

CLERICAL INCOMES

CLERICAL INCOMES

An Inquiry into the Cost of Living
among the Parochial Clergy. By
Eleven Diocesan Contributors

Edited with an Introduction by
J. HOWARD B. MASTERMAN, M.A.
Rector of St. Mary - le - Bow
Church, Canon of Coventry



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I

INTRODUCTION

By the EDITOR

FROM time to time attention is directed to individual cases of poverty among the parochial clergy, but no attempt has hitherto been made to state the facts with regard to the incomes of the clergy as a class. Their natural reluctance to encourage public discussion of their domestic affairs has resulted in widespread ignorance of the real facts. It is generally assumed that most of them are able to supplement the inadequate incomes of their benefices from their own resources. No doubt a considerable number of the clergy have some private means, or they could not live at all ; but the supply of candidates for Holy Orders has been drawn chiefly from the professional class, in which the struggle to maintain a reasonable standard of life is more severe at the present time than in any other class. Even before the War it was becoming increasingly difficult to secure incumbents

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with private means for inadequately endowed benefices.

The actual facts about the incomes of the clergy cannot be gathered from any mere collection of statistics ; they are known only to those who are brought into intimate contact with their home life. It seemed, therefore, that the best way to present them to the public would be to invite a certain number of leading churchmen who have special knowledge of the facts to write of what they know. Every contributor to this volume has been left free to treat the subject in whatever way he judged best. The cumulative evidence thus gathered from various dioceses will serve to show how serious the problem is with which we are confronted. The Dioceses of London, Manchester, Birmingham, Southwell, Norwich, and Salisbury were selected as typical of industrial and country dioceses ; and the Bishops of Lichfield and Colchester, the Dean of York, Canon Partridge and the Rev. A. G. B. Atkinson have all been closely associated with the administrative work of the Church.

The problem of the poverty of the clergy is no new one. According to Adam Smith, till after the middle of the fourteenth century an English mason's wages were much higher than those of a parish priest. In spite of a Statute

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of Queen Anne, he adds, there are still (1776) many curacies under £20 a year. Macaulay's description of the condition of the clergy at the end of the seventeenth century is familiar.

Hardly one living in fifty enabled the incumbent to bring up a family comfortably. As children multiplied and grew, the household of the priest became more and more beggarly. Holes appeared more and more plainly in the thatch of his parsonage and in his single cassock. Often it was only by toiling on his glebe, or feeding swine, and by loading dungcarts, that he could obtain daily bread ; nor did his utmost exertions always prevent the bailiffs from taking his concordance and inkstand in execution. His children were brought up like the children of the neighbouring peasantry. His boys followed the plough, and his girls went out to service.

Conditions improved somewhat during the eighteenth century, chiefly owing to the fact that a good many of the clergy, like Dr. Primrose in '*The Vicar of Wakefield*,' had private fortunes that enabled them to be independent of the stipend that they received. Readers of Goldsmith's novel will remember that after the loss of his fortune Dr. Primrose accepted a benefice with a stipend of £15, which he supplemented by laborious work as a farmer.

The inadequate endowment of benefices led

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to a great deal of pluralism, but this only shifted the burden of poverty from the non-resident incumbent to the curate. This scandal was mitigated by the Pluralities Act of 1838, which also provided facilities for uniting small and ill-endowed parishes.

The Report of the Royal Commission of 1835 stated that nearly 2000 benefices had an income of less than £100 a year, and nearly 5000 of less than £200. The average stipend of a curate, where the incumbent was non-resident, was £79. Nearly half the benefices in England had either no parsonage house or one unfit for habitation. When the Ecclesiastical Commission was established, in 1837, the surplus revenues of Bishoprics and Cathedral Chapters were transferred to it, and it was charged to make 'provision for the cure of souls in parishes where such assistance was most required.' The Commissioners have carried out their trust in three ways. They have made grants to meet benefactions for the permanent augmentation of the income of benefices ; they have provided endowments for new parishes in populous areas ; and they have raised the income of all benefices in public patronage to a certain minimum. In the case of those benefices that had 'local claims' (*i.e.* were situated in districts from which the Commissioners derived revenue)

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the income has been raised to £300 in cases where the population exceeded 1000, and grants have also been made for parsonage houses. In the case of other benefices in public patronage, the Commissioners have raised the income of parishes with a population of over 4000 to a minimum of £300, and last year proposed a scheme for raising those with a population of 2000 and upward to a minimum of £250. Ten years ago they also carried out a plan for securing a minimum of £200 to all benefices with a population of over 500. ‘The general scope of these schemes may be described as that of raising to a minimum provision of £200 per annum the income of every incumbent of a benefice with a population clearly sufficient to require a separate incumbent.’ In the case of new districts, the grant made by the Commissioners has generally been £200 per annum in cases where the population exceeded 4000 ; or, where the new parish was in private patronage, £100 to meet an equivalent sum from other sources. They have also made over 1000 grants, generally of £60 or £120 per annum, towards the stipends of assistant-curates.¹

¹ For further details of the work of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the reader is referred to a recently published book, *The Ecclesiastical Commission : a Sketch of its History and Work*, by Sir Lewis Dibdin and S. E. Downing (Macmillan).

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Long before the Ecclesiastical Commissioners came into existence, the Queen Anne's Bounty Board, appointed to administer the First-fruits and Tentshs restored by the Queen to the Church, was carrying out a similar policy of making grants for the permanent augmentation of the income of benefices to meet benefactions from other sources. The total amount expended by Queen Anne's Bounty during the last two hundred years is close on £9,000,000.

Beside these official organisations for the administration of Church revenues, voluntary societies have come into existence for dealing with clerical poverty. The oldest of these is the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation, established in 1856, which gives grants in money and clothing to meet special cases of need, and has also a fund for assisting clergy to pay the expense of a holiday. With very inadequate resources, this Society has done a most valuable work in relieving acute distress among the clergy and their families; but what can be said of such a letter as the following?—

May I respectfully apply for a grant of clothing for my wife and self? I had hoped to wait until I get a bonus, but neither of us is really able to go out decently. I would not apply if I could help it, but I am driven to do

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so. I am bound in this hot weather to wear my overcoat in Sunday School to cover my rags. I have no debts.

The Curates' Augmentation Fund was founded ten years later to help the older unbeficed clergy. The Fund makes grants of £50 a year to assistant curates who have been in Holy Orders for at least fifteen years. The Secretary states that there are no fewer than 1400 clergy eligible for grants from the Fund, but it has only been possible to make grants to 200 of them. 'About seventy applications for help are received by the Society every year, but the Council are unable to meet more than about twenty-five.'

The Queen Victoria Clergy Fund was started in 1896, under the title of the Clergy Sustentation Fund. This title was changed in the following year to 'Queen Victoria Clergy Sustentation Fund,' and on the obtaining of a Royal Charter, in 1898, the present title was adopted. The objects of the Society are :—

1. To impress upon all members of the Church of England the clearly defined Christian duty of contributing towards the support of the clergy.
2. To supplement and extend the diocesan organisations for the support of the clergy ; to

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elicit contributions for this purpose from the richer to the poorer dioceses ; and generally to promote the further sustentation of the clergy.

The income of the Fund is derived from voluntary contributions (about £2300), dividends from investments (about £1000), and contributions from affiliated diocesan organisations (about £5400). It also receives variable sums in legacies. Block grants are made to each diocese, and the allocation of them is left to the affiliated diocesan organisation. Since 1897 the sum of £353,762 has been paid in block grants, and over £850,000 has been distributed by the diocesan branches in annual payments to incumbents whose benefices do not provide a living wage. A small sum is available each year for the permanent augmentation of benefices.

The problem of ministerial stipends is being considered by the Free Churches, and in reply to inquiries the official authorities have kindly furnished me with information as to the standard at present adopted. Of the Wesleyan Methodists, the Rev. Henry Carter writes :—

The recent Annual Conference decided that the stipend for a *married* minister of ten years' standing and under should be not less than £200, and for a married minister over ten years' standing not less than £220. The minimum stipend of a probationer (that is, a preacher on

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trial, not yet ordained) should be £130. These are, of course, only a part of the customary ministerial allowances. The circuit, in addition, is responsible for the provision of a furnished house, and payment of rates and taxes thereon ; frequently also for the payment of income tax on the stipend (named above) ; and Connexional Funds are liable for annual grants for the maintenance and the education of the children of the ministers. There is sometimes also an arrangement for honorary medical attendance.

The Rev. J. Mayles states that the minimum stipend among the Primitive Methodists is £130 for the first four years, and £200 after that, in addition to a furnished house, and an allowance of £10 for each child under eighteen years of age.

The Rev. George Parker supplies the following information with regard to the United Methodist Church :—

The *minimum* salaries fixed by the Conference, and paid, of course, by the Circuits, are : For probationers, £150 per year ; for ordained ministers (*i.e.* after four years of probation), £200 per year ; for the superintendent of a Circuit where there is more than one minister, £210 per year. In the case of ordained ministers there is also a furnished house provided, free of rent, rates, and upkeep. There is also £10 a year paid per child up to the eighteenth year—*i.e.* eighteen annual payments. The Circuits

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also provide annuities for aged and afflicted ministers and for the widows of ministers. The highest annuity is £63 15s. This we are seeking to increase to £85. Each minister must also join the Ministers' Friendly Society, where the highest annuity paid is £42 10s. The payment for a widow is two-thirds the amount paid to her late husband, or to which the husband would have been entitled.

Of the Presbyterian Church of England, the Rev. J. S. Roose writes :—

The Presbyterian Church of England prior to the War had a minimum stipend for its ordained ministers of £200 per annum, with a few exceptions where £160 was given on the 'Lower Platform' of the Sustentation Fund. These stipends (the lower, *i.e.* £250 and under) were augmented by voluntary effort in the Presbyteries during the War. But now the Synod (the supreme court of our Church) has set going a 'Thanksgiving Fund' to raise £100,000 in order to increase the minimum stipend to £300 in the provinces, but to raise it to £350 in London and the large cities. There is often a Manse as well.

In the Congregational and Baptist Churches stipends are fixed locally, and no common standard is adopted.

Inadequate as these stipends admittedly are, they represent, when outgoings are taken into account,

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account, a higher minimum standard than is afforded in the Church of England. The circumstances of the Church of England clergy differ somewhat from those of ministers of the Free Churches. The Church of England has accepted responsibility for bringing the ministrations of religion within reach of all who are willing to accept them. Through its parochial system it provides a resident priest in every centre of population¹; and in many villages, and in the poorer parts of our great cities, the incumbent and his colleagues are the only ministers of religion living among the people. The ancient endowments of the Church have made this possible, but even before the War they were entirely inadequate to provide a living wage for the clergy under the conditions of modern life, and the rise in the cost of living that the War has brought about has reduced many of the clergy to the verge of actual destitution. In just those places where the work of the clergy is most needed and the claims on their sympathy and help most constant, the work of the Church is being crippled by the intolerable burden of financial anxiety from which they are suffering. We are right in expecting from the clergy a simple standard of life and a definite

¹ ‘The ideal of the Church of England has been to provide a resident gentleman for every parish in the kingdom.’

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detachment from the scramble for material things which is the ugliest characteristic of modern life ; but no man can give himself whole-heartedly to the cure of souls entrusted to him if he is burdened with perpetual anxiety about the provision of simple necessities for himself and his family.

Even where the claims of the parish do not demand all the time and energy of the incumbent, there are few ways in which he can supplement the income of the benefice. It is not generally desirable that he should farm his own glebe, even when he has the requisite knowledge and strength to do so, and it is only a small section of the clergy who can augment their incomes by teaching or literary work. They are rightly precluded from occupying themselves with definitely secular employment.

But, it may be said, at least the beneficed clergy have their glebe houses. The laity do not even now recognise how serious a financial burden these glebe houses often are. The Wesleyan Methodist Church not only provides a house ready furnished for its ministers, but also undertakes the maintenance of it, so relieving the minister of all anxiety in regard to this matter. In the Church of England the entire cost of maintenance is thrown on the incumbent. In earlier days wealthy incumbents were allowed

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to enlarge rectory houses with a reckless disregard of the welfare of their successors. As a result, an inadequately endowed parish is often saddled with a rectory house the upkeep of which absorbs more than the entire revenue of the benefice. In consequence of the rise in the cost of building, the problem of dilapidations has become a nightmare to many an incumbent.

Here is my own case [an incumbent wrote to me recently]—a huge house, fit for a squire, large lawns, two conservatories, five stall stables, very large coach-house, with glebe farm buildings. When I came, in 1912, worth £218 ; this I have raised to £251 ; deduct £1 for collecting rent, £50 for repairs and rates and taxes, over £100 for gardener and boy ; and I am left with less than £100 to pay subscriptions and dilapidations of nearly £200 every five years, no matter how well I keep it up. The rise in the cost of labour has turned my rise in rent into an adverse balance. Who will take such a living !

The Rev. A. G. B. Atkinson, who as Secretary of the Curates' Augmentation Fund has special knowledge of the circumstances of the unbeneficed clergy, has dealt with their needs and claims. While so large a proportion of benefices can only be held by clergy having substantial private means, many assistant-clergy

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have to face the probability of remaining unbenedicled, and unless they are prepared to remain celibate they have little to look forward to but a life of constant financial anxiety.

Most of the writers who have contributed to this volume have touched on possible remedies for the present condition of things. The remedies proposed are of two kinds. Something may be done to relieve the clergy by removing the charges that reduce the actual income that they receive to a sum much below its nominal amount. Regarding this, attention must be drawn to some hardships that the clergy suffer in connexion with the tithe rent charge. About 12,000 parishes are dependent on tithe, wholly or in part, for the maintenance of the incumbent. By the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 a money payment, varying according to the price of corn, was substituted for the old tithe in kind. Agricultural depression has kept the tithe below par for most of the period that followed, the highest rate being £112 15s. 6d. in 1875, and the lowest £66 10s. 9d. in 1901. For thirteen years (1897-1909) the rate was less than £70. The rise in the price of corn that resulted from the War would have raised the tithe rent charge to as much as £123 in 1923, and £160 in 1926. An Act was accordingly passed last year by which the value of the tithe rent charge was

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fixed for the next seven years at the 1918 rate—
£109 3s. 11d. After 1925 it is to be calculated
on a fifteen years' average, instead of seven as
heretofore. I do not propose to say anything
about this arrangement, which was assented to
by the Archbishop of Canterbury on behalf of
the Church, but it has been widely felt that it
should have been accompanied by some redress
of the grievance under which the clergy suffer
in having to pay rates on their tithe by the
provisions of the Parochial Assessment Act
(1836). In 1899 the Royal Commission on
Local Taxation reported in favour of some
measure of relief for the beneficed clergy, on
the ground that there was 'no other class of
ratepayers whose basis of assessment results in
the contribution of so large a proportion of
income towards local taxation,' and that 'the
persons entitled to the rent charge are under a
legal obligation to render services and to perform
duties in return therefor.' The Rates Relief
Act of that year remitted one-half of the rates
on tithe rent charge, but it still remains a hard-
ship that the income of an incumbent should be
liable to rates while the income of other pro-
fessional men, often much larger, is not so
liable. Thus a tithe rent charge of £400 will
probably be reduced by at least £60 for rates,
and the incumbent has also to pay rates on his

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house ; while his neighbour, whose income is derived from investments or other sources, only pays the rate on his house.

The Bishop of Lichfield and the Archdeacon of Nottingham have dealt with the subject of glebe houses and dilapidations. It is not very creditable to the Church of England that both these matters have been allowed to drift on so long without any effective effort being made to find a solution.¹ The shortage of housing accommodation makes it, for the present, much easier to get rid of existing glebe houses than to provide other accommodation for the dispossessed incumbent. But the existing arrangement by which the parish priest lives as a splendid pauper in one of the most imposing houses in the village, must come to an end. In view of the efforts now being made, and hereafter, we hope, to be made more whole-heartedly, to revive village life, a much more exacting standard of efficiency will be asked for from the country clergy than in the days when the best life of the English villages was being sucked into the vortex of our overcrowded cities. The village incumbent will be less of an almoner, more of a teacher ; his influence will depend less on his social position than on

¹ Since writing this, the Queen Anne's Bounty Board has adopted a scheme for affording incumbents partial relief from the burden of dilapidations.

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his spiritual power. The big rectory-house will be the symbol of all that separates him from the common life of men, and its abandonment will mean his emancipation both from financial anxieties and from outworn traditions.

Though some town benefices are burdened with over-large vicarage houses, the tendency in newer parishes is to provide a house of moderate size, and where this adjoins the church it should obviously be retained. But in such cases, the upkeep of the house should be a charge on the funds of the parish, and not on those of the incumbent. It would also be reasonable that the responsibility for the upkeep of the chancel should be transferred from the rector (except in the case of a lay impropriator, whose tithe is not an earned income) to the parish.

The nominal value of a benefice is often subject to heavy deductions for contributions towards the stipend of assistant-curates. Some years ago attention was drawn to the fact that the rectory of Hawarden, of the nominal value of nearly £2000, did not in fact provide a living wage for the incumbent, owing to the number of assistant-curates that were needed for the efficient working of the parish. The parishes where the largest staff is required are often those that are least able to provide funds for the maintenance of their clergy, and the expedients

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to which parishes are sometimes reduced in order to replenish the assistant-curate fund do not foster respect for the clergy. For the incumbent the only alternative is to find the necessary sum out of his own resources. It is only the help afforded by the Additional Curates' Society and the Church Pastoral Aid Society, and by Diocesan Funds, that has enabled many an incumbent to have a colleague, and if the unbeficed clergy are to be paid a stipend proportioned to the present cost of living these Societies will be hard put to it to maintain their grants on an adequate scale. There is much to be said for the proposal that all unbeficed clergy should be paid from a central fund in each diocese, each parish being asked to pay in proportion to its ability for the services of its assistant-curates. The position of the assistant priest of a parish cannot be satisfactory where it is one of direct financial dependence on the incumbent. Another way in which the incomes of the clergy can be indirectly supplemented is by providing pensions for old age, and some assistance for widows and orphans. Few of the clergy are in a position to provide adequately for their own old age, and various proposals have been made for a pension fund. The earliest, and worst, of these is the Incumbents' Resignation Act of 1871, which provides for the assignment to a retiring incum-

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bent of a sum not exceeding one-third of the income of the benefice, thus crippling his successor during the early years of his incumbency in order to provide what is often a mere pittance for the retiring incumbent. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have tried to remedy this by establishing a pension scheme, by which an income not exceeding £75 is secured to a retiring incumbent, out of which a sum not exceeding £25 is to be paid to his successor if he draws a pension from the benefice whereby the income is reduced below £250. It is a condition of any such grants that they shall be met by a grant of not less than £50 per annum from diocesan or other funds. Pensions are also provided by the Clergy Pensions Institution, founded in 1885. The purpose of this Society is to encourage self-help by the clergy, and accordingly every clergyman who joins the Society is required to pay a premium annually sufficient to secure for him a pension of £15 15s. at the age of sixty-five. This sum is augmented, when he retires, out of the voluntary contributions collected by the Society. At present the amount of augmentation given by the C.P.I. is about £40 per annum.

