry of the Church of England differs from that of the Levitical priesthood, since the one is twenty-three while the other is thirty years. I do not know that the

exact age is a necessity. What is of importance is the underlying principle.

It would probably not be wise to restrict the age of service to fifty years. Many a man at that age is full of vigour, and it is a fact that the clergy as a whole are long-lived. A very general age for retirement from active service is sixty-five years. This age is being generally adopted by different insurance offices, and might be taken as a basis to work upon. Suppose we should adopt the age of sixty-five years as the limit of age for the holding of a benefice, it would at once become apparent that the Church as a whole would gain tremendously, and more frequent openings would occur for the promotion of younger men, and thus a felt grievance would in part be met. Such a suggestion will doubtless be called visionary, unworkable, impossible. A good many reforms have been similarly met, and yet have been successfully carried out. There are capabilities for usefulness in this scheme also. The question is, How is it to be worked? There appears but one answer—by a compulsory pension scheme.

A step in this direction of a voluntary nature is the Clergy Pensions Institution. Through this institution those clergy who pay an annual premium are entitled to a pension of £15 15s. at the age of sixty-five years. That is, of course, totally inadequate for a living. By various additions to the society the pensions are now granted for £50 without increasing the annual premium. At the age of sixty-five years the pensioner can either have his pension or, if he prefers, he can have his contributions in a lump sum out of the funds. Only a small number of the clergy avail themselves of this institution, however. If a scheme could be propounded that would materially benefit the clergy, and thus the Church at large, it ought to receive the attention it would deserve. One could hardly require those already in Orders to join a pension fund against their will; but it might be required of all men on entering the ministry. It might further be required as a *sine quâ non* upon institution to a benefice, and thus by degrees become a general thing.

It is not necessary here to go into the amount of the pension, nor the amount of the annual premium required; that can be left to experts in insurance work. Two points only seem needful to touch upon now: (1) How is the annual premium to be raised? and (2) What is to become of incumbents when deprived of their living at the age of sixty-five years? With respect to the first of these points, many different ways might be suggested to help raise a requisite amount. Where the living is sufficient, the contribution might be paid direct by the clergyman. The Easter offerings

might well be utilized in this cause. Voluntary contributions could also be asked for when it is recognised that it is for the general benefit of the Church at large. Benefactions would doubtless be given, and grants from the funds at the disposal of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and other similar agencies might be obtained. In fact, to make the scheme workable, it would have to be undertaken by some such organization, or else by the existing Clergy Pensions Institution. Then, respecting those incumbents who have reached the age limit. There would primarily be the pension to which they would be entitled. If the age limit were adopted, probably the one-third retiring allowance would have to cease. A clergyman, however, at sixty-five years of age is often very vigorous and hearty, and capable of doing much that would help to increase his income. Literary work, occasional duty, chaplaincies, secretarial work, etc., would be open to him, and in many ways he might increase his income.

The boon, when thoroughly realized, would be immense. For a man to feel that at a given time he would be expected to resign his post, and so be relieved of the multitudinous duties, anxieties, and worries that fall to the lot of every incumbent, would be a great blessing. It would come at a time when his energies would begin to flag, and he would feel unfit for much that his position would require of him. The sense of relief to many a man would be intense, and he would be able to look forward to a peaceful and restful old age, conscious that a younger man would step in and throw his strength and energy into the work that he was finding too much for himself.

One has a natural objection to the word "compulsory." That would probably be the hardest obstacle to be overcome. It is only by recognising what is for the general good that the word becomes at all tolerable.

If we look at other professions, we find a time or age limit imposed. Service in the army and navy is for a certain period. Men are pensioned off at the expiration of their term of service. Why should not the same hold good with the Church? It will be argued that the cases are not parallel. With the army and navy the pension is paid by the State, and the pensioner is given a sufficient sum to cover his requirements, while the clergy would have to provide their own pensions, and it would be difficult to raise an adequate allowance. With respect to "the services," the above statement may be true of officers' pensions, but the pensions of the rank and file need to be supplemented by the men's exertions. If it were possible to formulate a scheme to make a clerical pension from £100 to £150 per annum, so much the better

for all concerned ; but that, again, is a detail, and not the main question.

Only recently an honoured and valued physician of one of our large hospitals sent in his resignation to the committee, on the plea that his advancing years rendered such a step expedient, and would afford an opening for a younger man. The committee saw the point, and with great regret accepted the resignation. We can appreciate the thoughtfulness that prompted this act of self-sacrifice, and I instance it just to show that the scheme advocated in this paper is no new one, although its application may be so.

Doubtless there may be many details and sidelights that would have to be dealt with, and many obstacles and objections met. The greatest obstacle of all would be prejudice. It affects a clergyman's position and finances. It proposes radical changes which would be looked at with suspicion and dread. The subject may be dismissed as utopian and visionary. Still, nevertheless, I am persuaded that it is one that must come to the front eventually, and, if so, its discussion and ventilation may have its value in helping to form opinions upon this aspect of Church reform.

GEORGE S. BREWER.



## THE SPIRITUAL WORTH OF THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL WORK.

**T**H**ERE** is no doubt that "social work" occupies a large share of the Church's activity in the present day. In contrast with what was done even twenty years ago we are able to show a great advance in the variety of our organizations for influencing the social life of the community and in the energy with which they are conducted. We have a broader conception of the Church's duty, while the desire to discharge it is unmistakable. We all agree nowadays that Christianity must touch every part of a man's life. The old dualism is vanishing. The Christian vocabulary has no longer any use for the word "secular."

Among parochial organizations designed to bring the Church's influence to bear on the social life of the community, there will generally be found Men's and Lad's Clubs. I venture to suggest that though these may be necessary, they are for the most part conducted in a way which is prejudicial to the best interests of those for whose welfare they are designed, while they exhaust the efforts of the Church and