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CHURCHMAN

A Monthly Magazine

*CONDUCTED BY CLERGYMEN AND LAYMEN  
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND*



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ART. I.—MORE ABOUT THE DIACONATE.

THE subject of an "extended" or opened Diaconate has been already brought before the readers of THE CHURCHMAN in several articles. The recent debates in Convocation and the Bishop of Lichfield's address to his Diocesan Synod have drawn attention to the cognate subject of the employment of licensed laymen for evangelistic work among the masses. Canon Bernard has pointed out certain advantages which accrue from the combined consideration and combined use of the alternative schemes proposed, viz., that for establishing an office of "Readers," and that for extending the "Diaconate." Both schemes point to a growing perception of the great need (an "overwhelming need," the resolution calls it, which was carried in the Southern and adopted in the Northern Convocation) of more living agents to circulate the Word of Life, and to aid the clergy in Church work. This means "an increase in the number of the ministry," whether we think of ordained ministers who possess the prestige and official status of Holy Orders, or of duly authorized helpers of the clergyman in his ministerial labours. We are thus brought face to face with the important and practically difficult subject of the tests whereby the competency of ministers should be approved at the commencement of their professional work. This question is by no means so simple a one as some persons think it to be. The question is also, as now raised, complicated by the difficulty in defining the difference between the "Reader" and the "Deacon," regarded as evangelistic assistants of the Presbyter in charge. An important official distinction is evident in the fact that only ordained Deacons could assist in the administration of the Lord's Supper. The real need of the Church of England, however, if it is successfully to grapple with the

work of evangelizing the masses, is the increase of ministerial evangelists, so recognised and so regulated as to become a publicly acknowledged and effective addition to the present clerical body. Now, the proposed "new order" of Deacons is of a very limited description. They are "not to be under thirty years of age;" they "must be willing to serve gratuitously;" that is, they must, as the Bishop of London says, "be laymen who have education, leisure, and independent means." This plan may in a few places succeed, but it certainly does not provide for a large additional supply of ministers. We must have in the larger parishes and centres of population many more Readers or Evangelists, as well as make use of "the great army of Christian working-men," spoken of by Archdeacon Blakeney in his paper at the Diocesan Conference in York last October. But this multiplication of agents involves the application of tests over a wider area; and the question forces itself upon our attention how the qualifications of such agents may best be proved. The Bishops' resolution, in speaking of the ordination of the unpaid Deacons, lays down two conditions: (1) That they "be tried and examined according to the Preface in the Ordinal, and in particular be found to possess a competent knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, of the Book of Common Prayer, and of theology in general;" (2) "That they be in no case admitted to the priesthood unless they can pass all the examinations which are required in the case of other candidates for that office, and that they shall have devoted their whole time to spiritual labour for not less than four years, unless they are graduates before they present themselves for these examinations."

The recommendation concerning the Readers is that "the Bishop should satisfy himself of (the Reader's) personal fitness, knowledge of Scripture, and soundness in the faith; that the Reader should also be required to sign a declaration expressive of his acceptance of the doctrines of the Church of England, and of obedience to the incumbent, and to the properly constituted authorities."

It would seem, then, that the practical exigencies of Church work are pointing towards a relaxation of what may be termed, for distinction's sake, the "scholastic" requirements of candidates for Holy Orders, so far as the office of Deacon is concerned; and thus, as has been previously pointed out, "the maintenance of the standard of culture and attainment in the ordained ministry of the Church becomes the subject of practical anxiety." This has long been a subject of anxiety and questioning to myself. My experience of fifteen years as an Examining Chaplain and as a Principal of a Theological College chiefly intended for non-graduates, has given me

opportunities of considering from a very "practical" stand-point how far any such relaxation as has been mentioned is needful, and in what respects it may be, on the one side, useful for the Church, and, on the other, may involve dangers against which we have to guard. The danger obviously is that the standard of intellectual culture may be unduly lowered for the clerical profession generally, when relaxation of certain scholastic tests is made for the purpose of facilitating or widening the area of admission to the Diaconate. But I much question whether persons in general adequately estimate the difficulty of fairly testing the various capabilities of those who as candidates for the ministry may be usefully qualified in diverse ways and degrees. There is the temptation to make the technical tests too rigid and narrow, and so to exclude worthy, earnest, diligent men. There is the temptation, on the other hand, to be impatient of all restrictions, and to admit men simply because they are earnestly religious and wish to preach the Gospel. I have found, by personal experience, that to steer between two extremes—namely, that of sacrificing what is practicable to what is ideal, and that of too readily giving up a higher ideal for "practical" considerations in clerical training, is no easy matter.