There are a number of societies that afford financial help to widows and orphans by grants for maintenance and education, the oldest and

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best-known being the Sons of the Clergy Corporation, which distributes a sum of nearly £30,000 a year in grants and pensions to clergy, widows, and orphans, and for the education of children.

The task of relieving the poverty of the clergy has, in our characteristically English way, been left largely to voluntary societies, and the relation of these societies to the Central Church Fund which is now being raised will require careful consideration. The growth of bureaucracy, both in Church and State, constitutes one of the greatest dangers with which our national life is menaced. The only effective safeguard is an alert and intelligent democracy, and that is why the effort to secure for the Church of England larger powers of self-government ought to be supported by all who desire to save the Church from a regime of red tape and machinery. The existence of voluntary agencies side by side with official organisations tends to keep the administration of Church finances from being dehumanised, and there is, in reality, no more 'taint of charity' involved in grants from societies than in grants from official funds. The objects of the Central Church Fund need not be further discussed here, as they are dealt with in Canon Partridge's essay.

I have dealt with the indirect methods by

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which the incomes of the clergy may be made more adequate by relieving them of various charges to which they ought not properly to be subject. But when all these steps have been taken, the majority of benefices would still offer less than a living wage to their incumbents. How can this be remedied ?

There is an idea, which often finds expression in the secular Press, that the problem can be solved by pooling the revenues of the Church and re-dividing them. Several of the writers of the essays that follow have dealt with this proposal, and from the figures that they give it will be seen that a redistribution of existing revenues would only reduce all the clergy to one level of poverty. But some system of redistribution must certainly form part of a larger scheme. I do not attach much importance to the argument that the Church of England should have financial prizes to offer to its clergy ; it is much more important that the Church should be able to offer to all its clergy a modest but adequate competence. The respect and affection of our people is a far better reward for faithful service than promotion to a ‘fat’ living, which often proves in fact rather a burden than a gain.

The statement of the Bishop of Lichfield, which could be confirmed by every other diocesan bishop, shows that the position of a bishop of

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the Church of England, so far from being one of affluence, is one in which a man without private means would be hard put to it to make both ends meet. It must also be remembered that many of the 'best' livings are the churches in London and other cities in which the stipend of the incumbent is derived, not from endowments, but from pew-rents or other voluntary contributions of the congregation.

Obviously, the first need is to secure for every clergyman the reasonable prospect of a living wage. In this connexion, one matter deserves serious consideration. In every other profession it is possible for a man to withdraw without discredit if he finds himself unsuited for the work. It is true that Holy Orders are indelible, and cannot be renounced, but when a man finds that, through changes in his intellectual attitude or other disabilities, he can no longer minister effectively in the priestly office, there ought surely to be some way in which he can honourably turn to some other avocation, without permanently disqualifying himself from subsequently resuming the exercise of his ministry, as he is required to do by the Clerical Disabilities Act. To put it harshly, no other profession makes itself responsible for providing for all its own failures. A man who finds himself unfitted for parochial work may serve

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the community well in some other sphere of work, but he will hesitate to do so while he is liable to be regarded as one who, having put his hand to the plough, has looked back. So he goes on, feeling himself in a false position but unable to escape from it. Moral principle may prevent him from becoming neglectful of his duties, but his own spiritual life and that of his parish will both suffer from his sense of unfitness.

What constitutes, under modern conditions, a 'living wage'? The demand of the Labour Party for a £250 limit for income tax is based on the contention that this sum constitutes a minimum living wage for a working-class household. Even if the standard of living of a clergyman approximated to that of a working-man there are certain necessary expenses that he is bound to incur. He must spend something on books and travelling (unless he is to be isolated from diocesan life), and if his wife is to do among the women and girls the work that many of the wives of the clergy have done in the past, he must have at least one domestic servant to share in the work of the house. There are probably no workers in the community who receive less recognition for the services that they render than the wives of the clergy. In current fiction they are generally represented as interfering busybodies, dominating weak-minded and

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ineffective husbands, and patronising with offensive benevolence the recipients of coal tickets and flannel petticoats. It cannot be denied that parishes and dioceses have suffered at times from the ‘monstrous regiment of women,’ but thousands of wives of the clergy have sacrificed health and social enjoyments in the effort to serve the poor among whom they live. Such service would be impossible if the whole task of domestic work and the care of the children were laid on them.

No class in the community makes greater sacrifices for the education of their children than the clergy. It is a right instinct that leads a father to desire for his children at least as good an education as he received himself, and it is certainly not for the advantage of the nation that the sons and daughters of the parsonage should be prevented by the poverty of their parents from obtaining an education that will fit them to ‘serve God both in Church and State.’ The time may come when higher education will be open free to all who possess the capacity to profit by it, but in this generation, at least, the task of furnishing the nation with intellectual leadership is entrusted to those who, understanding the value of education, are willing to live frugally for the sake of their children. A few years ago an investigation of the ‘Dictionary

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of National Biography' showed how large a proportion of the men and women who had become the leaders of national life had come from English parsonages. To an educated man, nothing makes poverty so hard to bear as the consciousness that he must depend on charity for the education of his children. Occupations are largely hereditary : the sons of the coal miner and the cotton-worker tend to adopt their father's avocation ; and there is nothing 'snobish' in the desire of the clergy that their sons should serve the community in occupations akin to their own. If we are content to pay our clergy a wage that makes this impossible, we cannot be surprised if educated men hesitate to offer themselves for Holy Orders, knowing that by doing so they are not only accepting poverty for themselves, but also making it impossible for their children to enter the professions to which they would naturally be drawn by their upbringing and associations.

Some idea of what constitutes a living wage is afforded by the new scale of pay for Army officers now adopted in the British Army. A second lieutenant begins with an income of £320, with an extra allowance of £74 if married. After two years he receives £448 if married and after seven years £505, rising to £667 after fifteen years' service. All officers are also

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provided with pensions on retirement, and receive allowances for official travelling, and in some cases houses and allowances for hospitality and other special expenses. In view of the present cost of living this scale cannot be regarded as excessive, and it serves to show how far below a living wage the present standard of clerical stipends is.

Bishop Hamilton Baynes, writing from his experience as Bishop of Natal, explains how the remuneration of the clergy is organised in the unendowed Churches in the British Dominions. In this country the question is complicated by the system of private patronage. While the scandal of the sale of livings is allowed to continue, it is impossible for the Church to raise the permanent income of benefices that can be treated as the private property of individuals or bodies of self-appointed trustees. The creation of a Sustentation Fund that shall provide for every clergyman a minimum stipend will necessarily involve a complete change in the present patronage system.

In no Church are the laity more generous than in the Church of England. Besides maintaining its own activities, the Church of England provides far larger contributions than any other religious body in England for the support of hospitals and other public charities. But the

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financial basis of the Church must be broadened if the greatly increased contributions that will be needed in the future are to be secured. A considerable proportion of the income of the Church has in the past been derived from the contributions of the middle class to which the nation has, to a large extent, owed the maintenance of its religious life. But on no other class has the increase in the cost of living fallen so heavily, and the practical disappearance of this class may yet prove to be, in this country, the most disastrous result of the War. Church finance in the future must depend largely on the regular contributions of the wage-earning class. How substantial these may be is shown by the funds accumulated by the great Trade Unions. Unless the Church of England can become the Church of the people it cannot retain its territorial organisation, and will have to become once more a missionary Church served by travelling priests vowed to poverty and celibacy.

The purpose of this volume of essays is not to propound a solution of the problem with which it deals, but to show how pressing the problem is. The matter is one in which the State as well as the Church is interested, since it affects the ability of the Church of England to fulfil its contract by providing the ministrations of religion

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for all in this realm of England who are willing to accept them. It would seem, therefore, that the first step should be the appointment of a Royal Commission to ascertain the facts and make such proposals for dealing with the existing revenues of the Church as might insure their being used to the best advantage.¹ When it is clear that the Church of England is making the best use of the revenues already available for the payment of its clergy, it will be for the laity of the Church to decide how to provide a living wage for them. Of all ways in which this can be done, the system of pew-rents is perhaps the least desirable. The right method would seem to be the provision of a minimum living wage from a central or diocesan fund, which may be supplemented by Easter offerings and other contributions of the people of the parish, who will thus be able to give expression to whatever gratitude they feel for the spiritual things that have been sown unto them by their pastor and his colleagues.

The reorganisation of the finances of the Church along the lines here suggested will

¹ The Bishop of Lichfield supports the Archbishop's preference for the independent action of the Church, but any proposal for redistribution of endowments would be much more likely to meet with the approval of Parliament if recommended by a Commission on which the State was represented.

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necessarily take months, or even years, to carry out, and in the meantime a considerable number of the clergy are drifting rapidly towards actual destitution. In some dioceses emergency funds have been raised to assist the most pressing cases of need, but a much larger immediate effort is required, not as a substitute for the permanent augmentation of stipends, but as a means of staving off the insolvency of many of the clergy while more permanent measures are being considered.

II

THE POVERTY OF THE CLERGY

By the BISHOP OF LICHFIELD

THE fact of the poverty of the clergy is beyond dispute. The various chapters in this book prove it to demonstration. But it may be worth while to add a few bald statements, based on my knowledge of my own diocese of Lichfield. In that diocese there are 456 'livings.' The average¹ income of those livings is £294. The value of only 27 is over £500. Two hundred have a less income than £250.

There are 165 unbefooled clergy, of whom about 81 are married. It is difficult to get the exact figures with regard to their payment, but their average income is certainly less than £200.

In pre-war days an income of £294 might possibly have represented a 'living wage' for a family. It is impossible so to regard it now. Even in the few instances where the enhanced value of tithe has increased the parson's incomings, the increment is very far from meeting the

¹ In calculating these averages I have in each case counted as one parish those parishes which are combined and held 'in plurality.'

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greater cost of living. The plain fact is that in many industrial districts the parson's family, unless he has private means, is one of the poorest in the parish.

Now, before we go any further, let us deal with a fundamental question which needs careful thinking out. Is the poverty of the clergy such a bad thing after all? There are many who warn us of the danger of attaching too much importance to this and other questions of Church finance. 'Spiritual power,' they remind us, 'has nothing whatever to do with material wealth. Our Lord was poor. St. Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none." St. Francis, in his holy poverty, brought new life to a corrupt Christendom. The days when the Church has been wealthiest in money have often been the days when it has been poorest in the true riches.'

All this is true and salutary doctrine. The ecclesiastical commercialists who suppose that you cannot command good spiritual work except by paying an inflated price for it, and who measure a parson's worth by the amount of money which he can raise, would do well to learn it. There can be no sort of excuse for a luxurious clergy. If bishops spend their nominally large income on their own comforts or the maintenance of an obsolete feudal magnificence, and if the clergy identify themselves with

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the expensive classes of society, the Church will never be able to persuade the world that it cannot serve God and Mammon.

But we want to be sure what we mean when we talk about ‘holy poverty.’ If we mean that all clergy (why not say ‘all Christian men’?) should avoid luxury and live simply, the case for such poverty is unanswerable. But at present there are clergy who are obliged to live, not simply, but sordidly, without the possibility of reaching the modest standard of comfort which the humblest wage-earners are rightly claiming. We will presently consider in some detail the evils which such poverty brings with it. There are, however, some logical advocates of a more thorough-going Franciscan poverty, and there is something to be said for their theory. It would require a drastic change in our present methods. Bishops would have to go about their dioceses on foot, and their visits to the parishes would be exceedingly rare. Bishops and clergy alike must be celibate : probably they would have to support themselves by some sort of trade or business, as St. Paul kept himself by tent-making ; or, like the mendicant friars, they would subsist on charity.

The theory is tenable : it is quite conceivable that, if such a revolution in our whole organisation of the Christian ministry were brought

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about, great results might be achieved. But it would be a revolution, and I doubt whether the advocates of clerical poverty are really prepared for it ; certainly many of them have not felt called upon to practise what they preach. It is clearly beyond the scope of this book to examine the theory in detail. One or two points, however, ought to be made clear. As to the enforced celibacy of the clergy, it can hardly be doubted that the majority of English people are against it. It is not a question of religious orders, which are proving themselves of immense value in our Church life : the priests who belong to these orders are, of course, unmarried, and they live strenuous, self-denying lives, though even they are not as a rule deprived of the bare comforts and ordinary amenities of life. The question has to do with the parochial clergy. We need not concern ourselves with public opinion of the unthinking sort, which calls for a parson's wife to fulfil the duties of an unpaid curate, and at the same time sneers at the clergy for getting married on a small income. But I believe it is true that the more thoughtful and enlightened members of our Church, with few exceptions, hold that clergy should have the same liberty as other men to marry or remain unmarried, according to the vocation which God gives them. If they hold

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this opinion they ought to do all in their power to secure incomes on which married clergy can support their families.

Now as to the question of whole-time clergy. It so happens that during the War we had an object lesson of clergy engaging in secular work. I, for one, believe that clergy were perfectly right in offering themselves for work on the farm, or in the factory, or in the school, which helped the nation in time of great emergency. It was good for people to see that a priest did not consider any honest work ‘beneath him.’ To some of the clergy it was a great gain that they were able to come into closer contact with the daily life of their parishioners. But I am quite sure that in many parishes the spiritual work of the Church suffered from the inability of clergy to give their whole time to it. It is a simple fact that our clergy (with the exception of a minority of slackers) have their time fully occupied all the seven days of the week : and they know little of an ‘eight hours’ day’—it is usually a matter of ten or twelve hours, if not more.

It seems, therefore, that St. Paul’s maxim holds good, ‘that those who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel.’ It is a reproach to the Church if its clergy cannot make decent provision for their families.

Therefore those comfortable people who

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talk about a holy poverty would do well to consider what are the present conditions of many a parson's family. Let us take one or two instances. Here is a man with weak health who has to support a wife and a family on an income of £140. Here is another with an income of £170, who is making heroic efforts to educate six children, one of whom is a confirmed invalid. These are extreme cases, but there are instances without number of priests who are struggling to bring up their families on an income of less than £250. (Remember the *average* income of benefices in Lichfield diocese is only £294.) No doubt the beneficed are in most cases provided with a house rent-free. But in many instances the house is far too large, and in all cases the parson has the intolerable burden of dilapidations. Moreover, because he lives in a big house, his parishioners cannot be persuaded that he is not far better off than they, and he is called on for subscriptions to all kinds of objects, and is appealed to in every sort of need. He gladly does his best to relieve the poor, but from his own poverty he has little enough relief.

It is easy to see where the shoe will pinch. What is to be done about the education of the children? The time may come when *all* children will have the chance of receiving as good

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an education as they are able to profit by. But that time is not yet. Meanwhile it is hard for any man to be totally unable to give his children the sort of education which he received himself, and when one considers the record of the services rendered by the sons and daughters of the parsonage it is bad policy that both Church and State should be deprived of these services because clergy cannot afford to send their children to a good school.

Again, what is to happen when sickness comes? A good man may bear a great deal of sickness without complaining ; but it is hard indeed when his wife or one of the children is unable to have the good diet and the change of scene which the medical adviser declares to be necessary. Then there is the holiday. No doubt Mr. Carey is right when he says that the hundred busiest men in England are clergy, and the hundred vilest slackers are clergy. The slackers may do without a holiday. The man who works seven days a week (and most town clergy would agree with my own experience that Sunday is often the easiest day of the week) must have a proper holiday if he is not to break down. And it is pitiable if he cannot do what, thank God ! many decent artisans are able to do—get his children out of the stuffy town to the sea or the mountain for a summer holiday.

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Nothing could be worse for a priest's work than that he should be perpetually harassed and worried with money difficulties. He ought to be a living exponent of joy and hope and good courage. A man must be either more or less than human if he can retain those good qualities when he is worried as to how he is to get boots for the children or proper nursing for a sick wife. I do not overlook the splendid work done by the various charities. The Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy, the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation, clergy educational charities, and other admirable institutions, often provide help which is a godsend to some hard-tried priest. Nor do I fail to recognise the large-hearted generosity of many laymen who have proved friends indeed to their clerical neighbours. But while it is reasonable to hope that special aid may always be forthcoming for special emergencies, it is not creditable to the Church that a considerable number of the clergy should normally be dependent on charity.

Clearly the evil cries aloud for a remedy. And there is no one cure for the disease. Several lines of action are necessary :

i. There must be a redistribution of the Church's existing resources. It is a pity that the strongest advocates of this necessary remedy seem, as a rule, to ignore what has already been

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done, and to exaggerate the amount which would be available for distribution. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have already done an immense amount of work, both in augmenting poor benefices and in providing for the ministrations of the Church in new industrial districts. The resources which they draw on are chiefly the surplus revenues of certain sees and capitular bodies. They have been subject to much criticism, but the more one comes to understand the principle and method of their working, the greater is one's respect for the wisdom and good sense with which the Ecclesiastical Commission has served the financial interests of the Church. If their present policy is continued it is probable that before long an income of at least £250 will be secured to all benefices with a population of 300 and over ; of £300 when the population is not less than 1000 ; of £350 when the population is not less than 4000. The incomes are still inadequate, but reference to a table comparing the 'livings' of to-day with those of forty years ago would prove the greatness of the results which the Commissioners have achieved, both by direct grants and by the stimulus which they have supplied to generous donors. I do not propose to enter into the current controversy about their past methods and their present policy. What is really beyond

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controversy among all who know the facts, is the success of their redistribution of Church resources within the limitations laid down for them by law : and it seems to me hardly doubtful that, in view of the needs of the parochial clergy, it would be bad policy to divert the funds at the disposal of the Commission to other excellent objects. Admirable work has also been done by Queen Anne's Bounty.

But it may very reasonably be urged that the principle of a pooling of our Church possessions ought to be carried much further, and that, as a first step, a careful and complete inquiry ought to be made by some competent authority into the whole question of the distribution of Church property. Dr. Headlam and others recommend a royal commission, and the precedent of the royal commission which resulted in the formation of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners is worth a good deal. But the circumstances have greatly changed during the last century. Experience of more recent royal commissions on Church matters has not been so encouraging, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, with his unique knowledge, is against this expedient. If the Enabling Bill becomes law, the Representative Church Assembly would be quite competent to take these financial problems in hand.

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I am quite sure that Churchpeople need to be convinced that we are making the best use of our existing resources before they are likely to give adequate amounts for the supply of the Church's manifold needs. And while the proper maintenance of the clergy ought perhaps to be a first charge on the income of the Church, it cannot, if our outlook is wide and statesmanlike, be wholly isolated from such purposes as (1) the training of the ministry ; (2) payment of a living wage to whole-time lay workers, men and women ; (3) proper equipment of our training colleges for teachers, and other educational work ; (4) church-building ; (5) evangelistic work at home and overseas.

But there can be little doubt that the result of redistribution would be disappointing. Even if we adopted the rough and ready method of pooling our resources, and dividing them equally among all clergy, the result would fall far short of an adequate living wage. In my own diocese, if the incomes of all benefices were made equal, including the *nominal* income of bishop, dean, and canons, the result would be an income of £306 per head. And a very little thought will show that a statement of nominal incomes is utterly misleading. The Archbishop of Canterbury has a nominal income of £15,000, but anyone who knows the facts is aware that

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Lambeth Palace is a great central office for conducting the business of the Church and a free hostel in which the kindest hospitality is dispensed, not to the Archbishop's personal friends, but to all sorts and conditions of people who assemble at Lambeth for all kinds of purposes. It is a quite obvious fact that when taxes and rates have been paid the Archbishop's income is totally insufficient to meet the demands upon it. If I may be forgiven for quoting my own experience—my nominal income is £4200 ; when taxes and rates are paid, £2600 are left ; £800 are required for necessary expenses, payment of staff, railway travelling (usually third class), motor car, &c., and £600 for subscriptions, &c. (mainly diocesan). This leaves £1200 for the upkeep of a large house which, with the utmost economy, cannot be kept going for less than £1600 per annum. Of course, the 'Palace' exists not for the Bishop's personal comfort (he is seldom there), but for the provision of hospitality.

There is a great deal to be said for the policy of making the bishop's palace a retreat house for the diocese, and housing the bishop in quite a modest way. But this would not mean any saving of money for other clergy. One thing is quite certain, that if the *real* incomes of the clergy of Lichfield diocese were pooled,

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the Bishop would under present conditions have a contribution of *minus £400* to offer.

There is the same discrepancy between facts and appearances in the incomes of some 'good livings.' Let me give one example. A priest was moved from a benefice of £400 to one of £1200. In the former parish the income was his own ; the assistant clergy were paid from other sources ; the financial needs of the parish were met by an excellent parish council. In the second parish the rector had to pay three curates and a lady mission-worker out of his own pocket ; all sorts of parochial needs had to be supplied by him ; he had to maintain a very large house. So far as his personal expenditure was concerned, he tried in both places to live as simply as he could. In the £400 a year parish he was comfortably off ; in the £1200 a year parish he was constantly overdrawn at the bank.

Those who know the facts are aware that the disparities of income are not so great as they seem. Nevertheless there is need of redistribution, and we ought without delay to take steps to secure a thorough inquiry into the whole subject. Legislation will certainly be needed ; let us hope that it may be possible to carry it through on the lines laid down in the Enabling Bill.

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2. *Parsonage Houses.*—We have already come up against the most troublesome element in the whole problem, the housing of the clergy. It is commonly believed to be one of the great advantages of the ministry of our Church that a bishop should have '*£4200 a year and a palace,*' a vicar '*£400 a year and a house.*' As a matter of fact it is just the possession of '*a palace*' which makes it impossible for most bishops to carry on without private means, and the parsonage house may be a white elephant of the most embarrassing type. There are many parsonages, especially among those of recent building, which are of reasonable size; but even where this is the case the income is often insufficient for the parson to employ domestic help, and his wife has to carry out all the service of an ordinary villa-house, in addition to the innumerable functions which she is (most unreasonably) expected to perform in the parish. Too often, however, the house is absurdly large —of the kind which would normally require four, or at least three servants. Probably, at some past date, a parson who had private means and a big family enlarged the house ; or another vicar desired to take pupils, and added a wing. The thing ought never to have been allowed, but the mischief has been done, and the incubus is permanent. I know of a parish where the

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'living' is worth £250, and the house and garden require an income of £1000; of another 'living' of £200, where the house is fit for a well-to-do country squire. The result is that in many cases a patron has to look out for an incumbent who has private means, and this is a scandal which we have been far too ready to tolerate.

I am almost ashamed to speak of dilapidations: they have been discussed *ad nauseam*, and yet we have never succeeded in finding a remedy. The facts, of course, are well known. The parson is responsible for the maintenance of his vicarage in good and tenantable repair. He can, if he chooses, have the house surveyed every five years, and then, when the required repairs are carried out, he is immune till the end of the quinquennium. But if he fails to take these steps, then, when he vacates the living, he or his representative is responsible for the cost of the dilapidations, as assessed by the diocesan surveyor. Several cases have occurred within my experience, when the incumbent of a very small living has died, leaving his widow no resources with which she could pay for dilapidations. The result has been an extreme difficulty in finding any parson who could face the dilapidation costs, which must perforce fall on him.

A good deal has been done in some dioceses

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to promote a system of insurance in which, by laying aside a certain sum every year, a vicar can become immune from further claims. But at present such a system can be only voluntary, and the men who most need its help are least willing (sometimes least able) to pay the yearly premiums.

I am sure that a more drastic remedy is needed, and I believe that in his recent charge the Bishop of Bath and Wells has shown what it ought to be. His proposal applies primarily to bishops' palaces, but he suggests that it should be applied also to parsonage houses.

'I think it would be far better if, in the case of every bishop, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were to be permitted to become the freeholders of the bishops' houses and the grounds attached to them, and to be responsible for all the taxation and the upkeep of them ; and that when the amount to which these requirements would come had been properly estimated, the bishops' incomes should be reduced by a sum representing all those required payments. The bishops would then no longer figure to the public as being the wealthy persons which, unless they have private means, they certainly are not, but would be thought of as only lodgers in their houses—which, as a matter of fact, they are.'

'I should not propose this, which would have to lead to parliamentary legislation, were it not

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that if the principle could be accepted with regard to bishops, I should like to see it extended so as to apply to all incumbents. Neither the bishop nor the incumbent would be a penny the poorer, for the cost of dilapidations, and the many expenses which fall on such people without the rest of the world knowing much about them, are at the present time among the most serious things they have to face ; and life would seem easier to them if they were possessed of a much smaller income, but without the anxieties of having to provide formidable amounts of money for the purposes to which I have alluded.

‘ One of the great gains of such an arrangement would be this—that it might be possible, when the proper consents have been obtained, for any house of residence that seems too large, or on the other hand too small, for its purpose, to be disposed of by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and another house of residence provided of the kind that was thought more suitable for the work which the occupier has to perform. This is a very great subject, and I can imagine at once that it means so great a change that people would say it is impossible. Nothing is impossible ; and by a process of devolution of authority to agents of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who might be connected with diocesan boards of finance for the purpose, it seems to me that great changes might be effected, by which clergy and people alike would feel that they were benefited—because no longer then would a bishop or an incumbent be held

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up so often to rebuke for possessing an income which he has never been free to call quite his own on account of the expenses which had to be met by the holder ; and it might lead to a more fair distribution of some of the means, which might thus be available for doing the work of the Church in a better manner.'

3. Another direction in which reformed methods would help to diminish clerical poverty is a readjustment of boundaries and the combination of small country parishes. Here, for example, are two country parishes, each with a population of about 200, and with something less than two miles' distance between the churches. At present each of the vicars has a miserable income, and neither of them has enough work to occupy a reasonably active man. It seems perfectly obvious that the two parishes ought to be combined under one vicar. Under present conditions there are endless difficulties in carrying through so simple a reform. The patronage may be in different hands, and one or other of the patrons refuses any compromise. Or different 'views' prevail in the two parishes. Or one of the local squires is obstructive. It is one of those cases where everyone is agreed as to the rightness of the theory, but where each individual case is found, in the eyes of the parishioners, to present peculiar and exceptional

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difficulties ! Some competent authority ought to have power to plan out these readjustments, and to carry them through, the parishioners having full representation, but no power of unreasonable obstruction.

It is true that there are small parishes where a man with a pastoral heart and large human sympathies enters so fully into every part of his people's life that his time is fully and profitably occupied. I know, for instance, of a moorland parish where the parish priest, who is a true father to his flock and puts spiritual things first, has organised a system of co-operative farming, and has made Christian principles the foundation of it. A really well-cared-for country parish is one of the best and happiest products of our church life.

But one cannot be blind to the fact that many country parsons have not enough work to keep them busy, and when we consider the shortage in the ministry of the Church it is preposterously bad statesmanship to allow big populations to go unshepherded, while each tiny village has its pastor. In my own diocese there are 45 parishes with a population of less than 300, and several cases of a population of over 8000 with only one parish priest to look after it. In some instances a combination of country parishes has been achieved, with happy results.

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What is needed is proper machinery for framing a careful and comprehensive policy and for carrying it into effect. The Bishop of Norwich's Bill, if it becomes law, will give substantial help.

4. Another greatly needed reform is the provision of an adequate system of pensions for clergy who are no longer able to carry on their work. A great deal has already been done by the system of supplemented voluntary insurance which the Clergy Pensions Institution has promoted, and by the efforts of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. But the usual method by which a beneficed priest obtains a pension is that of the Clergy Resignation Act : this provides that a clergyman who has reached the age of seventy, or who is declared by medical certificate to be permanently incapable of fulfilling his duties, may resign his benefice and receive for the rest of his life a fixed portion of its income. The amount, which cannot exceed one-third of the annual income of a living, is assessed by a commission. Even when, according to this scheme, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have supplemented the pension, and made up a part of the income lost to the benefice, the usual result is that the living is so impoverished that only a man with private means can afford to take it. This is clearly a case in which diocesan effort needs to be supplemented by a well thought out

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scheme for the whole Church. The Central Board of Finance have the matter in hand, and it is to be hoped that this reform may before long be an accomplished fact.

5. Let us now see how far these reforms would carry us.

Firstly, redistribution of our existing resources is desirable and necessary. But it will not provide the clergy with a living wage. I have pointed out that in the Lichfield diocese (which is quite typical of all the rest) a pooling of all benefices and an equal distribution of proceeds would provide £294 a year all round : if the *nominal* income of bishop, dean, and canons were thrown in, the £294 would become £306. And it goes without saying that, as liabilities differ enormously, equality of incomes would result in most unequal justice.

Secondly, a new plan ought to be devised for the tenure of parsonage houses. This would be an immense help to many benefices, but, unless a very large sum were expended by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners or some other central body, the relief from the burden of keeping up the parsonage could only be obtained by a diminution in the annual income of the benefice.

Thirdly, there ought in many cases to be a union of small country benefices. But this

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would only touch the fringe of the problem. Many of the poorest benefices are in towns.

Fourthly, a proper scheme of pensions for aged and incapacitated clergy ought to be worked out and carried into effect. This would greatly ease some of our present difficulties, but obviously it does not reach the heart of the matter.

Plainly we need a thorough and statesman-like scheme for dealing with the whole question. And there is no source to provide for the large sum which will undoubtedly be needed except the voluntary gifts of the faithful. I make no attempt to calculate the sum. The amount must depend on our estimate of what is a living wage for the clergy. The Report of the Archbishop's National Mission Committee on Administrative Reform suggested that 'the minimum stipend for an incumbent should be £400 per annum, and for the unbeneficed clergy who have been five years in Orders, £200.' [The only reason why an unbeneficed parson of several years' standing should receive less than his beneficed brother, is that certain liabilities inevitably fall on the vicar from which his assistant curate is immune.] But the cost of living has greatly increased since 1917, when this report was written. If a higher figure were claimed, the parson with a family would still

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have to live with the utmost simplicity and frugality.

The machinery for dealing with the problem is now in existence. Every diocese has its Board of Finance ; the Church of England has its Central Board. The adjustment of functions between the dioceses and the Central Board is not a very simple matter, but can be achieved by the application of wisdom and good will. Clearly the provision of the large capital sum which will be required is a matter for the Central Board. Will the members of our Church rise to the occasion ? Freely we have received ; shall we freely give ?

There are two remarks which I want to make in conclusion. They might very well be taken as said, but our critics do not always allow us to take much for granted.

The first remark is that the clergy are the last people to grouse and complain about their poverty. They suffer in silence, and many of their well-to-do neighbours would be surprised, and (I hope) a little bit ashamed, if they knew what elementary comforts the family at the vicarage have to go without. There is much heroism in the courageous cheerfulness of many a parson and parson's wife, who go about their work, week in week out, never patronising,

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always sympathetic, prompt in an emergency, and constant when trouble clings, while all the time they are denying themselves what many of their humbler parishioners would consider the necessities of life. The clergy do not grumble, but that is all the more reason why the Church as a whole should make their needs its care.

Secondly, it is very tiresome that when we are trying to reconsider our ideals of the character and purpose of the Church, when we are at last learning that it is the army of God's kingdom, called to proclaim God as King to the uttermost parts of the earth, and to assert His sovereignty over every domain of national and international life, we should be obliged to occupy ourselves with so prosaic a question as the payment of the clergy. But it is just as well for some of us to be taught by solid facts that we cannot realise high ideals without a lot of hard grind at uninteresting details, and that it is bad Christianity to talk big words about our mission to humanity, while we miss a plain duty of human justice which lies at our doors. Let us not forget the great ideals—God forbid!—but let us set our own house in order, and show that we are practising that gospel of brotherhood which we are trying to preach to the world outside.

III

CLERICAL INCOMES IN INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

By the DEAN OF YORK

THIS chapter deals with the case of the clergy in some of the industrial districts. Every district has its own characteristics and its own special difficulties, and it is not easy for those who have never lived in manufacturing or mining districts to understand how widely they differ from other parts of the country.

I. In the industrial districts of Yorkshire the dominating class is the wage-earning class. A manufacturing 'village' may have a population of anything from 1000 up to 8000 or more. There are the doctors and the parsons to represent the professional class. The Co-operative Store or the Industrial Society eclipses the tradesman class. There are no 'leisured' people —no one lives there who is not obliged by his business to do so. The entire population consists of operatives and mechanics, with their complement of managers and officials of various kinds. Street after street of well-kept, prosperous-looking houses form the outward and visible evidence of good wages and a high

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standard of living. ‘The poor,’ as that expression is understood, say, in South or East London, practically do not exist. Of course there are impecunious people here and there, and many a family that has a hard struggle. But as a rule, and on the whole, people are well off. There may be hardly a household that keeps a servant. People do their own housework, their own washing, their own baking—not because they could not afford to do otherwise, but because they prefer it, and it is the custom.

Now all this has a bearing on the question before us. The vicarage should set an example of cleanliness, neatness, tidiness, where such things are regarded as the *sine qua non* of respectability. But the vicar, if he is worth his salt, has his work cut out for him, morning, noon, and night, in the parish; in most cases his wife has not been trained, and in many cases is not physically able, to do housework and washing and baking ; she has her children to look after, their clothes to make, besides her part in the work of the parish. Servants in such places are increasingly difficult to keep, and in numberless instances can no longer be afforded. And where there is well-paid work for women in the mills it is seldom easy even to get a woman to do an odd day’s housework.

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On the one hand, then, there is all round you a high rate of living, and a high standard of house comfort; and, on the other hand, it is practically impossible for the vicarage to rise to it on present-day incomes and at present-day prices.

2. A glance through the 'Clergy List' shows that large numbers of livings range from £230 to £280 a year and a house. But the important question is not the amount, but the liabilities upon a man's income.

At a meeting held a little while ago in a manufacturing village, for the purpose of considering an effort to raise the income of the living from £200 to £250, a man got up and said that £4 a week was wage enough for any man, and he saw no necessity for more. But when he understood that the vicar was his own landlord, that dilapidations had to be paid for, that the vicarage could not be kept going without a servant, that there was hardly a fund in the parish to which the vicar was not expected to subscribe, and that the vicarage was, with one exception, the most heavily rated house in the place, he acknowledged that personally he would not care to take the job on under £5 a week—and the meeting agreed with him. The question is not what is the gross income receivable, but what is the balance after all necessary outgoings

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are paid. And then comes the further question, What are the expenses that have to be met out of that balance?

‘Spending brass’ is an expression well understood in the manufacturing districts. A man earns, say, £3 a week, and he gives his wife £2 a week to run the house on, and keeps £1 for ‘spending brass’—that is to say, for his own pocket-money and amusements. Now, how much ‘spending brass’ has the average vicar? After the housekeeping expenses have been met he has to pay for the schooling of his children. If they are to be trained for professional life they must go to good schools. It would be a great national loss if the clergy were no longer able to educate their boys for professions.

3. This, no doubt, raises interesting questions, but this is not the place for their discussion. The sons of the clergy have given a good account of themselves in the Army, Navy, Air Force, at the Bar, in Medicine, in the Civil Service, in the Church, and that they form a most valuable recruiting-ground for all these professions no one will deny.

But after household expenses and schooling have been met the real difficulty begins. If the clergyman is to keep himself from rusting, if he is to do his work properly and be of use to his parishioners, he must have books; he must

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be in touch with culture ; he must have change of scene ; he must have interchange of views. All these things mean expense. They mean much more expense if you are far off from opportunity. And the vicar of a great manufacturing village in the midst of an industrial district is cut off and isolated to a peculiar degree. As has been already said, there are no leisured people to associate with. He is not ‘asked out,’ in a social way, year in, year out. Consequently he meets no one except his parishioners. Year after year this goes on, and no one who has not experienced it can imagine the narrowing effect of it.

Then, again, the whole atmosphere of the place is ‘business.’ There are few educative or recreative opportunities. Even to reach a decent bookseller’s shop, where he can see new books, he probably has to make a long railway journey.

He gets little or no amusement, and no exercise at all except walking. Everyone is busy : there is much organisation ; and it is fatally easy to fill up one’s time with a restless round of activities which do not always constitute the most useful kind of life. In such circumstances a clergyman is seriously restricted and hampered if he has not any money to spare. And it tells disastrously on his work and his spirits. There are a hundred ways in which

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his brother parson in a small country parish has the advantage of him.