Our duties in reference to the clerical profession are to take a broad view of the Church's requirements; to provide for a painstaking investigation which shall not be merely general, formal, and technical, but also personal and specific, into the capabilities of *each* candidate; and, so far as is possible, to have a judicious supervision which shall prevent "weaker" men from occupying positions for which they are incompetent, and to keep back the "ill-prepared" men until they are better prepared either for "the higher grade," or for the special sphere which they seek to occupy. I will make a few remarks on these points under the heads of Comprehension, Investigation, Localization.

I. *Comprehension*.—Canon Bernard seems astonished to hear "from so prudent a man as the Bishop of Winchester" the wide view which that eminent and excellent prelate propounds concerning the social area from which the clergy should be drawn (See *CHURCHMAN*, x. 209). But I fully sympathize with that view; and although I most earnestly wish that there were more university men ("educated gentlemen") from the higher social grades, who would come forward and employ their intellectual power, their refinement, and the personal advantages which accrue from superior and more leisurely training, in the service of the Christian ministry, not the less do I earnestly maintain that men who belong to "the farmer and tradesman class"—yes, and a "certain number enlisted

even from the class of operatives"—can become and have become competent clergymen, whose work contributes to the welfare of the English Church and of the English nation. In a National Church like ours, which, by virtue of its historical and legal position, possesses opportunities such as are given to no other Christian body in the land of reaching with its ministrations all classes of the community, and is therefore bound to recognise a corresponding range of claims and obligations, the field of clerical work is very wide and varied. It is a field which calls for and can employ a great diversity of workers. Rigid uniformity is here, as in other departments of human activity, impossible and undesirable. We need not a clergy all cut to the same pattern, but a clergy capable of adjustment to various sorts and conditions of men and of work. Some say, and say with much reason (and I agree with them), "We want a *learned* clergy." Others most strongly insist on the *social* qualifications of the clergyman, and will deprecate (if not despise) an imperfectly cultured candidate for the ministry, as if he were an altogether alien element to the profession. Another cry is, "We want *practical* men who can organize and administer." Some ask for a curate who can "preach;" others for a man who will "visit" diligently and take an active interest in the details of parochial work. Sometimes *musical* requirements come to the front; at other times a helper is sought for who shall be qualified for *missionary* work among certain classes of the population.

Perhaps the most serious objection urged against choosing candidates for the ministry from a wide area is the contention that by trying to become comprehensive we shall fill the ranks of the clergy with unlearned men. But is it not a fact, which, upon consideration, will be acknowledged by all, that the really "learned" and "skilled" element in every profession must be a small one? and particularly must this be so at the outset of the professional career; for it is professional experience which ripens, matures, and develops the mind of those who diligently pursue their profession, and imparts a knowledge and a power which not even the most promising *débutant* possesses, or can be expected to possess. In every profession there are average and ordinary requirements, and the capacity to meet these must be exhibited and tested in some way at the commencement of the professional career. There are also special branches of professional work for which some may be more capable than others. There can be no doubt at all about the fact that an intelligent and educated clergy is a condition essential to true religious progress; and Churchmen should have the maintenance of this condition deeply at heart. We must, however, take care not to narrow the term "education for

the ministry" to such a special range of scholastic requirements as may make it impossible for the average student to satisfy the imposed test, or may exclude men who, though inferior in learning and in power of passing examinations, might justify the choice of them to be "Deacons" in the Church of England on practical grounds, duly investigated and approved.

II. *Investigation*.—I choose this term as a wider and more pertinent term than examination. For the tests by which a candidate for ordination should be proved ought not to be confined to technical examinations, however necessary and important a place such examinations may hold in the course of the candidate's training.

In estimating the capability for useful work in the ministry of the Church we have to take the personal, the local, and the practical aspects of the matter into consideration.

(1) The primary requisite is personal fitness, *i.e.*, the competency of the agents themselves for the work to be entrusted to them. Good character, intelligence, and manners (or demeanour) are the three constituents of the qualification for a clerical position, as for any professional position which is to command respect, and to produce beneficial results for the community. These lines of investigation are implied in the familiar formula, that a clergyman should be "a Christian, a scholar, and a gentleman." The first essential in the candidate for Holy Orders is the spiritual character. Moral uprightness, the force of sincere conviction, the possession of religious fervour, and religious energy are an indispensable basis for the structure of ministerial usefulness. We can perceive clearly from the New Testament that the qualifications there laid down for the ministry are spiritual, moral, and practical, rather than literary, or scholastic. And in our own Ordinal, godly and blameless character is one of the principal requirements mentioned. The investigation into character and sincerity of desire and resolve may easily become merely formal and superficial; and it is matter for regret that testimonials are not seldom given, and accepted, in too perfunctory a manner. Referees should be careful lest by overstatement in praise of a candidate, or by omitting to state something that should be known about him, they give a misleading description: and those who have to judge of the testimonials sent in should not be lax in their scrutiny, where the testimonial is at all unsatisfactory. The second constituent of "personal fitness" is the possession by the candidate of a due measure of intellectual power and attainments. Mental culture must be added to moral and religious worth. The minister must be, in some sense, a man of "learning," which is to be coupled with "godly conversation." In this "learning," the intelligent knowledge

of, and belief in, the Scriptures should occupy the foremost place. How far a knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin should be required, is a moot-point among those who are interested in clerical education. On practical grounds afterwards to be noted, I am in favour of having a *minimum* test which shall not make linguistic attainments a *sine quid non* either in reference to general learning, or to the learning of Scripture in particular. A man may be "sufficiently instructed in the Holy Scriptures" by means of English only. The study of the three sacred languages should be by all means, and in every way, encouraged, as peculiarly appropriate for clergymen. But those who cannot, from circumstances, take up the study early in life, ought not to be thereby prevented from reading for the ministry, and approving themselves in English. Of the three languages the one which should be last abandoned as a test is Greek. Some knowledge, even though slight and elementary, of the Greek Testament should be an almost universal requirement. No one will contend for the imposition of Hebrew as a compulsory test. But it is urged that Latin cannot be an optional subject, because Rubric and Canon enjoin it. Let us see what is prescribed. The Preface in the *Ordinal* enjoins that a Deacon should be *learned in the Latin tongue*, while the 34th Canon lays down that a student who has not taken "some degree of school" in Cambridge or Oxford shall "at the least be able to yield an account of his faith in Latin, according to the Articles of Religion . . . and to confirm the same by sufficient testimonies out of Holy Scriptures." If this Canon is satisfied by a man's learning by heart and being able to write down some of the Articles in Latin, it is not a very severe test. But if being "learned in the Latin tongue," and being able to give an account of one's faith in Latin, mean the power of translating English into Latin, and of writing Latin composition, there are a great many graduates who in this respect are certainly not superior to the non-graduates, or undergraduates, who are by the Canon disqualified from being admitted to Holy Orders!