4. There is another factor which makes restricted means a special hardship in the industrial districts, and that is the physical atmosphere. Anyone who has travelled from Leeds to Manchester, or who knows the district that lies about Sheffield, Rotherham, Mexborough, Barnsley, can form an idea of the physical atmosphere in which hundreds of thousands of our people habitually live.

Bishop Walsham How¹ raised quite a little controversy by stating that there was not a garden in his diocese where you could pick a flower without blacking your fingers : but it was literally true.

A new-comer in that district once remarked upon the blackness of the stems of the trees, and a genial native, with much surprise, retorted, ‘ What colour would you have them ? Who ever saw tree-stems any other colour ? ’ A child bred and born in the same district, going on a railway journey into clean country for the first time, seized his mother in a paroxysm of excitement. ‘ Look ! look ! mother, there’s a sheep—isn’t it ? but it’s all white ! ’

Now, this dirty atmosphere means constant expense. The washing bill is bigger—not only

¹ Bishop of Wakefield, 1888-1897.

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personal washing, but curtains, blinds, table linen, everything wants washing and wants renewing far oftener in such districts than elsewhere. The house itself makes a far larger demand in the way of actual soap and brushes and cleaning materials. This may seem a small matter, but any housewife who has lived in such a district knows that it is not so. Where all dust is black dust—is, in fact, largely soot—things are soon smeared and dirty and shabby : a sofa cover, a chair cover, anything and everything suffers. And this matter becomes much more insistent in a district where the weekly ‘fettling day’ is a sacred institution in every house in the street, and polished cleanliness is the rule. How is the vicarage—often much too large—to be kept up to the mark? That is a question that wears the life out of many a good parson and his wife.

But the atmosphere is not only dirty—in many parts of these districts it is poisonous, and actually destroys papers, books, and, to a less degree, your very clothes. It may seem a small matter to mention here, but it is a fact that your hats and coats suffer in a way unknown in pure air. And all this means extra expense for the poor parson, who has to keep himself respectably dressed.

And it has a psychological as well as a

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physical effect. The perpetual lack of pure air and pure sunshine tells disastrously upon the spirits of a man and upon his whole outlook. Not merely for the sake of his work, but for the sake of himself and his own development, the parson who lives in such places ought to be able to get away—get out of it all—breathe pure air, and see flowers and moss and blue distances. Yet over and over again the same dejected objection is raised : ‘ I know I ought, but I can’t afford it.’

5. The very advantages of densely populated districts—the highly developed amenities, water-supply, electric light, tramways, good roads, &c., &c., all cause a special drain on the vicar’s pocket. The rates are high. The vicarage is heavily rated. This is true of all towns, of course. But it has a more far-reaching effect in what are known as the industrial districts, because here there are practically no ‘country’ parishes in the ordinary acceptation of that term. There is a so-called ‘country’ vicarage known to the present writer where it is said to be possible to step out on the pavement and walk sixteen miles in one direction and twenty in the other on pavement lit by gas all the way, and with a tram-line connected up almost the whole way along. That means a great network of towns, and urban districts, and as a consequence

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high rates ; and not only high rates, but generally high prices for necessaries of life, and a perpetual trickling drainage on your purse in all sorts of little ways that do not occur ‘in the country.’ Life is busy. There is no time to spare. Trams must be used, and a taxi is often necessary, and it all means expense.

It is not sought in this article to argue that the parson in the industrial districts has a more expensive time of it than his brother in London or Bristol or Portsmouth, or other great towns ; but that his expenses are far greater than those of his other brethren in what are commonly called country districts, whereas his income is much the same as theirs.

6. The exacting nature of the life in such districts makes the need of occasional rest and holiday imperative, and few things are sadder than to watch the gradual wearing-out of good men because they cannot afford the respite which is absolutely necessary if their life is not to be a failure. The volumes of smoke issuing from hundreds of tall chimneys, the ceaseless throb of the engine, and whirr of machinery, the noise and clatter of the mill, the crowds of operatives pouring in and out at meal times, the rigorous office hours—all these things are the outward and visible signs of a high pressure which tells upon every one whose work lies in these places,

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and not least upon the parsons. Then, again, there is the local Press, often very ably conducted: controversy runs high ; all public men live more or less in the limelight. All this adds enormously to the nerve strain and the need of regular respite. The business man has at least his Sundays, and generally his evenings, free. He can shut up his office and go home and be rid of his work. Not so the parson. His Sundays are strenuous ; a succession of meetings, classes, clubs, fill up his evenings, and he never gets away from it.

The prosperous manufacturer or merchant has his shooting in Norfolk, or his moor in Scotland, or his yacht. The well-to-do operative has his week-ends free, and his annual holiday—no mean one—at Blackpool or Scarborough. The parson is over and over again the one man of any standing in the place who cannot afford a holiday at all, and if he gets away it is to take a locum-tenancy, or to exchange duty with a brother parson, for one or two Sundays. What chance is there of keeping fresh and vigorous for the work that he has to do under such conditions ?

The country parson in a rural district can get his day in his garden, or his bit of fishing in his squire's water, or his tennis at the club, or at any rate a good walk in clean air and cheery surroundings. There are none of these

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things for the man whose work lies in a teeming manufacturing district. ‘ Surely there is a golf club somewhere near ? ’ says some one. Yes, there generally is, and it is generally a very good one, thoroughly well run, on a scale to suit the tastes and the pockets of the men who run it, and they are not the poor clergy. Over and over again you will get the same answer : ‘ I don’t belong, because I can’t afford it.’

Of course it may be said with truth that it is a case of management rather than amount of income. There are some men who are muddlers, and would have nothing to spare if you doubled their income to-morrow. But there is a point at which it becomes impossible in these days to keep a vicarage going, to do your work, and to have anything to spare : and that point is the point at which many a clerical income stands to-day.

7. Over against all this there is one consideration which must not be overlooked, and should be mentioned with appreciation and gratitude, and that is the great liberality and kindness which is not seldom shown by the people. In a business community there is a great deal of hardness, a great deal of insistence on a *quid pro quo*. But at the same time multitudes of instances could be given of spontaneous acts of generosity done to the clergy by the

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very people whose normal character has been described in the classic sentence : ‘I never do owt for nowt, and if I do do owt for nowt I do it for mysen.’ A surprisingly handsome Easter offering ; an anonymous cheque to pay a heavy doctor’s bill; a good sum subscribed to help put the vicarage in order; even a guarantee to pay for a child’s schooling—these things, no doubt, are not confined to industrial districts, but probably occur oftener there than elsewhere, for the simple reason that, on the one hand, there is more money floating about, and, on the other hand, people realise the pressure of straitened means more readily.

In a book recently published by Bishop Henson we learn how Bishop Croft of Hereford bitterly complained (in 1675) of the unwillingness of well-to-do people to contribute to the support of their parish priest.

This is not without its application to-day. But an experience of thirty years in the West Riding has supplied the present writer with a great many incidents which would have astonished good Bishop Croft. What may have been true of Herefordshire in the seventeenth century is by no means universally true now. But while it is to be hoped that kind acts of generosity will continue to mark appreciation of good work honestly done, yet it is wholly

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unsatisfactory that the clergy should be so underpaid as to be dependent on the casual generosity of parishioners.

8. No one can have taken part in a campaign for the raising of clerical incomes without encountering the smug disapproval of the people who talk glibly about the advantages of holy poverty. No doubt the vicar and his household should set an example of very simple living, of avoidance of luxury, of a ready liberality, and a willing abstemiousness. In hundreds of parsonages such an example is nobly set. But simple and frugal living is one thing ; grinding poverty and inability to pay your way (however simply you live) is quite another thing. Give a man a living wage, and then tell him to set an example of ‘holy poverty,’ if you like. But to expect a man to manage on an income which cannot meet his most modest needs, and then to comfort him with the doctrine of ‘holy poverty,’ is cant.

Whatever part of the country he lives in, a man should have an income on which he can make ends meet, and then practise whatever degree of self-restraint he finds most helpful to his work. Most of the value of his economies disappears if they are not voluntary, but inevitable. That is true everywhere. But there is something to be said, even in this connexion,

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about the special characteristics of such districts as we are considering. An appearance of poverty does not increase the parson's influence in a community where it is generally a man's own fault if he is not fairly prosperous. Many things are forgiven in such a district, but inability to pay your way and to keep out of debt comes very near to being the unpardonable sin. It is commonly said that people in these districts are 'very independent'—a good deal might be said about that, but for the moment we will allow that it is so. The criterion of that independence is to stand on your own legs and pay your own way, and be beholden to no one. While, therefore, great generosity and kindness may constantly be shown towards the monetary difficulties of the parson, the fact that he needs such help does not increase his influence for good. He would have more influence, not less, if he were better off. It may not be a very acceptable fact, but it is true that there are regions where even 'holy poverty' in its true signification does not improve a man's chances with his people.

Bishop Wilberforce used to say that he travelled third class because there was no fourth. He thought, no doubt, and probably he was right, that it commended him to the working people of his diocese. Things have changed

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since then, and plenty of bishops travel third class now because there is no second and they can't afford first. But it is no use a bishop in one of our great industrial centres thinking it will increase his influence. With 'business contracts,' and other devices, everyone who has raised himself a bit above his fellows travels first class, and to them the man who does otherwise either can afford and won't, in which case he is mean: or he can't afford, in which case he is to be pitied.

It may be very sad, very wrong, and very much to be regretted, but where business is everything, and everyone is on the ladder and means to go up, voluntary poverty does not make the appeal that it should. Experiments have been tried many a time, and the results have not been encouraging.

But be this as it may, our plea in this book is, at any rate, don't let poverty continue to be obligatory and inevitable. There can be no such thing as even an experiment in voluntary poverty when your whole income won't meet the very lowest expenditure that you can live on.

9. One word as to the normal income to be aimed at. There is an apparently ineradicable conviction in the minds of most laymen that a clergyman has private means. '£250 and a house' is a pretty fair 'living'—how often one

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has heard that said ! ‘ Would you care to keep up that house on £250, with your wife and family ? ’ one retorts. ‘ Oh, no ! I should be sorry to run the place on £700 ; but the parson generally has a bit of his own.’

Now, here are two points. First, that very often the vicarage is a house of a size and character that no layman could dream of taking unless he had £700 or £800 a year ; and, secondly, that when you speak of a ‘ living ’ you really only mean an addition to the parson’s private fortune.

Some years ago a scheme was being prepared for the foundation of canonries out of a large and munificent bequest. One of the archdeacons of the diocese was deputed to draw up a scheme, and was directed to seek the advice of certain laymen of position as to the amount which should be set aside for each canonry. After explaining that the bishop’s intention was to form a sort of headquarters staff round himself, and to be able to attract men of standing and experience who could be intrusted with departments of diocesan administration, the archdeacon asked a certain good layman (who was at the head of a very big concern) what income he thought should be offered. He considered a moment, and then said, ‘ £400, or perhaps £450—that should be sufficient.’ ‘ How much do you pay

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your principal manager ?' asked the archdeacon. 'Our manager—our manager—oh, of course—four figures—but we must have a first-rate man.'

Now, he was a straightforward, good Christian man, who did his duty by his church, and he didn't mean to be rude or to be derogatory ; but it never occurred to him that in money value a 'first-rate' administrator or teacher in Holy Orders was to be reckoned in the same category as the expert layman. Yet, if you come to a mere business proposition, the training of the cleric generally costs a vast deal more than the training of the 'manager.' No! It was the old idea that the clerical income is an extra, and that all clergy have, or ought to have, other resources of their own.

This deep-rooted delusion will surely soon be dissipated in these days, but until it is we shall stick in the mud.¹

Examine the scales of salaries recently put out by any of the larger education authorities—not only head teachers, but assistants—rising to £400 and £500 a year.² And compare the

¹ N.B.—The War Office and Admiralty have had to deal with a similar situation, and have raised the scale of pay so as to render it possible for married officers to live even without private means.

² In September 1919 one of the smaller County Authorities advertised its scale of salaries for secondary school masters —'minimum £500, rising £25 a year to £650.'

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cost of their training, or the importance of their work, with that of the clergy. God forbid that we should underrate the importance of the teachers' work—it is vital, and they deserve every penny they get—but if the teachers' work is of great importance, the parish priests' is of still greater, and its range far wider ; and the training demanded is at this moment much more costly.

The teacher is paid on a scale and knows what his prospects are and can arrange accordingly. The curate begins at £150 or so, after seven or eight years may be getting £200, and then be appointed to a living of the inevitable ‘£230 and a house,’ where he stays, perhaps, twelve or fourteen years. Then he very likely goes to another living of £300 or £350—there he finds it customary for the vicar to pay £50 a year towards the curate's stipend and £20 towards the parish nurse or the rescue worker ; and very likely there is, into the bargain, a heavy charge to Q.A.B. for some costly improvements made by his predecessor, and he is worse off than he was before.

It would be easy to multiply illustrations, and to show how inadequately the clergy are paid. But the point is, At what ought we to aim ? whether anything can be done by an extension of the method of redistribution, or

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by amalgamation of small benefices, or whether it must all depend on the collection of new funds. What ought to be our objective?

Now it is manifestly impracticable to suggest a scale of salaries for curates and a scale for vicars, and a scale for dignitaries. But it may be useful to set down certain essential conditions which ought to be aimed at.

(1) The income should match the liabilities. There is the question of house. We cannot suddenly scrap all our buildings and start fresh. We've got to deal with things as they are. £400 a year and a small compact house, with hot and cold water laid on, no stabling, and a reasonable garden, affords a much better 'living' than £1200 a year with a rectory like a great country house without central heat or water supply, stabling for three or four horses, a great rambling garden, and a farm with a mile of stone walling. Many a man who has been preferred to 'a rich living' has rued the day he went there, and knows perfectly well that he was better off on his £350 or £400, with its manageable little house and few outgoings.

It is not the amount of the income so much as the nature and extent of the necessary outgoings that make the difference between a living and a starving. Therefore our first objective ought to be to secure that either the outgoings

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shall be otherwise met (and this is seldom really practicable), or that the income shall be arranged with due regard to them.

(2) And our second object ought to be (though this can only become possible when a large central fund is in existence) that stipends should have some relation to years of service. There are numbers and numbers of cases where clergy are in receipt of actually less income when they are sixty than they had when they were five-and-thirty. This is all wrong. It is discouraging and it is hampering. It is not relevant to say, ‘Clergy ought to be above such considerations.’ Give a man an adequate income, according to his length of good service, and then if he likes to sacrifice some of it, that is his own affair. There can be no virtue in receiving a lessening income if it lessens without any volition of your own.

10. This is not the place for a disquisition on the tithe question, or a discussion of the advisability of selling glebe lands. But it is encouraging to know that real progress is being made—at any rate in some parts of England—in dealing with both of these questions side by side with a determined and successful effort to build up additional endowments ; and on this latter point it may be suggestive to describe an experience in one of our north-country dioceses.

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A very considerable sum of money was left by a munificent churchman at the disposal of the bishop for increasing the incomes of the clergy. It was decided to endeavour to raise all livings in public patronage to £250 a year. All the benefices in the diocese below that figure were grouped in categories A, B, C, according to the financial conditions and circumstances of the parishes. The 'B' class was the average parish; 'A' the wealthy; 'C' the poor. The grants varied considerably; but taking £100 as a specimen grant: £100 was offered to 'A,' on condition they raised £200 to meet it; to 'B,' on condition they raised £100; to 'C,' on condition they raised £50. Now, taking an 'A' parish—the parish having raised its £200 to meet the special gift, this £300 was increased to £350 by the Diocesan Fund. The £350 so raised was offered as a benefaction to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and met by them with a grant of £350 out of their Common Fund under their regulations. Thus the £100 had become £700, and the endowment of the living benefited to that extent. In those days the Ecclesiastical Commissioners only allowed 3 per cent., but even so the prospect of securing an additional £21 a year by raising a couple of hundred pounds was a proposition that appealed readily to a business community,

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and the task set before themselves by the diocesan authorities was soon accomplished.¹

This was a pre-war episode in the diocese of Wakefield. We recognise now that the minimum figure should be £400, not £250, yet very accurate returns of two archdeaconries in the diocese of York just compiled show twenty-four livings between £200 and £220, twenty between £100 and £200, and two (still held separately) under £100—*i.e.* forty-six livings under £220 a year in two archdeaconries.

In the early days of the War, when, to contribute towards meeting the rising cost of living, increased wages and bonus payments were being showered upon the wage-earners with lavish hand, the clergy set their teeth and tightened their belts, and said nothing. Those of us who had to do with it are not likely to forget the gratitude with which pitiful grants of £7 or £10 a year, from inadequate diocesan funds, were acknowledged. Few people who have not been

¹ The actual figures of this little transaction may be interesting. They were :

(1)	Grants paid from the Trust Fund	£14,732
(2)	Amount raised by local effort (in the parishes)	14,257
(3)	Grants by Ecclesiastical Commissioners to meet (1) and (2)	28,259
	Total augmentation thus secured	<u>57,248</u>

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in direct touch with it know how clerical households have suffered in these last few years. The artificial war wealth which has enriched nearly every class of wage-earner has done nothing for that great section of the middle classes whose incomes are fixed and who have no means of adding to them.

The clergy are sometimes set down as an unbusinesslike lot, but it is a question whether any other class can show a better record for paying their way and keeping out of debt, and doing their duty in the education of their children (a matter in which they are not beholden to public funds, as most of their parishioners are), and taking their part in contributing to good objects.

Five years ago a clergyman died suddenly, in the prime of life, leaving a widow and four children between eight and eighteen. He had no private means and a living of £230 and house. His friend and neighbour, who had been with him at the last, and had undertaken to do his best for the wife and children, went with a heavy heart and a good deal of apprehension to see how matters stood. He found that the dilapidations on the vicarage had been carried out recently, and were covered by certificate ; that £15 would cover all outstanding bills—ready money having been the inexorable rule ;

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and that there was a duly paid-up life policy for £300. The good man had had no warning that his end was near. Small as his resources were, the rule and habit of his life had been to keep within them, and he had done it. Two of his children were still at school, and their fees had been duly paid.

One more instance. A. had a difficult case to deal with requiring financial help at once. He went to talk it over with B., the vicar of a large, poor parish, with an income of £250, and who had a wife and two children to support. A. sought B.'s advice, partly because he was a level-headed man, and partly because, owing to his poverty, there could be no question of his feeling called upon to give anything himself. Nevertheless, after a talk B. unlocked a drawer and produced £5, asking A. to put it to the little fund as his contribution. A. expostulated, and B.'s answer was, 'Very well, as you please. But into that drawer goes a regular proportion of my income. I do not reckon it mine, and if you don't take it, it will go to something else of the same kind.'