What we want to test in candidates for the Diaconate is whether they have studied honestly and with good results; and whether they are so far intelligent and educated as to permit of their exercising the functions of a Deacon to the glory of God, and the good of their fellow-men—and this may certainly be done by persons who are unacquainted with any other language save that "understood by the people." "A competent knowledge of theology in general" is a very different thing from specific theological learning. There must always be a wide difference between "the scholar" in the technical use of that term, and men of inferior learning and powers,

who are yet distinctly superior to the status of illiterate and uneducated persons. Investigation of mental capacity (like the choice of candidates) must be comprehensive, and not confined within a too narrow or pedantic range. It should not be forgotten that personal interviews, and conversation, will often prove a more useful method of estimating a person's general capacity than an examination on paper. There was a time when paper examinations were too few, and their value was not sufficiently appreciated. The danger now seems to be that they may be overrated, and made to count for more than they are really worth. The personal knowledge of students' intellectual calibre by tutors (private or collegiate), if honestly and candidly imparted, in confidence, to the Bishop to whom they present themselves, is also an element of investigation into the applicants' capabilities which should not be overlooked. This might reasonably be taken into account in conjunction with any estimate formed from the result of an "independent," or of a "chaplain's," examination.

In addition to moral and intellectual fitness, it is desirable that there should be such a measure of social adaptability in a clergyman as may render him competent to win respect in varying social circumstances. Birth and education have much to do with good manners; but honesty of purpose, and a Christian disposition of mind and will, go a long way towards supplying the lack of what is termed good-breeding. And a man humbly born, and even passing his youth in circumstances unfavourable to refinement, may have much roughness modified, and manners softened and shaped by that refining process of intellectual with religious training which tends to make a man "gentlemanly," even when not a born "gentleman." Whether a candidate has had sufficient of such training must be judged of by the Bishop's private inquiries.

(2) Investigation concerning "personal fitness" should be connected with the consideration of *local* suitability. Some consideration of this point is demanded before, as well as at and after, ordination. It comes into the question of selection of men for the Diaconate, and bears upon their admission into colleges or classes, in which they are prepared for the ministry. If it were assumed, for instance, that all clergymen must be "theologians" (not in the general sense in which the Bishops' resolution speaks of possessing "a competent knowledge of theology in general," but in the sense of being learned men who can read the Fathers in Greek and Latin, can digest the philosophy of the Schoolmen, and write commentaries on the Old and New Testament), a very small circle indeed of disciples would be gathered in, either at the Universities, or other training-places, as *præparandi* for Holy Orders. If, on the

other hand, the fact be recognised that the field of clerical work in our ever-increasing population is as extensive and comprehensive as has been already intimated, then those who seek for and those who train candidates for the Christian ministry are bound to feel the force of the consideration that various spheres of work may admit of various degrees of intellectual culture and attainments. But the full weight of the regard to be paid to the consideration of locality belongs to the appointment of the clergy where they are ordained, and to this we shall draw attention presently.

(3) There is a *practical* aspect of the subject of investigation which can escape the notice of no one who admits that the supply of candidates for the Diaconate is insufficient. The test of admission must be one which will admit men who, on spiritual and practical grounds, are found capable, although they may lack the higher "scholastic" attainments which it is desirable for the clergy in general to possess. How far shall promise, or proficiency, in one line of qualification compensate for defect in another? The candidate for Deacon's Orders who is "over thirty years of age," though a "man of education and leisure," may have little knowledge of Latin and Greek; but if his means, position, and practical powers commend him to the Bishop, he will be ordained. Here is another case. A man, who has been prevented from learning Latin and Greek in youth, wishes to take orders. He is a man of earnestness, vigour, and gifted with some power of speech. He is between twenty and thirty years of age, is suited to the parochial and evangelistic wants of a particular place, is willing to go through a course of theological study, but cannot manage to study Greek and Latin with any good effect. Shall the Bishop refuse him because he cannot approve himself in Greek and Latin? Then there are cases of men who are between thirty and forty, who are willing to study for, and to serve in, the Christian ministry, and are competent for practical work, but cannot give their services "gratuitously." Suppose a man of this sort to be desirous of being ordained; but he knows "very little of Greek," and no Latin. He is ready to study at a Theological College, but the Principal has to inform him that a man of his age would probably be unable in the period of the College course to learn sufficient Greek or Latin to satisfy the current requirements of episcopal examinations. Is the linguistic test a fair one in his case? Or again, provided that he can obtain a title from a clergyman, should his age prevent him from being allowed to be a candidate for ordination on the same conditions of examination as the Deacons "above thirty years of age," who can serve without remuneration, viz., "a simpler examination than the usual one," which shall, however, "re-

quire a sound and intelligent knowledge of the Old and New Testaments, the Prayer Book, and the formularies of the Church of England."