'A very exceptional man!' you say? Not so exceptional as many who do not know the poorer clergy might suppose.

IV

IN THE LONDON DIOCESE

By the BISHOP OF WILLESDEN

‘ONE half of the world has not the least idea how the other half lives.’ I remember, years ago, in a heated discussion in a drawing-room, upon the poverty of the labouring classes, a leading Q.C. who was present, and had dilated upon the extravagance of the working man, was asked by our hostess if he would write down the way in which a weekly income of £2 should be spent. I can see him now take a gold pencil out of his pocket, and in a few minutes, with an air of satisfaction, hand in his paper. ‘There ! I hope that will be quite clear.’ Poor man ! When we came to analyse his figures, he had forgotten, amongst other things, rent and clothes. In a weekly budget he ignored what he paid by cheque. I am bound to add that he did not try to defend himself, but pleaded guilty.

Things have altered since then: wages have doubled, so have expenses in many ways, and the problem still remains. To me it is a mystery how the labouring classes live comfortably—their children well dressed and no sign of poverty

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—upon their small weekly wage. It is ‘management’ that does it; and I often wish that women who have the art would explain it at Mothers’ Meetings; but, alas! such women are the people who do not talk much.

But it is with the incomes of the clergy that this article is concerned, and not until the laity realise the present condition of affairs will there be any lasting improvement. There may be spasmodic appeals which produce temporary help, as the £35,000 which resulted from the letter of the Bishop of London last Christmas most emphatically did ; but the evil is far too deep to be treated by gifts of charity for ‘starving clergy.’

I do not propose to enter into the details of past history to account for the present condition of affairs. Like ‘The Ring and the Book,’ the same story will be told by several writers, and if I added one more article I feel sure that the Editor would strike it all out, as certain parts of Browning’s wonderful poem might be omitted with advantage. I can imagine the anger of the Browning Society at any such statement, and perhaps I might have shared their anger if, after much trouble and thought, my contribution had been ruthlessly cut to pieces.

I should like to say just a word about my

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twenty years' experience in British Columbia. My predecessor, Bishop Hills, an ideal pioneer bishop, whose memory ought to be reverenced in church history, went out in 1859, his own stipend secured by a most generous gift of Miss Burdett-Coutts (as she was then). He was liberally supported by the faithful in England, and took up large tracts of land, and if he had been able to hold them would have secured endowments sufficient for the whole province ; but, unhappily, as years went by the money was not forthcoming to pay taxes, &c., and to-day only a very little remains—so that the clergy are dependent upon their congregations. The danger is obvious. A man may be most devoted in his work, but not what is called ‘ popular,’ and the congregation is tempted to ‘ freeze him out.’

In town parishes, however, as a rule, the stipend is forthcoming ; while in the country districts the congregations are assessed and pay their quota to a central fund, from which the missionary clergy are paid their monthly stipends. These stipends are by no means what they ought to be, but in Canada there are gifts in kind, which are most acceptable ; and, on the whole, the laity do their duty, and the secret of whatever success there may be, is the free-will envelope system.

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But the London clergy—that is a much larger question. I came to this diocese eight years ago, and wherever I was received in the rural deaneries I always said that it was generally accepted that the youngest London curate was considered superior to the most experienced country vicar—not, of course, in his own opinion—so that they must forgive my ignorance and bear with me patiently. My experience has been in the North-West of London, and I have tried my best to get into close touch with the clergy committed to my special charge; and I should be thankful if I felt that they had as high an opinion of me as I have of them.

There are a very few well-endowed livings in the eight rural deaneries entrusted to my charge, and only two of them in the gift of the Bishop of London—the greater part of the Bishop's patronage consists of parishes which have been formed during the last fifty years. In that time 250 churches have been built, mainly by the Bishop of London's Fund, and a large number of parishes, fostered by the London Diocesan Home Mission, have been formed. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have endowed these with an average of £200 a year.

But before I try to deal with the incumbents

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from a financial point of view, let me take the case of the assistant curates. The number is far larger than in any other diocese, and the chances of preferment are smaller—so that a man may expect to serve a long time before getting an independent sphere of work. From a financial point of view, a single man, on the stipend which he receives at the age of twenty-three, should have enough on which to live—although a female teacher of twenty-one in the Willesden education area will for the future draw a larger stipend ; but the increase will only be very small year by year. The curate ought to remain unmarried, it will be argued, and in theory I quite agree, for no man ought to marry unless there is a fair prospect of maintaining a wife and family ; but the meeting of the ‘one woman’ leads him to take the step, often with a very small amount of private means, sometimes with none. To their honour, be it said, the majority keep out of debt. The balance sheet on p. 84 is worth careful study.

It would be easy to multiply instances. What the standard of living must be when the weekly books come to £104 for four persons in these days of high prices can be more easily imagined than described. Here are the details from another curate with two

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BALANCE SHEET FOR 1918

Receipts

	£	s.	d.
Stipend	200	0	0
War bonus	20	0	0
Easter offertory	4	15	0
Deficit	0	19	0
	<hr/>		
	<u>£225</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>

Expenditure

	£	s.	d.
Rent of house	36	0	0
Rates and taxes	14	0	0
Income tax	6	10	6
Housekeeping (£2 per week)	104	0	0
Domestic maid	14	0	0
School fees for daughter	10	0	0
Insurance—life and property	14	3	6
Coal	8	0	0
Gas	6	0	0
Clothing and sundries	13	0	0
	<hr/>		
	<u>£225</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>0</u>

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children, who receives £200 a year, which deserve study:

	£	s.	d.
Bread—2 loaves per diem	15	10	0
Meat (butcher's) . . .	26	0	0
Bacon	12	0	0
Sugar	4	11	0
Milk—1½ pints daily . . .	10	5	4
Vegetables	15	0	0
Tea	3	0	0
Butter and lard	2	7	8
<hr/>			
	<u>£</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>14</u>
			0

He writes that he has kept down boots, clothing, &c., 'rigidly to the lowest ebb.' His children's education costs him £21 per year, and he pays £4 9s. 3d. to the Clergy Pensions Institute and £20 for insurance. And he adds: 'All this is some slight indication of the difficulties which face the general run of curates, who should have their minds clear and free for their calling, without being perpetually worried with considering the ways and means of living, which are always confronting them.'

There is a danger of its being accepted that if we aim at a minimum stipend of £200 a year for an assistant curate it will be sufficient. It

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may be so for an unmarried man, but the above figures make it clear that it is wholly insufficient for one who has a wife and children to support. We must aim at £300, or at the least £250, if debt is to be avoided and any idea of family life to be maintained.

When we come to consider the position of incumbents, the average amount received is, of course, larger in London than that paid to assistant curates ; and in most cases a house is provided. Often the house is a white elephant, although we are spared the iniquity which prevails in certain country parishes, when a vicar is allowed to add room to room and wing to wing, with stabling and every necessity for a rich man's house, because he happens to be rich himself.

There are, indeed, certain parishes in London in which the house is much too large. But, granted that the house is of moderate size, there are the rates and taxes to be paid—often 10s. in the £—and the question of dilapidations has to be faced. If the whole amount is forthcoming from the widow of his predecessor, the new incumbent must spend a considerable sum upon the house, and during the first five years bear the expense of all repairs, and then, if he wants another five years' certificate, do all that the diocesan surveyor demands. Add to this

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the expense of furnishing, and I confess it is a mystery to me how most men get into their vicarages at all. Sometimes, alas ! there is a bill of sale upon their furniture ; sometimes it is bought upon the instalment plan—and in either case again and again have I known of the terrible anxiety that has followed—a burden so heavy as to interfere with the man's spiritual work. I try sometimes to put myself in his place, and wonder what the character of my ministrations would be if I were continually receiving lawyer's letters and threats of distress upon my furniture—with bills unpaid, and no prospect of things being better. It must be hard enough for a layman to go on with his work under such conditions, but still harder for one called to minister in holy things. And when sickness comes ! All through my ministry I have known, and gladly acknowledge, the extraordinary kindness and generosity of the doctors. Their free ministrations to all classes of the community are frequently shared by the clergy ; but it is not the doctor's bill—nursing and medicines, and in convalescence the necessary food, are the heaviest burden. St. Luke's Hostel, in Fitzroy Square, has proved an unspeakable blessing to many a clergyman and his wife ; but when the patient comes out, the extraordinary expenses—how are they to be

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met? The Poor Clergy and other relief organisations help; and in this diocese we have an admirable institution in the Clergy Holidays Fund, without which many would never have the chance of ever leaving their parishes for a short holiday and rest.

The education of the children is one of the greatest difficulties. I know of a vicar whose income is under £300 a year, who spends £115 on the education of three children. He writes : 'We have no private means; we keep no servant—a charwoman occasionally : we have a large house.' Another writes : 'It is a very severe struggle to keep things going. I have three boys at school, but I have been obliged to take one away, at the age of sixteen, because I cannot afford to pay his fees. The other two are day scholars. Had it not been for the kindness of the Bishop of London, and the Queen Victoria Clergy Fund, who sent financial help during the year, I dare not think what would have happened. My wife is just splendid in the way she manages to keep things on the economical side. *P.S.*—The vicarage is an old house, and needs constant repair.'

What must be the effect of all this upon a man's work? The bravery of many incumbents who cannot make both ends meet is to me astounding. They do not grumble or com-

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plain, but is it any surprise if gradually the heart is taken out of their work and they break down?

Statistics are bewildering, and sometimes misleading. In the London diocese, as a result of an official inquiry by the committee of the Queen Victoria Clergy Fund, in rather more than one-sixth of the parishes the average income left to the incumbent, after paying the local rates on the vicarage, the annual cost of repairs, and in certain cases other necessary charges, amounts to £225. Some of these benefices are held by clergy who, being possessed of private means, practically give their life's work without payment. In other cases a sum of about £3000 is paid annually in grants to increase the incumbent's net income to the meagre total of £260. If this were increased to £300, it would affect half the livings in the diocese, and £9000 a year would be required.

But £300 is not a living wage for a married clergyman, and even if it were raised to £400, it would in these days still be inadequate. This would involve a total expenditure of £45,000 a year.

Here is an estimate *in pre-war times* of a clergyman with his wife and two children, whose income is a little over £400 :

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Education	£100
Food	122
Wages for servant	24
Clothing and personal expenses	50
Insurance	15
Doctor	10
Holidays	15
Rates and taxes	20
Contingencies	15

This amounts to £371. With the additional cost of present prices, when everything is nearly double what it was in pre-war times, how (the writer asks) can he possibly escape debt, with all its miseries ?

It is something more than a question of money for a class of men who ought to have a living wage, like the police or the railway workers. It is the spiritual point of view that presses. If the clergy, as leaders of the church life in their parishes, are to give their best for Christ and His Kingdom, they must be freed from the galling, carking cares of money difficulties. They have no desire to be rich, or to take any leading part in society. That has disappeared long ago in the Church of England.

What is the remedy ? Clearly there should be a reform in the matter of endowments—but that cannot be until new powers are given to the Church of England, as we hope, without

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Disestablishment and Disendowment. Even then it will require most careful consideration, and no radical changes can be expected for a long time. Meanwhile it is really a question for the laity.

'Evil is wrought by want of thought as well as want of heart.' And the object of these articles is to make people think.

London is by far the richest diocese in the world, especially as it does not include that part of London which lies on the south of the Thames, which is in the diocese of Southwark. I quite grant that generous churchmen give beyond the limits of the diocese; and if the list of subscribers of any institution were studied, a large proportion would come from London. A West-End clergyman told me that he found fault with one of his rich parishioners because he only gave him a guinea for his Sunday School treat, and the answer was that this was the seventeenth application to which he had responded.

This is an exceptional case, and it is by no means only the very rich that we want to interest in church affairs. The formation of parochial councils ought to have a good effect, and the incomes of clergy should be explained clearly in detail when the annual budget is considered. Each parish must not be left to itself, and diocesan action is essential.

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When the laity realise that they have a distinct share in the work, the Diocesan Conference will cease to be a debating society, and practical results must follow. Beyond this, the Central Fund, provided that it is well managed, will have its function, so that the poor dioceses may be helped financially by the richer dioceses.

Many who read these articles may be moved to sympathy, but more than that is needed. I grant that the expenses of the laity have increased, and the strain is great. ‘Every man must bear his own burden,’ but the appeal is summed up in the other text : ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.’

V

EXPERIENCES IN A RURAL ARCHDEACONRY

By the BISHOP OF COLCHESTER

I. THE PROBLEM

‘To get efficient work, we must give the men who are doing that work salaries, not equivalent to what they could make in commerce, but commensurate in some degree with their ability and the importance of their work, and must relieve them in regard to anxiety about money affairs.

‘I do not suggest that in paying Ministers the country should be expected to pay them the full amount which it would be possible for them to obtain in other occupations. In the past it has been a rare thing for Ministers to be dependent on their salaries. After all, money is not the only thing, even from the point of view of selfish interest. What men prize even more than money is the position it gives them in the eyes of their fellows, and undoubtedly a Minister has a great position, which gives him a value far higher than anything in the way of money can do. But is it reasonable to ask men to serve as Ministers—I am speaking of those who depend on their own exertions for their livelihood—when everyone knows that if they

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continue to do it they have got either to incur debt—which is an actual fact—or at once live on a different scale from that on which they were living before?’

These are the words of Mr. Bonar Law, speaking in the House of Commons recently, on the Bill to remove the statutory limitations (£2000 a year) on the salaries of certain Ministers of the Crown. I do not quote in order to criticise, though some of us think that in these difficult days, when economy should be preached by example as well as by precept, we might be able to struggle on with £2000 a year, if the sum were not subject to heavy deductions for official expenses, without getting into debt. But I quote for two reasons :

(1) The words apply almost exactly, and more forcibly, to the position and difficulties of ministers in the Church of England—almost exactly, but not quite, because the clergy, as a whole, do not expect stipends commensurate with the importance of their work, nor do they shrink from living on a lower scale than that on which they were living before, indeed they expect to do so ; more forcibly, because the scale for which they ask is so much more moderate, because they desire *only* that the poorer members of their body should be relieved from the anxiety about money affairs which militates

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against the effectiveness of their work, from the grinding poverty which crushes their spirit.

(2) The question whether £2000 a year is sufficient for a Minister of the Crown, or £200 a year for a minister of the Church, cannot be answered without reference to his family responsibilities : if the community at large recognises that healthy children and good education are essential to its well-being, far more ought to be done than at present by the State to encourage the production of the one and to ensure the possibility of the other ; and should the State be unable to do this adequately, the only alternative would be that salaries in every department of life should be supplemented by allowances, as now in the Army, for wife and children. This would never work in business circles, for all advertisements for employees would be qualified by 'no married men need apply,' just as even now in the Church. We have often to appoint bachelors, or married men without families, to curacies, or livings, or clerical secretaryships, or even to bishoprics, because the stipend is inadequate for a man with children. So the State must help, and until the State does the Church must try to ensure a living wage for married clergy and must help to secure good education for their children.

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This is part of our problem, and it is a vital part. ‘Now I understand why he looked like a half-starved rat,’ said a well-known Member of Parliament to me when I told him that a certain vicar of a large town parish had an income of £200 a year to support himself and his wife and two children. A man cannot do his work efficiently and brightly, or at all events as efficiently and brightly as otherwise, if he is half-starved and constantly worrying how to make both ends meet (though the particular man was both efficient and bright by nature, and never got into debt). Many people advocate as a solution the celibacy of the clergy. While I am sure that for some large working-class parishes the right sort of unmarried priest is eminently desirable, I am equally certain that for most country parishes it is far better that the incumbent should be a married man, especially—paradoxical as it may seem—if he is a poor one. Of course there are brilliant exceptions—men, perhaps, with devoted sisters, who help them and cheer them and mother them ; but as a rule the country parson wants a wife, and his parish wants her too. I am not thinking of parishes in which the wife is, as she never ought to be, ‘as good as a curate,’ but of the little country villages in which the rector’s or the vicar’s wife is a ministering angel, not

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only in her home and to her husband, but to the simple folk who look up to her and love her, as she loves them, and goes about among them, listening to their troubles and sympathising with their difficulties, and brings them nearer to Christ because she reflects on to them the glory of His character—‘I am among you as he that serveth.’

The two commonest remarks I hear from parishioners, when there is a vacancy in a country living, are these : ‘I hope that they will send us a married man,’ and ‘I hope that they will send a man with some money’—the former aspiration is as worthy as the latter is unworthy.

The provision of a living wage, whether a man is married or unmarried, whether the quiver is full or empty, is not the whole problem. If we bring a charge against the laity that they sweat their clergy, that the income of many benefices is too small to support even a bachelor, we have to meet the counter-charge that there are benefices to which a stipend is attached far too large for the work done. It is not accepted as an effective answer that the number of the former is far greater than the number of the latter, or that the rich benefices ought to be a reward for those who have done strenuous work in poor ones : as a matter of fact, they are not,

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and it is a real difficulty that when we complain, to take an actual instance, that the stipend in a well-worked country parish is only £200 a year, we are met with the retort that in the adjacent parish, not so well worked, the stipend is £1200—an exceptional case, no doubt, but it is the exceptional cases which are remembered, the normal ones are not heard of.

Similarly we may point to large working-class parishes in which the incumbent is over-worked because he cannot afford to keep an adequate staff, and our critics reply that there are numerous parishes in which the incumbent ought not to expect a living wage because there is not sufficient work for a capable man.

I may return to these difficulties later in speaking of reforms ; I only mention them now as belonging to the problems which confront us.

II. FACTS AND FIGURES

Incumbents in the Archdeaconry of Colchester

Here is an extract from a Church paper in September 1919 :

The sudden death of —, vicar of —, a few days ago, as he was about to celebrate the
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Holy Communion, fulfilled a wish that he had often expressed. He desired to receive the home-call in the church where he had served so long and faithfully. Mr. ——'s thirty-two years' service as a parish priest were uneventful, but his parishioners were deeply attached to him.

The writer, whoever he was, might have added, if it was within his knowledge, that the real tragedy of this old vicar's life was far more touching than the apparent tragedy of his death, which was a relief from the constant burden of grinding poverty. I am in a position to add some facts. Ordained somewhat late in life, giving up, presumably, other work in answer to a call to service in the Church, he was for thirty-two years vicar of a small country parish. He brought up eight children, of whom two served throughout the War. He had no private means, and the net income of the benefice was never until the last two years more than £150, the average for the whole time being far below that figure. The consequence was that during the whole period he had to be helped by doles from clerical charities. A few years ago his vicarage had fallen into such a state of disrepair (he had never, of course, had any money to spend on dilapidations), that the rain poured in

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through the roof, and the drainage was pronounced absolutely insanitary and dangerous to health. I managed to collect from friends some £200 to put the house in a state of partial repair, but now, of course, there is much to be done, and no money is left for the dilapidations, the widow being penniless.

This may be an extreme case, but it is a definite and up-to-date one, and if there is one such in each of the ninety-nine archdeaconries in England and Wales, we have sufficient evidence of the need for radical reform of the present conditions.

The case, however, is not an isolated one. Not long ago there was another vicar in this archdeaconry, with seven children, all of school age, and a stipend of £120. He had no private means, so it was more pathetic than surprising to hear that the family dinner on Christmas Day consisted of a piece of bacon.

The first essential, if one is to devise remedies, is to be conversant with *all* the facts, to know the details not of a few special cases, but of all the incomes, and with this object I made only last year as thorough an investigation as was possible of the stipends of all the incumbents in my archdeaconry, and I give the results, with corrections necessitated by the rise in tithe

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to its present figure. The following table shows the values of the livings classified in rural deaneries:—

NET VALUE OF BENEFICES

Exceeding	£1000	£900	£800	£700	£600	£500	£400	£300	£200	£100
1	—	—	—	—	2	2	3	2	4	2
2	1	—	—	1	1	1	3	4	5	—
3	1	—	—	1	1	1	—	3	6	1
4	—	—	—	1	—	3	4	5	13	2
5	—	1	—	2	—	—	1	1	4	—
6	—	—	—	—	—	3	3	3	4	1
7	2	—	—	—	1	3	5	4	4	1
8	—	—	—	1	4	1	—	4	4	—
9	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	2	5	5
10	—	1	—	1	2	1	—	4	4	4
11	—	1	—	1	2	1	2	4	6	—
12	—	—	—	1	1	—	2	8	6	3
Total	4	3	—	9	14	18	25	44	65	19

There is one benefice of still smaller value, £66, but as it is held with another, I have not counted it separately. It will be seen that there are 48 livings worth more than £500 a year and 153 worth less, and of the latter 128 are worth less than the £400 a year which, according to some authorities, should be the minimum stipend for incumbents. The average value of the 201 benefices is £389, but we have recently been

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able to arrange that six of them should be held in plurality with others (sometimes in spite of strong opposition from the laity), and this increases the net incomes of 195 incumbents to an average of £400 a year exactly.

The values would have been considerably lower but for the recent rise in the value of tithe, and the action of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in raising to £200 a year all livings with a population of 300 and upwards.

It may be noted that thirty livings have no tithe at all.

If the figures can be taken as representative of the incomes of the clergy generally, it means that in England and Wales there are 8960 livings of which the value is less than £400 a year, 5880 less than £300 a year, and 1330 less than £200 a year.

Particular information has been obtained of the financial position of all those incumbents in the archdeaconry whose net stipends are less than £250 a year, which may be regarded as a starvation wage for a man who has a rectory or vicarage to keep up and anyone besides himself to maintain. There are 48 such incumbents ; 31 of them are married—of the latter, 6 have, unfortunately for themselves, but fortunately for their pockets, no children ; the others have 64

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children between them. As far as I know, 16 have no private means.

Parenthetically one may remark that it would be extremely interesting and illuminating if the laity could know the total amount of money spent by the clergy throughout the kingdom from their own private resources, just in maintaining the most modest standard of comfort at home, and in charities and subscriptions : probably the consciences of many of the laity would receive a shock which would permanently alter their whole attitude. Such a computation is, no doubt, impossible to achieve, but solid facts are the best arguments with which to appeal to the hearts of the general public, so I have collected a number of balance sheets of receipts and expenditure from incumbents whose accuracy and business aptitude make them entirely reliable, and I submit some of them as a convincing proof of the difficulties against which the clergy have to contend, difficulties which might drive most men to despair, faced with such cheerfulness and courage that few realise the constant strain and the aching hearts which these virtues mask.

The following cases are not extreme ones, but typical of a large number :—

A.—Vicar, wife and four children (three at school). No tithe.

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Income

	£	s.	d.
Ecclesiastical Commissioners	88	8	0
Q.A.B.	. .	36	0 0
Lay impro priators	. .	100	0 0
Surplice fees	. .	5	0 0
Easter offering	. .	14	4 7
	<hr/>		
	<u>£243</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>7</u>

Expenditure

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Bread and flour	9	3	3			
Milk	. 10	12	10			
Meat	. 16	10	0			
Groceries	. 35	0	0			
Fish, fruit, &c.	8	15	0			
	<hr/>			80	1	1
Lighting and heating	. .	20	6	6		
Laundry (much done at home)	. . .	10	8	8		
Charwoman (no servant kept)	. . .	2	10	0		
Garden	. . .	2	3	0		
Life insurance	. .	21	18	4		
House insurances	. .	2	14	0		
Rates	. . .	9	16	4		
Doctor and dentist	. .	11	11	2		
	<hr/>			<u>£161</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>1</u>

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This leaves £82 3s. 6d. for the following items : clothes, boots, and shoes for a family of six ; education of three children ; travelling expenses, pocket-money, charities, household repairs and renewals, newspapers, books, stationery, amusements and holidays, carrier to and from station ($4\frac{1}{2}$ miles), chemist. Of course it could not be done. The diocesan society helped with the education, and the vicar's small private income had to be diminished by inroads on the capital. Notice the incredibly small amount spent on food ; the obvious saving in laundry expenses by home work, though no servant was kept ; and that the vicar must have cultivated his garden thoroughly. All this while both husband and wife ministered devotedly in a scattered parish of nearly 2000 souls.

B.—Vicar, wife, and two children. No vicarage. (See statement on p. 106.)

Here, then, is a deficit of nearly £20, which was covered by a grant of £25 from the Diocesan Maintenance Committee. The need of education for the children is arising, but where is the money to come from ? The vicar is faced with an additional anxiety not uncommon in country parishes with old churches : he has to find some £800 to prevent his beautiful church tower from falling ; he will be lucky if he gets a twentieth of the sum in the

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parish—the greater part must be begged from outside.

Income

	£	s.	d.
Tithe, less rates . . .	154	13	8
Ecclesiastical Commissioners	68	0	0
Q.A.B.	11	8	0
Glebe rent	6	10	0
Fees	6	9	0
Easter offering	10	8	0
<hr/>			
	<u>£257</u>	8	8

Expenditure

	£	s.	d.
House rent and rates . . .	45	0	0
Income tax	5	5	2
Insurance	5	2	0
Housekeeping	110	0	0
Servants	22	0	0
Coal and oil	28	10	9
Doctor and dentist	9	5	0
Clothes and boots	15	0	0
Holidays and travelling . . .	13	0	0
Books, stamps, papers, stationery, subscrip- tions, and all sundries	24	0	0
<hr/>			
	<u>£277</u>	2	11

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C.—A vicar, wife, and two children. For simplicity's sake, the figures omit shillings and pence. No tithe.

Income

Ecclesiastical Commissioners	£160
Q.A.B.	46
	—
	£206
Debit balance	130
	—
	£336

Expenditure

All household expenses	£168
Rates	5
Coal, wood, and oil	20
Doctor	5
Clothes, boots, and shoes	15
Insurances	30
Vicarage repairs	10
Education (two)	83
	—
	£336

The item 'household expenses' includes wages for occasional help—no regular servant is kept. The vicar's comment is: 'No mention is made of holidays—we can't afford them—income tax, subscriptions, or sundry minor

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expenses ; when we know that £1 is now worth about 8s. 7d., the problem of how to make both ends meet is somewhat difficult, and in the case of benefices where there is no tithe this difficulty is accentuated.'

D.—A vicar, with wife only, sent me last year the principal items of household expenditure. He has a large garden, for which a boy's help is absolutely necessary.

Net income, after deducting rates and taxes, £198 14s.

Expenditure on food, £76 15s. 10d. ; coal, £12 17s. 4d. ; clothing, £7 13s. 8d. ; wages, £35 4s. 1d. ; leaving £66 for insurances, doctor, repairs and renewals, laundry, travelling, books, newspapers, charities, holidays, and pocket-money.

The vicar was faced with expenditure of £150 on dilapidations, the house being an old one and not a good one, and he did not know how to find the money.

E.—Vicar, wife, and one child in a poor parish. (See statement on p. 109.)

The vicar writes that the 'other purposes' include ordinary wear and tear, breakages, clothing for three, provision for boy's future education, church collections, charities, and many other incidental expenses. He might have added holidays and books.

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Income

	£	s.	d.
Tithe, less rates and cost of collection	178	15	0
Ecclesiastical Commissioners	100	0	0
Surplice fees	5	0	0
Easter offering	2	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£285	15	0
	<hr/>		

Expenditure

	£	s.	d.
Food	107	0	0
Coal	25	0	0
Oil	5	0	0
Maid	18	0	0
Laundry and charwoman	13	0	0
Garden	10	10	0
Newspapers	2	18	0
Income tax	12	0	0
Insurances	5	14	0
Repairs to house	18	0	0
Balance for all other pur- poses	68	13	0
	<hr/>		
	£285	15	0
	<hr/>		

One might produce some eighty similar budgets from an archdeaconry of this size, but the above are sufficient, and they are representative of the average living of less than £300

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a year. Anyone who studies them will be struck by the absence of any reference to expenditure on books, which to a parish priest are not a luxury, but ordinary tools without which he cannot work at his best. A vicar, writing recently to the *Guardian*, complains with reason that he has had to sell his books and borrow money on his insurance policies ; but many have never been able to afford either books which they can subsequently sell, or insurance policies, which certainly every married man ought to have. Of the clergy who have given me information, some subscribe a small amount to the Clergy Pensions Institution, but only two do anything more in the way of life insurance, and then only because they have small private means. There is no evidence of extravagance in any of the balance sheets, and when I reflect upon the amount spent on clothes, memory recalls to me some budgets which were published a few years ago in the *Daily Mirror* of ladies who spent £1000 a year on clothes, and of others who were able to manage on £500 !

We must not forget that the situation has been eased this year by the special grants from the funds of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, which are to be continued on a lower scale next year; but these are only temporary expedients, and the grants will cease after 1921.

A RURAL ARCHDEACONY

Incumbents in London-over-the-Border

Though this article deals primarily with rural parishes, some information about the most populous and the most necessitous part of the diocese may be of interest. We have here a population of about 900,000, distributed over only seventy-one parishes. There are a few old parishes in which the stipend is good, but the average is stated to be but £322, and there are thirty-seven livings in which the income is not more than £300 a year, and three more which are just under £200. It would be wearisome, even if enlightening, to read the details of these forty parishes, but I select a few to show what are the responsibilities of these men with inade-

LONDON-OVER-THE-BORDER

Parish.	Population.	Curates.	Value.
St. Stephen, Upton Park .	21,246	4	300
St. John, Walthamstow .	19,070	1	300
St. Andrew, Walthamstow .	13,513	1	270
St. Edmund, Forest Gate .	13,154	1	236
St. James, Forest Gate .	14,000	1	240
Emmanuel, Forest Gate .	12,419	1	270
Christ Church, Leyton .	14,642	2	274
St. Matthias, Canning Town	15,099	1	275
St. Margaret, Leytonstone .	15,586	2	230

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quate remuneration, and what are the difficulties which we have to overcome in these crowded areas.

Here we have nine incumbents responsible, with only fourteen curates, for 138,000 people, and their average net stipend is £266, and it would require £1200 a year, or a capital of £24,000, to raise the stipends of these nine men only to a reasonable minimum—£400 a year—for men in such responsible posts ; and there ought to be at least ten more curates to give one man for every 4000 souls. I calculate, from the information at my disposal, that we should want £6600 a year, or a capital sum of £132,000, to increase *all* the livings in London-over-the-Border to £400 a year.

Curates

In the archdeaconry of Colchester there are only twenty-eight curates, and their average stipend in 1918 was £168 ; nine of them are married men. We should require £1010 a year more if we made the minimum £200 a year.

In London-over-the-Border there are eighty-seven curates, with an average stipend of £189. With sixty more we should not be over-staffed, but to pay them, and to raise all to the same minimum of £200, would mean the provision of a further £13,000 a year.

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No class in the whole community can have felt the strain due to the increased cost of living more than curates. Dioceses have been able to do a little to mitigate their suffering, but how little is evident from the following statement of doles which we have given through the Board of Finance in the diocese of Chelmsford:—

To thirty-five married curates with not more than £200 a year—£10 each.

To eighteen married curates with more than £200 a year—£5 each.

To forty-two single curates with not more than £180 a year—£5 each.

It is what the *Guardian* rightly calls a heart-breaking position. A few months ago a married curate in this neighbourhood died of consumption : it developed only last year, when his stipend was £160 a year. Is it not probable that it was due to, or aggravated by, the undermining of his constitution by privation ?

A Personal Experience

At the suggestion of the Editor, to complete the record of the financial position in a rural archdeaconry, not at all by way of complaint, I add some information about the archdeacon.

His archdeaconry is exceptionally well endowed, in striking contrast with most others, with a stipend of £600 a year ; he has £400 a

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year besides as Suffragan Bishop, and £75 a year for expenses, and he only pays part of the actual rental value of his house. He cannot give his expenditure for 1918 because it was complicated by his absence in France ; but in 1917, when prices were lower, his accounts were as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Household expenses, wages, and garden	473	7	1
House repairs and renewals	36	10	5
Rent, rates, and taxes	268	2	11
Travelling and postage (official)	73	9	0
Coal and light	57	7	5
Charity	48	5	9
Life insurance	100	5	1
Wife and six children (clothes, travelling, &c.)	80	16	0
School bills (three)	189	15	6
Medical	23	9	7
Holidays	6	4	2
Self (clothes and all personal expenses)	12	4	0
<hr/>			
	<u>£1369</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>11</u>

This is much lower than usual, owing to the war economy revealed in two of the items. It is a quaint comment on Mr. Bonar Law's arguments that from the day he took his degree until he was made a bishop and archdeacon he

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always lived within his means, without help from anyone, while since that promotion he has never done so, but has spent in ten years upwards of £3500 more than his official income, which he could not have done without getting into debt but for the help of relatives.

III. REMEDIES OR REFORMS

Is it possible, with our existing machinery, to devise effective remedies, or must we seek drastic reforms by legislation? The improvements which have been brought about by the splendid work of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have been alluded to. They have raised a large number of livings to £200 a year; now they are raising those with a population of 2000 to £250, and those with a population of 4000 to £300 (if in public patronage), with a proviso that their total contribution is not more than £200 a year (this excludes a good many new parishes which they have originally endowed with £200 a year). There is every hope that they will continue and increase this upward levelling; but meanwhile present needs are urgent. If the laity would support Boards of Finance, whether diocesan or central, more whole-heartedly, and would realise that in so doing they would be fulfilling their obvious duty of supporting their clergy, the Maintenance

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Committees of those Boards would generally be able to cope with the difficulties.

And much can be done by the union of small benefices, as every diocesan bishop has proved ; but the application of this remedy is restricted by the present legal conditions and by the almost invariable opposition of the laity. It is true, as I know from experience, that they sometimes graciously give way, and by working for the welfare of the united parish prove that the change has been beneficial ; but often they show permanent resentment, and actually try to prevent the success of the venture by refusing to fall in with arrangements for some alteration in the hours of service, which are necessary if one man is to serve two churches. There seems to be no other solution of the problem of the small country parishes, if every incumbent is to be given full-time work to entitle him to a reasonable wage. But reform of ecclesiastical law is necessary if the application of the principle is to be extended and perfected. At present no union of benefices is possible unless the combined population is less than 1500, and no benefices may be held in plurality unless one of them has an income of not more than £200 a year. It is just for reasonable legislation of this kind that the Enabling Bill, if passed, will be most useful. I should like to see groups

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of parishes under a good incumbent and young curates. I know many localities in which an incumbent and a curate could work three grouped parishes well : a two-fold advantage would accrue—the curate would get experience of a country parish, whereas now so often a rector comes to such a parish after spending all his life in a town ; and the younger members of the parish would come into touch with one who could enter better into their thoughts and their interests and their games than, as a rule, an old man can, however worthy he may be. When I first went to a country parish I found that not a single inhabitant under fifty had ever had any experience of a rector under sixty, and I know what the result was. Of course there are exceptions, and many old men are wonderful in their adaptability to the young ; but I think that generally the laity will bear out my contention that country parishes suffer from this absence of ‘young blood’ among the country clergy. If we can have the wisdom and fatherliness of age, and also the vigour and enthusiasm of youth, in every district, the nation will be the better for it. But such a reform would mean that we should have less employment for the older men, and therefore it is inextricably linked with the question of the provision of adequate pensions. To consider this thoroughly would

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require a whole chapter, so I do not touch upon the subject except to draw attention to its importance in its bearing on other reforms.

One considerable advantage of securing a reasonable stipend to all the country clergy by the system which I have indicated would be the greater mobility possible. We are rightly accused of letting the clergy stagnate, and of our inability to move a square peg from a round hole. If the incomes were better and more uniform, and if the freehold were modified, far more movement would be possible. At present numberless men who would like to move have no margin for the expense of removal or dilapidations. We might even approximate to the Army system, so excellent both for the discipline and efficiency of the *padre*, under which a man might be moved to any work for which his superior officer thought him most fitted. I saw something of the organisation in France. At one base where I stayed the senior chaplain (D.A.C.G., to give him his proper title) had under him some twenty-five chaplains whom he could dispose of at his discretion. If a man was a 'dud' as a brigade chaplain, he might be moved at once and be found more efficient in a hospital ; if another was too rough for hospital work, he might be sent to prove his mettle in a factory. One who through some inexperience

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or indiscretion fell foul of his mess might be quietly shifted and avoid mistakes elsewhere. It all worked well, and I am sure that numbers of our excellent chaplains would be ready and glad to see a similar system introduced into the organisation of the Church at home.