But it will be said these are exceptional cases, and cases in which the discretion of the individual Bishop must decide. Certainly so; but the possibility of these exceptional cases being admitted, cannot but affect the question of previous training. It seems certain that the "linguistic" test will be relaxed in some cases. But if so, in what cases? And how should this bear upon any course of training to be laid down for men who have not had those advantages of school and university education which others have had?

The normal course should obviously include Greek and Latin; but might there not also be opportunity afforded for some candidates for the Diaconate who would go through a course of theological teaching in which the knowledge of English only should be required? I am sure that some men who read for orders would be benefited by devoting the hours, which have now to be given to acquire a mere smattering of Greek and Latin, to a more thoughtful and thorough study of the Scriptures in English, of Christian doctrine and evidences, and to more frequent practice in English composition, and in delivery of addresses and sermons. Might not Bishops, in any previous test of a general kind which they require before candidates come up for the episcopal examination, recognise a difference equivalent to the difference between "honour" men and "pass" men at the Universities? This would enable Theological teachers to encourage the *maximum*, while they admitted of the *minimum*, test. The knowledge that "distinction" in passing a higher standard would commend them to the Bishops as better trained and more cultured men, would stimulate all who felt they had time and ability to work for the higher standard. At the same time, those who felt that they could not compete for "distinction," would not be debarred from trying to do their best on a lower level.

A policy has been recently adopted by many of the Bishops requiring the "Preliminary Examination of candidates for Holy Orders" as a *sine qua non* test for all non-graduate candidates. From that policy I venture to express, with all respect, my dissent. I fully sympathize with the motives which prompt its adoption. To exclude men who have had little or no intellectual culture, and are not well-trained in habits of connected thought; to exclude men of indolent and feeble mental attitude who will not try to learn although they wish to be teachers; to encourage and stimulate such definite study as may enable students to shape their reading in a direction in which it might be useful for them to undergo an examination

of a general and independent character, apart from the colleges to which they belong—all this is a legitimate and useful procedure. But the "Preliminary Examination" (originally intended to be an "honour" rather than a "pass" examination) is not adapted for an exclusive test. As a matter of fact, it presses hard upon a considerable class of students (or candidates) who lie between the men who are tolerably safe to pass the examination and the men who either from indolence or incompetency should be debarred from ordination. In the examination, as at present conducted, the principle is followed of not allowing any candidate to pass if he fails in any one subject, even though he may do fairly in others. This might act well in an examination regarded as an examination for special "distinction"; but it does not allow of that principle of compensation which would naturally be allowed in a "pass" examination. Again, the cramped nature, as I must call it, of the "Preliminary" in respect of the "double" papers, where knowledge in two wide subjects is tested in three hours, is very inimical to all students who have not acquired the rare faculties of conciseness, concentration, and facility of expressing thought in short time. For the superior candidate such a test may be a good one; and for establishing a difference between those who merit "distinction" and those who do not, it is well. But the effect of it in the case of average candidates is to bewilder and to oppress; and men who might, in *one* subject taken at one time, or with a longer period for answering, answer creditably, fail. I feel tolerably confident that, if Bishops would themselves really consider the character and length of the papers which are set in the "Preliminary Examination" in Old Testament (selected subjects), in Greek Testament, and Church history, they would come to the distinct conclusion that many candidates might fail to pass in such papers who would not on that account be justly excluded from an opportunity to approve themselves at the episcopal examination in those same subjects, presented to them in a simpler form.

Practical considerations should, then, in my judgment, induce the Bishops to treat the "Preliminary" (as at present conducted) as a "distinctive," and not as a "pass," or "exclusive," test. I doubt, indeed, whether any single examination fairly tests an average man's ability; and of this I am certain, that the honest Principal of a Theological College would generally be able to reply to any inquiries of a bishop about individual students in a way which would enable the Bishop to judge for himself how far the candidate had *prima facie* claims to episcopal consideration in regard to moral, intellectual, or social qualifications. For purposes of investiga-

tion, candidates for Holy Orders may be divided into superior, average, inferior (or dubious) candidates. Let Bishops encourage the first, throw difficulties in the way of the last, but not unduly or promiscuously discourage the middle class, which, after all said and done, must be the largest class in any professional body.