One further reform which would considerably ease the financial situation must be briefly alluded to in conclusion. It is impossible to justify the payment of £1000 a year to one man for shepherding 500 people and of £300 a year to another who has charge of 20,000. I know the difficulty in the way of any ‘pooling of resources,’ and I know the danger of interfering with what is considered, if wrongly, private property ; and I admit that, whatever was done, vested interests would have to be considered ; but with the help of legislation (again we want the Enabling Bill) some changes might be made to lessen the anomalies. It would be a good beginning if in livings in public patronage part of an excessive stipend might, on a vacancy occurring, be transferred to a poorer parish. At present there is only one case, I believe, in which such a transfer can be made—when two livings are united. What possible objection can there be to a limited extension of the principle ?

I have hardly done more than enumerate reforms, because I understand that they are more

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fully discussed by other writers. There is much more to be said than I have attempted to say, but I will only register my conviction that by real reform, wise without being weak, considerate without being too conservative, definite without being destructive, we shall best win the sympathy and the pecuniary assistance of the laity, and so solve the problem of clerical poverty, and at the same time make the Church what she ought to be, what she was meant to be, what she is not fully at present—the Church of the people, and more worthy of her Master.

VI

IN THE DIOCESE OF NORWICH

By the ARCHDEACON OF NORFOLK

IT was a prominent layman who, in the course of a speech on Church Reform, made the scathing indictment of members of the Church of England, that they were the meanest people in the world as regards the payment of their clergy ! Frankly, this was not quite fair. An unusually varied experience has led me to the conclusion that the laity are generous when they have the need brought clearly before them. The fact is, very little has been done to present the case of the financial position of the clergy, because, while incomes have been stated, responsibilities have hardly been referred to. But clerical financial responsibilities are the crux of the problem. Nothing is so misleading as a bare statement of income. Here is the case of a clergyman who is now receiving about £850 gross income. This sounds handsome, but consider his responsibilities, as follows :—

	£	s.	d.
Rates and taxes	170	0	0
Assistant curate	150	0	0
Repairs and dilapidations	45	0	0

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	£	s.	d.
Donations, including collections, hospitality, &c. .	50	0	0
Insurance of glebe premises, chancel, and payment to clerk	5	0	0
Cost of collection of tithes, and payments for locum tenens	10	0	0
	<i>£430</i>	0	0

This leaves £420. ‘Not so bad,’ you will say. But observe the following expenditure :—

	£	s.	d.
Servants (including board for two)	175	0	0
Coals, lights, &c.	25	0	0
Travelling	50	0	0
Life insurance and pension	20	0	0
Books, papers, stationery, and postages	20	0	0
Board for three persons	100	0	0
Clothing and personal expenses, medical, &c. (two persons)	30	0	0
Holiday	25	0	0
Sons’ college expenses and expenses when at home, clothing, &c.	200	0	0
	<i>£645</i>	0	0

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Income, £850. Total outgoings, £1075. Some comments may disarm obvious criticism. The curate is *not* engaged to do the rector's work ! There are two parishes, each worked by itself, with full services in each church. In addition to the stipend, the curate has a house rent-free, and the Easter offering.

Repairs average about £25 ; the £20 is required to meet the cost of dilapidations when due.

The item for servants seems large. The difficulty is that the rectory and grounds are large. One domestic servant could not do the work of a house with fourteen rooms, scullery, &c., where hospitality is so frequent. And the rectory grounds are too large for the rector personally to keep in order. There is no reason against the clergy doing manual labour, but if they are to be students and thinkers, they cannot combine this with laborious or prolonged manual work. It should be noted that the rector and his wife both do a considerable amount of work in the house and outdoors. If it be imagined that they are anything else but 'workpeople,' please drop that idea at once ! They know nothing of a six-hours' day, and often it is more than an eight-hours' day with them.

'Travelling, £50'—a lot of money ! But the rectory is five miles from a station, and the

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rector does a fair amount of diocesan work as well as visiting in two parishes. He bicycles a good deal, but in the winter, with bad country roads, this is not always an easy mode of progression. It is curious how seldom this severe monetary handicap of distance from station and shops is referred to.

The holiday is a necessity. It helps to save a doctor's bill. It also is a preservative against those obsessions, those trumpery resentments, that narrow outlook which is the curse of people who never leave their village.

CASE No. 2

	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Income from tithe, &c. .	264	0	0
Gift (yearly) . . .	60	0	0
	<i>£</i> 324	0	0

Free-will offering and Easter offering, £92. This is not added to the £324, as there is no certainty about it. Indeed, even the gift of £60 is dependent upon the generosity of one donor.

Expenditure

	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Rates and taxes . . .	34	0	0
Repairs . . .	15	0	0
Servant . . .	40	0	0
Jobbing gardener . . .	32	0	0

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		<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Coals and light		25	0	0
Insurances		20	0	0
Schooling		77	0	0
		<i>£</i>	243	0

This leaves £81, plus £92 uncertain income, or a total of £173, out of which sum six persons are to be fed and four to be clothed, &c. Add something for doctor's bills, donations, the incessant hospitality and demands for help for nearly every conceivable object, and—how can it be done? What about a holiday, books, &c.?

Note that there are four in family, so that the expense for board for six persons includes the servant and her boy. But observe that if the squire moves away (as so many are doing), probably the £60 flies away as well!

No wonder this clergyman writes: 'We are always trying to cut down things.'

CASE No. 3

	<i>£</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Income from tithe and glebe	178	0	0
Ecclesiastical Commissioners' grant	40	0	0
	<i>£</i>	218	0

This is a small parish, so the rector is allowed

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to take duty elsewhere on Sundays, provided he gives his own people a celebration and another service with sermon. He is thus able to earn £73 10s. this year, in addition to £218—total £291 10s.

Expenditure

		£	s.	d.
Rates and taxes . . .		28	0	0
Fire insurance . . .		2	19	0
Repairs . . .		7	0	0
Life insurance . . .		7	12	8
School fees . . .		45	0	0
Butcher . . .		30	0	0
Grocer . . .		60	0	0
Baker . . .		25	0	0
Coal . . .		8	0	0
Clothes, lights, sundries .		145	0	0
<hr/>				
		<u>£358</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>8</u>

In addition, there is, for this year, an item of £70 for a boy's outfit as a cadet, and fees £52 10s. The family consists of nine persons, including parents. They have no servant, and the rector does the garden, &c., himself. The item £7 for repairs is the sum actually spent for this year ; the average, including dilapidations, is more like £30 per annum.

The rector says, ‘ We are poor, but by no means destitute, thanks to my relatives and friends.’ But why should relatives and friends

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be asked to make good the deficit? And why should the rector have to be in the unpleasant position of an almoner? It should be noted that this is a case of one who has done good work as a missionary abroad; he is not a 'slacker,' nor is there any reason to suppose that in any other vocation he would be in such dire straits.

CASE No. 4

(A curate in a large town)

	£	s.	d.
Stipend	260	0	0
Value of house	24	0	0
Diocesan Board of Finance. *	10	0	0
Ecclesiastical Commissioners *	12	0	0
Whitsun offering	6	0	0
<hr/>			
	<u>£312</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

This sounds a fair amount for a curate ; but the two items with a * are not permanent. He pays rates, taxes, and ground rent, £16. His net income for 1919 is about £296. This is unusually good, but he has been in Holy Orders fourteen years, and is the chief of a staff of curates with considerable responsibilities. There is no need to give his expenditure. Of course, the amount he would be called upon to give, and the hospitality he would show, would not be so much as if he were an incumbent, but it

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would be more than if he were in a private position.

Most curates receive from £180 to £250. It is an absurd stipend, when you take into account the large sum spent on their education. Some manual labourers, whose education has cost their parents nothing, and who began earning at fourteen or fifteen years of age, are receiving wages even higher, and they have no position to keep up, and very few calls on their generosity or hospitality.

On the whole, curates are better off than incumbents. They get much more private assistance, and their monetary responsibilities are fewer.

Now let us draw some conclusions, not from the foregoing cases alone, but from those and from many others which want of space prevents from being stated.

i. *The Actual Incomes of the Clergy.*—I wish to emphasise that the mere statement of income is most misleading.

Figures can be quoted from the 'Church of England Year Book,' published by the S.P.C.K., also from the 'Norwich Diocesan Calendar,' published by Goose & Son, Norwich. It will be enough for our purpose to say that the incomes of the clergy in the city of Norwich average about £200, or more. In rural deaneries in

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the country districts, one deanery averages £340 ; another is £380 ; and one deanery with two or three unusually valuable livings works out at about £600. Note that these figures are *gross* incomes. But, we repeat, figures giving the incomes alone are most misleading. For instance, if you live in a moderate-sized house in a town, with station, trams, and shops close by, and if one servant can do the work, £200 may be worth more than double that sum in a large rectory in a village remote from station or shopping centres.

Again, the cost of repairs and dilapidations may vary from £10 to £70 a year ; the number of tithe-payers may run into hundreds, and necessitate the employment of a collector, or it may consist of half a dozen landowners, from whom there is no difficulty in collecting oneself.

The neighbourhood is very important. I know of a curate who is far better off than the majority of incumbents, for the reason that his parish consists of well-to-do people who privately give him much help. I may say that for nearly six years I held a curacy where the stipend was £150, but the wealthy parishioners wished to do more for me than I felt justified in accepting. In a small village in Norfolk, where I was rector for nearly six years, the income was about £160 net, but this was always made up to £180 by

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a generous landowner ; I had plenty of time to spare for tuition, and generally earned £80 to £100 a year from pupils. When I left, the parishioners gave me the very handsome gift of £50. I was never so well off before or since—yet the income of the living was only £160.

Three facts emerge, as follows:—

- (a) Figures do not give a correct picture of the incomes of the clergy.
- (b) The majority of the clergy could not carry on were it not for their private incomes.
- (c) The assistant clergy are at least as well off as incumbents, and probably, owing to the generosity of their people, privately shown for the most part, they are much better off than their stipends would suggest.

2. The Effects of Underpaying the Clergy :

- (a) *On their Work.*—To their honour, be it said, many of the poorest-paid clergy work the hardest. There may be cases where the clergyman knows he is underpaid for the work which he does, and consequently he does not feel called upon to be as energetic as he might be. But such cases are few. It may be stated that, in general, the last thing which any clergyman thinks of

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in relation to his work is his stipend. Now and then there is a grumble, but no threat of a strike !

Yet there are certain inevitable effects from underpaying the clergy. Obviously no man can do his best when he is ill-nourished, has no holiday, and is frequently worried about ways and means. It is impossible, perhaps, for him to show that hospitality which is an integral part of his duty—and a very important part. He cannot buy books, nor many little things which make quite a big difference in the manner of living.

But, worse than these consequences, under-payment tends to cramp the character. The ceaseless, sordid struggle ; the degradation of debt; the inability to give ; and the unpleasant consciousness of occupying a position without the means to maintain it—all this must tell on the most saintly of men. Thus the character tends to deteriorate, and, along with it, the character of the work.

Of course, if we had a celibate clergy, the difficulty of ways and means would vanish. But other, and probably worse, difficulties would arise. Pope Pius II (A.D. 1458) said he ‘ saw many reasons for taking away wives from priests, but many more, and those of a graver character, for restoring them.’ At all events, our branch

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of the Catholic Church has decided for a married clergy, and at present the question of income must be looked at on the assumption that this will continue to be the normal state.

(b) *The Effects on their Families.*—The poverty of the clergy affects their wives more than their children. In many cases their sons win scholarships at school and at college, and the result is that they take a fairly good position when they go out into the world. There are excellent schools where clergymen's daughters are received at special terms. There is not much evidence that the children of poor clergy suffer as much as might be expected owing to the straitened means of their parents. Indeed, one finds that a good many candidates for ordination come from clerical families, which is an argument that their manner of life has not been unhappy, else they would not be willing to offer themselves for the same calling as their father. It is questionable, however, whether this will be so in the future. The outlook is so bad that some clergymen do not feel justified in recommending to their sons a life of such poverty that their efforts to do good may almost be stultified by their struggles to exist.

A clergyman's wife is sometimes considered a rather uninteresting, dowdy kind of person. As a fact, they are the most wonderful, hard-

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worked women in England. In the villages they are at the beck and call of every cottager. They make 'nourishments' for the sick and aged, and take them to them. They help with the outfit of young girls going out to service. They run an unpaid registry office for mistresses and maids. They teach in the Sunday School ; take a lead in all organisations for their sex, such as Mothers' Union, G.F.S., Girl Guides, &c. They visit and collect for every object of charity. They get up jumble sales, treats, and, in short, what is there they do not do ? Lay-people take it for granted that the services of the wives of the clergy are thrown in ! They little know of the constant struggle at home, and how much that good lady is overtaxed by the ever-pressing problem of making one shilling do the work of two !

The poverty of the clergy affects their wives in another way : it means that these ladies have to eke out their husband's income by throwing their own into hotch-potch.

Note.—The number of children of the clergy in this neighbourhood averages 4·15. The figures are: 26 married clergymen ; 6 have no children ; 20 have 83 children—an average of 4·15.

Small Parishes.—There are many villages in this diocese which do not afford scope for full-time work of a clergyman. But their number

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is decreasing owing to the joining of benefice to benefice. Then, a fair number of the clergy who have scanty populations do a lot of unpaid work outside. There are church organisations for so many objects nowadays, and committees innumerable which provide some extra work for incumbents of small parishes. But, no doubt, there are still clergymen who do half-time work and expect to receive full-time pay. Their number is becoming less, and the continuance of the wise policy of uniting small parishes will eliminate them altogether.

It may be observed that the greatest opposition to joining parishes comes from the people themselves, and, of course, it is a pity to reduce the number of services in any church on Sundays. When a clergyman has to oscillate between two, or even three, churches on a Sunday, the burden is almost intolerable. The revival of the permanent diaconate, with deacons who carry on their ordinary occupation during the week, yet are able to assist with services on Sunday, may help to solve this difficulty.

Here a word may be said about the extraordinary demands made upon the clergy, far outside their proper functions. During the War they have acted as unpaid Government officials in many ways, but as these last five years have been exceptional, nothing further

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need be said on this point. But a list of the work of a parish priest may be instructive, and certainly will surprise many of the laity, who do not realise what is being done for them. The following list is by no means exhaustive, and no mention is made of the ordinary activities inherent in the office of an ordinary clergyman:—

- Boys' Brigade.
- Scouts.
- Bandmaster.
- Clubs for men and boys.
- Clubs for cricket, football, hockey, &c.
- Savings Bank.
- Coal Club.
- Clothing Club.
- Teaching secular subjects.
- Letter-writing.
- Making inquiries.
- Applying for situations.
- Signing forms (quite a formidable task).
- Guardians.
- Magistrates.
- Local Councils.

At seaside and health resorts the incumbent is bombarded with letters from unknown correspondents, asking for information about lodgings,

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&c. Unfortunately many of these inquirers forget to enclose a stamp for reply !

The Unequal Distribution of Clerical Wealth.—This is, on the whole, not a bad thing. Of course we are not equal, and never will be, thank God ! We rightly aim at equality of opportunity, but not even that is really attainable. Nature refuses at every turn to respond to the demand for equality. The very basis of progress is—inequality. A dead level would not only be too dreary for words—it would also cause stagnation, or degradation. Our Lord did not treat the Apostles as if they were equal: St. Peter, St. James, and St. John were a special three. St. Paul speaks of the double honour for those who are counted worthy (1 Tim. v. 17). Yet, no doubt, the ‘double honour’ does not always go to the worthy. It must, indeed, be disheartening for a clergyman in charge of a large town parish with a small income to observe his brother of the cloth in a small village with emoluments two or three times as much as his own. It would be an excellent plan if these rich country livings could be reserved for those who have done hard work in a large sphere, and who need a less strenuous life. This touches the difficult problem of patronage. Possibly, if the Enabling Bill be passed, one of the first questions which will be tackled will be this.

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But why not put the matter clearly before the patrons of rich livings? If an authoritative statement were put forward by the whole bench of bishops, pointing out the desirability of reserving rich preferment for those who have laboured long and well, or for scholars who intend to devote their spare time to research and writing, would not this help matters?

As regards canonries, deaneries, &c., there is no reason why they should be cut down. These responsible positions entail considerable financial burdens beyond the ordinary, and they are not at all the rich, comfortable, do-nothing kind of job which ignorant people suppose they are. It may also be asked, Why is every profession to have its higher posts, to which the humblest beginner may aspire, while in the Church the desire and the aptitude for larger positions is to be unrecognised? We are glad in this diocese to have had Dean Beeching, a world-renowned literary man; Canon Hay Aitken, the veteran missionary; Canon Johns, the most eminent of Assyriologists; Canon Allen Bell, whose long and valuable services in an important London parish have been thus gracefully acknowledged. One other Canon is the Bishop of Thetford, also Archdeacon of Lynn, whose services to the Church in this diocese cannot be over-estimated—to say nothing of

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what he has done for the Church at large. If these positions were abolished there would still be needed clergymen to officiate in the Cathedral ; and if the incomes attached to the canonries were halved and the balance divided among the parochial clergy, it might mean £2 or £3 more for each one, but the loss to the diocese would be great —far outweighing the monetary considerations.

With the exception of a very few rich livings, it may be truthfully asserted that the distribution of clerical wealth in this diocese is by no means unfair—certainly not nearly so unfair as in other occupations.

Comparative Incomes.—The clergy are much underpaid when compared with those who have other occupations of a professional nature. The education may cost the same ; the recompense is very different. The ordinary history of a clergyman is as follows:—

No earnings until he is twenty-three years old.

A curate for fifteen years—average stipend, now, say £180 to £250. (Before the War it was considerably less—perhaps £150 to £180.)

At the age of thirty-eight a living worth £300 to £350, and a house. (Before the War, much less.)

N.B.—Remember that no other professional

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man has the same financial responsibilities as a clergyman, hence a considerable discount must be made when comparing incomes.

Would a solicitor, barrister, doctor, architect, or an official in the Civil Service be satisfied with similar pay? There are cottagers who are better off than the rector! What would a respectable coal-miner think of the monetary return, supposing he had paid for his education, earned nothing until he was twenty-three, and was expected to give and live in such a house as most country clergy do?

There is a labourer near here who earns over £2 a week, his son the same, daughter 25s., wife, say, 10s.—total nearly £6 a week. He pays no rent; gives next to nothing; has no expenses of any extent beyond board and clothing. He is a millionaire compared with many of the neighbouring clergy!

No one enters Holy Orders with the idea of 'making money'; neither do we want to open a door for any such thing; but the labourer is worthy of his hire—and does not get it.

It may be safely asserted that in the few cases of clergymen who leave fortunes, the money was not gained by the exercise of their office, but simply represents the amount left of their private income—probably much depleted since they first entered the ministry.