I have said that I doubt whether any single examination gives a test of an average man's general ability. I have been brought to this conclusion by my experience as an examiner. A single examination can always discover evident superiority either of knowledge or of intellectual power, and it can perhaps detect hopeless incompetency; but I have found that the records of several successive examinations form a more trustworthy estimate of the general capabilities of average students than can be formed from the results of a single one; and I am quite sure that it is a more accurate estimate than can be drawn from the results of a central competitive examination like the "Preliminary."

I contend, further, that on practical grounds investigation must go beyond the mere question of position in a class list. The linguistic test, for instance, sometimes brings a man lower down on the list than his general attainments and capabilities would place him. I know of men who by knowledge of Latin and Greek have obtained a place above those who were distinctly superior as regards general qualifications for clerical work. It must be observed that I have been speaking in view of a class of students who, without being, in a scholastic sense, "superior," do by a diligent and intelligent pursuit of appointed studies approve themselves as above the blame due to indolence or inability. I dislike even to seem to deprecate the value of "a classical education" and of literary culture. I am most grateful for the knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, which, under God's good providence, I have been enabled to acquire; and I could wish that many more of those who are candidates for the Christian ministry could have the same advantages which I had. But, as has been already said, "learning" and the higher theological studies for which "learning" is useful must be a department for which a comparatively small number of the clergy can qualify. And it is surely indisputable that the practical work of contending against vice and irreligion, and of evangelizing the masses, needs not only the direct exercise of sanctified learning, but also the multiplication of commissioned ministers of God's Word, who, without being in the technical sense "learned," shall have enough of trained intelligence, moral energy, and spiritual discernment, to fit them for taking useful part in the parochial and evangelistic machinery, even though they may

have less culture, less polish, and less scholarship than others, especially at the outset of their clerical career.

III. *Localization*.—The theory is much easier to state than to carry out. “To place the right man in the right place” is a prescript facile to utter, but difficult to execute. Yet this principle is one which should receive as much attention as possible from incumbents, Bishops, and patrons. An incumbent should only give a “title” to a candidate for a curacy on the distinct conviction that he is suitable to the sphere of work to which the incumbent invites him, or for which he becomes an applicant. A Bishop should require the incumbent to satisfy him that there is such a suitability in the person whom he nominates. And if the candidate’s qualifications for work be of a narrow and limited nature, he should be admonished that he will not be allowed to be ordained to the “priesthood” until he has approved himself by such further tests either of a scholastic or of a practical kind, as shall satisfy the Bishop that he is fit for full clerical orders. It seems clear to my mind that, with an extended Diaconate and the necessary widening of the area of admission, the lengthening of the period of the Diaconate will have to be more generally adopted than hitherto. The late Bishop of London mentioned in a recent Charge that the Deacons, to be admitted on the new arrangements, should pass “an examination of less stringency than that which is ordinarily required” for the Diaconate, but would not be qualified for full orders till they should have ministered *at least four years* in the Diaconate, and were prepared to undergo the same examination as that which is required of all other candidates for that order.

This prolongation of the Diaconate will bring out the often-forgotten principle that the Diaconate should be regarded as a probationary period. A man can be tested in and by his work as deacon in many points in which the tests before ordination would not apply. And if it came to be generally understood that a deacon would not be allowed to obtain full orders until he had satisfied the Bishop of the diocese that he was competent for wider work and fuller authority, two beneficial results might be expected to follow. First, the candidates for Deacons’ orders who intended to be more than “permanent Deacons” would be stirred up to acquitted themselves well in their first episcopal examination; and secondly, incumbents would be morally constrained to allow their Deacon-curates adequate time for such study and such special work as might be required to commend them to the Bishop with a view to their being promoted to the office of Presbyter.

What kind of examinations during the Diaconate should be required, and how far the specific needs of the locality should

affect the nature of the examinations, or of the reports concerning the Deacon's work which the incumbent would be expected to submit to the Bishop, are matters which only local experience could decide.

The requirement of a longer period in one locality (say three years) might perhaps prove an advantageous arrangement to adopt in many instances of a first curacy. The curate would have time to mature in experience, and would not be restlessly seeking for new openings; and incumbents would become careful to choose a man who seemed likely to do the work which the particular district or parish demanded.

The principle of judicious localization, *i.e.*, of adjusting materials of various sorts to suitable places, is a more elastic principle than that of endeavouring to exclude all material which is not of one superfine sort. The former is a comprehensive principle; the latter a limiting one. That there must be limitation is essential, but it is not less practically important that there should be sufficient width of view to secure the required number of workmen. The field is wide, and far from uniform in its nature; the labourers needed are many; they cannot all be "skilled" workmen in the sense in which some of them ought to be so; but if they be of good character, diligent, and competent for specific work in one or another part of the field, should we not rather seek to sort the labourers wisely rather than to sift them too severely?

I shall be sorry if my meaning in writing this paper is misapprehended. In speaking as I have done with a special view to that relaxation of "scholastic" tests which any extension of the Diaconate must bring with it, I do not wish to be considered forgetful of the great need which exists both of scholastic ability and of general culture among the ranks of the clergy. But the supply of such men cannot be effected by the mere imposition of high examination tests. The Spirit of God, moving men who have had superior social and educational advantages to devote themselves to theological and clerical work, is the only power effective in this matter. Meanwhile, whether such men be forthcoming or no, the number of ministers ought to be kept up in proportion to population, and to the multiplied needs of ministration (whether homiletical or liturgical, pastoral or evangelistic) which call for an adequate supply of living agents, sufficiently instructed to do intelligent work, and animated by the spirit of devotion to Christ, and to the spread of the gospel of God's love. We are bound to meet practical needs to the best of our ability. The ideal of a clergyman's training is that he should have a general and "liberal" education (as the phrase is), followed by specific professional

training. To obtain this education *in full* is out of the reach of many, who are unable to afford the requisite expenditure of money and time. If more aid were provided to help poorer students towards obtaining a fair clerical education, good results might follow. Mr. E. R. Bernard (see CHURCHMAN, vol. ix., p. 8) has made reference to "a Yorkshire parish" which raised its contribution to a curate's stipend from £100 to £140, "on the condition that the incumbent should find them a university man." Whether the requirement in this particular instance was that of literary or of social superiority, the readiness to contribute in order to secure a competent man was very praiseworthy. But a great deal more might be done for the good of the Church if a larger amount of pecuniary aid were forthcoming for the *training* of young men who may feel a longing to enter the ministry and to fit themselves for it, but are debarred from entering a collegiate course either at the University or at a Theological College by want of sufficient means to defray the necessary expenses. A judicious system of grants in aid to applicants who, showing their need of such aid, could furnish satisfactory proofs of character and of capability for study, would prove a most useful species of assistance, not merely to the individuals aided, but to the Church at large.

W. SAUMAREZ SMITH.

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## ART. II.—SAINTS' DAYS IN THE CHURCH'S YEAR.

### III. MARCH. ANNUNCIATION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

#### A. THE LESSONS OF THE MAGNIFICAT.

"*And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord.*"—LUKE i. 46.

THE *Magnificat* is so familiar to us that the danger of not thoroughly penetrating into its meaning, and consequently of losing part of its spiritual instruction, is a very real danger. It is true that ignorance of the meaning of Holy Scripture generally arises from an opposite cause, the want of familiarity. We are careless, and therefore ignorant: we do not study these sacred pages: and neglect brings its penalty in actual lack of knowledge. Nothing is easier than to fancy we understand a form of words, when we have long been used to listen to it, or to join in it without understanding it. And when the question of understanding such words does not arise—when the persons who use the hymn are well educated and experience no difficulty as to the meaning of its language, still there is the risk that familiarity should result in want of