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Comparison between pre-War Conditions and the Present Time.—The rise in tithe is an increase of 45 per cent. since 1914, but even now the clergy only receive £109 3s. 11d. for each £100 of tithe rent. For about thirty years the amount was as low as from £68 to £75 for each £100. There was no movement in those days to help the clergy, but directly tithe went beyond par the scrap of paper was torn up, and the Houses of Parliament showed they had plenty of time to discuss church matters when there was money in it ! An Act to prevent the tithe-owner from receiving more than £109 3s. 11d. was passed in a very short time. The result is that, while expenses have gone up over 100 per cent., clerical incomes from tithe have gone up only 45 per cent. Unfortunately there is no escape for the incumbent—he cannot undertake other work more remunerative, neither can he move into a smaller and less expensive house. The outlook is dismal in the extreme, and must affect the supply of candidates for Holy Orders as soon as the position is thoroughly comprehended.

Social Status.—This is an attraction even in these democratic days. Of course it is much more easy for anyone to pass from one social group to another than it was in previous generations. Education is the true leveller, and there are great developments in view in this respect.

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Yet there will always be particular attractions for certain social groups, irrespective of *L. s. d.* Now, the clergyman *ex officio* mixes with all sorts and conditions of men, and he has opportunity for meeting interesting, cultured people with whom he might not come in contact if he occupied a different, although better-paid, position. It must not be supposed that those who enter Holy Orders deliberately take this into account. On the whole, there is no doubt of the purity of motive which leads men to become candidates for ordination. But the position of a clergyman is *sui generis*, and it may be thought that this is part of his remuneration. And here it should be noted that it is valuable, not only because it permits free ingress to cultured circles, but also to almost any circle. It is a real pleasure to feel that one is welcome in the cottage as well as in the Hall. This status is, perhaps, to many truly Catholic clergymen their most cherished possession, only it must be emphasised that it is prized, not in anticipation, but after ordination, when it is realised and has been proved to enlarge one's outlook and invest life with very widened interests.

'*Unlearned and Ignorant*' (Acts iv. 13).—This passage has been quoted to show that we do not need a learned clergy! We should be content with men of elementary education, who

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would live on the lowest economic plane and be paid accordingly. This unfortunate translation, however, must not be quoted in support of such a view. The word translated ‘unlearned’ means that the Apostles had not been trained in the technical learning of the rabbinical schools. In this sense our Lord was unlearned. The word translated ‘ignorant’ is in the original ‘idiots,’ and really one wonders why the translators, in their meticulous nicety, did not use this word ! An ‘idiot’ was simply a private person—one who possessed no official position. A reference to Edersheim’s ‘Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah’¹ will enlighten anyone if he imagines that ‘unlearned and ignorant’ have the same connotation as in ordinary conversation nowadays.

Of course, we need various types for the ministry, and we have them. There are lay evangelists, Church Army workers, &c., as well as parish priests, theological professors, and learned deans. This paper deals chiefly with the parochial clergy, and instead of lowering the standard, we need men more learned and more efficient, with a longer training for their specific function.

The Apostles had the priceless advantage of being trained by our Lord, and they were chosen for a ministry of conversion to His teaching.

¹ Vol. i. p. 228 *et seq.*

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The ordinary ministry in a country which has been Christian for centuries, where life is highly complex, education universal, and scepticism widely spread, must be that of men able to deal with conditions very different from those of Apostolic times. The qualifications for a Christian missionary of the first century, and of a parish priest in England nowadays, may in some respects be the same, but no one surely can argue that they should be precisely similar in every particular.

A millionaire in Wales said that he thought the clergy ought to be poor, and he was a strong advocate for disendowment ! He need not worry; the clergy are poor, very poor, and they do not wish to be rich—certainly not to be millionaires. But there is no doubt that the alternatives must now be faced, and a decision be made. Either we must revert to a celibate clergy, or if the present type of parish priest is to continue, he must be properly paid.

The rectory or vicarage, with its traditional and actual hospitality and truly catholic influence, is an asset which few value at its proper worth. The sons of the clergy have helped to make our country great, and the daughters have contributed to sweeten life in all directions. It is not the things most advertised, nor the institutions which thrust themselves forward, nor the

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officials who are officious, who are doing the most valuable work. One is astonished to find how little is known of the quiet, solid, everyday work of the Church. How many of the labouring class, for instance, know that the Church unostentatiously undertook the education of the poor long before the State troubled about it? And is there anything which has enabled the manual labourer to improve his position so much as education?

Political partisans, demagogues, atheistic revolutionaries have, for their ulterior purposes, tried their hardest to upset the relation between the parson and the poor. Yet he is above all the one true democrat in his parish. He is the friend of all, and stands for the rights, as well as the duties, of all. He bids not for popularity, neither among the manual workers nor among the brain-workers. He neither advertises his work nor himself. He is in many ways the most valuable asset of our corporate life, and it would be a thousand pities to lose him, or to substitute one of another type.

Conclusion.—If the present type of parish priest is to continue, he must be relieved of his intolerable financial burdens. The first steps should be as follows :—

1. Repairs to glebe premises (including the parsonage) and the costs of dilapidations should

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be at the charge of the parish, and not of the incumbent. Probably the Diocesan Boards of Finance could assist in the case of poor parishes. If the collection of tithe and management of glebe lands were placed in the hands of a central agency in each diocese, it would be done more economically and a much larger rent obtained. There is no reason why such an agency should not be run at a handsome profit, which could go towards a diocesan fund to help to pay for repairs and dilapidations.

2. There should be a permanent instruction to every diocesan surveyor to include in his reports recommendations as to the removal of unnecessary buildings, walls, &c., and the reduction in size of parsonages.

3. The Church as a whole should press for the removal of our grievance in respect of heavy and unjust rating.

4. Plain statements of the incomes of the clergy, both large and small livings, should be issued. Emphasis should be placed on the financial responsibilities, as these are unknown to most of our people. If the actual state of affairs becomes widely known, I have sufficient confidence in the laity to believe that the proper remedies will be forthcoming. If my optimism be ill-grounded, it is time for a radical change in the type of parish priest : he should be a

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celibate, and one upon whose purse or hospitality no demands are made.

There is another course, which may be the very one which the stress of circumstances is intended to compel us to take—viz. that of seeking pastures new overseas ! Who knows ? The call to missionary work abroad becomes more and more insistent, and maybe it is time for the Church to devote her chief energy and her best men to carrying out the plain command of the Master to go into all the world. The privileges which our countrymen rate so cheaply should now, perhaps, be transferred to those who are neither Gospel-hardened nor engrossed in their own material interests.

VII

IN THE DIOCESE OF SALISBURY

By the ARCHDEACON OF DORSET

THE general character of the Archdeaconry of Dorset, which is typical of the diocese of Salisbury as a whole, is indicated by the fact that it contains only twenty urban parishes, that the population of eight out of the nine boroughs averages 2500—that of the other being 35,000 ; and that only nine of the 128 rural parishes possess a railway station, while many of them are remote and more or less difficult of access.

Continuous visitation for twelve years of the whole county, with its 300 parishes, and work for five subsequent years in the reduced Archdeaconry, have afforded me more than normal opportunities of understanding and sympathising with the financial position of the clergy. And this personal knowledge has been supplemented by direct information specially supplied from parishes taken indiscriminately throughout the diocese. I propose to put their case mainly in my correspondents' own words.

The facts which emerge from this experience and inquiry, if only they can be marshalled

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aright, will show good and sufficient ground for the following conclusions:—

1. The great majority of clerical incomes are wholly inadequate, and many of them are ‘impossible.’
2. There is a vast difference between the nominal and the actual incomes of nearly all the rest.
3. Prompt and effective action is imperative.

1. *The Incomes are Insufficient.*—The average ‘net’ income last year in the archdeaconry, according to the S.P.C.K. ‘Statistical Return,’ was £264. Omitting two of the eight rural deaneries, it was £248. And if the comparatively few better-endowed benefices are eliminated, the average is much smaller—e.g. in ten out of the fourteen parishes of one deanery it falls to £189.

Among the incomes which I happen to have inquired into recently, twelve are £170 (2), £150 (2), £145 (3), £137, £128, £74, £70, £40—and these are only samples.

But an intelligent comprehension of the true state of affairs cannot be acquired by merely taking an average.

The following domestic budget, showing last year’s expenditure, will give a better idea.

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In this case the income is £210, with no vicarage house.

House rent, with taxes . . .	£60
Food (six persons) . . .	185
Clothes	34
Coal and light	28
Wages of maid	30
School fees for two boys .	13
Insurances	10
<hr/>	
	£360
<hr/>	

The deficiency, therefore, was no less than £150, the income not covering food and clothing. The 'Special Grant' scheme of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners provided £40, and the remaining deficit was met by 'help from friends who knew something of my circumstances—one of whom pays £60 for the rent and taxes. I have no idea how I am to keep out of debt this year, unless help is forthcoming from outside sources of which I know nothing at present. As it is, my children are not being educated as they ought to be for a clergyman's sons, nor are they properly clothed; while my wife, with three children and only one maid, has to toil much beyond her strength.'

How others of the clergy and their wives live is suggested by the subjoined extracts:—

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A.—‘My food costs £156 per annum for five persons. The stipend does not cover food alone. My wife does the cooking. With the help of my wife’s sister I work the garden and an allotment. In two fields which formerly let for £6, I keep a herd of goats, which made £60. The hay we make ourselves and carry in the children’s cart. We grow also $\frac{1}{4}$ -acre of grain on the allotment, for fowls. I and my sister-in-law have been reaping and binding the oats this week. (We can’t afford even to eat my own fowls : they must go to market.) I am so entirely tired and weary as to be unfit for work at night ; and the weariness passes over to Sunday, which the labourer gets as his day off, while I am on again with never less than four services. We were both brought up in luxury. What will happen to my wife and children if I die before my boy can help them is a constant nightmare.’

B.—‘It is fearfully hard on my wife, who is a household drudge, an unpaid housekeeper. She is wearing herself out, and is very nervy, almost to a breakdown, but gets no rest, and cannot do so. She has needed doctors and dentists for years, but they are out of the question. A holiday is impossible. Education is an impossible burden.’

C.—‘I bought no clothes and took no holiday for three years. Two winters I let the house and lived in a cottage on 30s. a week. It was a long and weary while. At present prices it is hard to manage at all, in spite of every anxious

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economy. I am, thank God, childless. How men with families manage, I can form no idea.'

D.—'I have £154 (for myself and wife) on which to live and find clothes, doctor's bill, coal, light, &c. I am not strong, and the doctor forbids me to dig the garden. I had to give up my insurance policy a few years ago.'

E.—'In spite of my wife being a most competent and economical housekeeper, every quarter leaves me with anxiety as to whether my account is overdrawn. The benefice income is £170. (I have a private income of similar amount.) A married man could only live on the income in a cottage, in the same way as an artisan. But it would be difficult then to marry a woman of education and refinement. For possible expense of illness one can only have faith. I am not able to make any provision for the education of my three young children. I ought to keep a gardener, but cannot afford it.'

F.—'Life is certainly a struggle, and the strain and anxiety financially do affect one's work. My wife is delicate, with chronic heart complaint, but we have no servant, indoors or out (the house is large), and only bare necessities. Hitherto I have been unable to make any provision for my family. I am going to paint the Rectory myself—by doing so I shall save £60.'

G.—'We have lived for two years in a large house without domestics, and all the winter months, to save fires, we live in the kitchen. We exist mainly on the produce of the garden. Both my sons have been at the front—one being

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killed. How those with young families exist is incomprehensible.'

H.—' Out of this small income of £170 I have to live and keep my wife and aged mother, who is eighty-six years of age, blind and bed-ridden. So we are bound to keep a servant to wait upon her. Being so far from a town, that too makes it much more expensive to live, as we have to fetch everything. There is the upkeep of the house ; and if any little thing is needed in the parish it mostly falls on me. Now that everything is so very dear and costly, it is a struggle to make ends meet.'

I.—' I could not possibly live here on the income of £145, but for the fact that my uncle and sister both share expenses.'

J.—' My children ' (there are ten of them, and the income was £75) ' got a good grounding in the National School just outside my gate, and then that foundation was built upon. Societies have been very helpful to me.'

K.—' The net income is £342. Dilapidations this year amount to £100, and the yearly upkeep of this house is heavy. There is no chance of putting by for education, and it is very hard to keep clear.'

L.—' The net income is £128, not enough to pay the wages I have to find. My health has been bad for some years. I have no more reason to complain than hundreds of others. We clergy usually pay for serving. Thank God, we feel our work is not a question of money, despite the terrible anxieties many of us have

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to face.' (Fifty per cent. of the church population communicated at Easter.)

M.—'When tithe was at £66 I had to use capital for education. Now, when there was hope of paying off my liabilities, the rise in tithe is arbitrarily limited, and the charges upon it have risen by leaps and bounds. Wages nearly doubled, cost of living doubled ! What must the inevitable end be ? It is a dark outlook after forty-five years of clerical work. Here I must, it would appear, remain, struggling with poverty, and become at last a cumberer of the ground.'

N.—'This living, when I took it, was of a gross value of £75 from tithe, "net" £60, the only supplement to it being a grant of £50 a year, if £25 is raised in the parish. Life to my wife and self was one continual struggle to live, and there was always the dread that sufficient would not be raised to obtain the grant. Some additional duty was afterwards obtained, and here again there was the constant dread lest it might cease. Ever to take a Sunday holiday was an impossibility, and even the taking of a daily paper was out of the question, much less the buying of any books. And then came illness in one's family for many years, and all one's energies went to meet the doctor's bills. How, then, provide for the future of one's family, or for dilapidations, on such and so uncertain an income ? I hope you will in no way think I am whining, for I frankly admit that the "pinch" has relaxed, but you wished to know what one

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really had felt when ground for fifteen years in the mill of poverty.'

SPECIMEN BUDGETS

T.R.C.¹ £395, E.C. £80, parish £8—gross income £483. Legal deductions : Rates on tithe £49, on house £16 ; land tax £11 ; Q.A.B. loan £9 ; repairs £14 = £99. Add life assurance £19, and parochial subscriptions £23. Total £141, leaving balance of £342, which has to be further reduced by income tax. Also dilapidations this year cost over £50.

T.R.C. £238, E.C. £140, from sale of glebe £30—gross income £408. Legal deductions : Rates on tithe £18, on house £14 ; land tax and house duty £23 ; collecting £4 ; repairs £10 = £69. Net income £339. Also wall fell down this year—cost £50.

T.R.C. £101, E.C. £20, Q.A.B. £19, various £8—gross income £148. Legal deductions : Rates on tithe £11, on house £8 ; repairs £15 = £34. Net income £114. Also the house is devastated with dry-rot (the staircase is only kept up by placing loose bricks under it), and the garden is surrounded by a wall chiefly made of mud, 176 yards long, which needs constant attention.

2. *The Nominal and the Actual Incomes are Two very Different Things.*—Even the 'net' in-

¹ T.R.C. = Tithe Rent Charge ; E.C. = Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

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come, as estimated, is quite misleading. For the outgoings are many more in number than those included in this estimate, and are often out of all proportion to the incomings. The difference between the 'gross' and 'net' incomes, as shown in the 'Statistical Return,' is £7600, or an average of nearly £60 per parish (in one deanery it is £84, in another £97).

One very serious and unjustifiable outgoing is the disproportionate demand for rates made upon incomes derived from tithe rent charge, which has been described as a 'second crushing income tax.' Few people are aware that the rector contributes to the maintenance of schools, police, and roads many times as much as such other residents as the doctor, the lawyer, or the colonel; for whereas they are rated on their houses alone, the pastor is rated on his tithe as well.

Look at this table :

T.R.C.	Rates on House.	On Tithe.	Total.
£805	£21	£75	£96
596	10	63	73
395	12	49	61
101	9	11	20
340	14	52	66
983	28	128	156
840	21	115	136
—	—	—	—
£4060	£115	£493	£608

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Seven clerical incomes, amounting together to £4060 and averaging £580, pay £608 in rates, or an average of £87.

Seven similar incomes of lay ‘residents’ pay about £115, or nearly £500 less than the parsons, and an average of £16.

‘What other class of citizens,’ a correspondent asks, ‘has to contribute £263 to the public exchequer, in rates and taxes together, out of an income of £800—*i.e.* one-third of his income?’

A leading article in *The Times*, commenting upon ‘the swift rise in the rates in the London boroughs,’ said ‘the larger proportion of the increase is due to the attempts of the Government to cast upon ratepayers burdens that should properly be borne by national finances.’ Does either the Press or the public know that the burden of this increase, which is not confined to ‘London boroughs,’ presses far more heavily upon clerical ratepayers than upon anyone else, and that it has greatly accentuated the already existing inequality of the incidence of local taxation upon them as compared with other ratepayers?

Take for comparison the rates paid last year (1) by a rector, (2) by two neighbours, whose financial ‘ability’ is indicated by the fact that they both pay super-tax.

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	On House and Grounds.	On Tithe.	Total.
Rector . . .	£18	£97	£115
X. . . .	28	nil	28
Y. . . .	39	nil	39

—i.e. two, at least comparatively, wealthy men paid, the one one-fourth, the other one-third, of what the clergyman paid.

And the increase in the rate during the last ten years makes a *difference*, to the rector of £60, to X. of £10, to Y. of £17—their respective payments in 1909 having been £55, £18, £22. Also whereas the original law which laid rates upon tithe only applied to relief of the poor, £75 of the rector's payment last year was for 'District' and 'County Rate.' Thus every new Education Act, every increase in the pay of the police, every new road, has taken *six times as much* out of the rector's purse as it has taken out of that of the layman close by.

When the Tithe Rent Charge (Rates) Act, 1899, was passed the Wilts rate was 3s. in the £. It is now 8s., so that the half-rate payable is 2s. 6d. more than the Act considered to be an equitable charge on tithe. Canons, indeed, still pay the full rate, which at one cathedral at least amounts to £140 apiece, besides an average of about £60 on their houses !

But the unfortunate tithe-owner has to suffer

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a fresh disability, and this time it is at the hands of the Church. For the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have formed a scheme of special grants, on the ground of 'need for assistance towards the increased cost of living,' to be given to incumbents whenever 'the net income of the benefice does not exceed £300.' But, presumably by some strange miscalculation, incumbents whose T.R.C. is 'of the commuted amount of £300' are excluded, in apparent forgetfulness of the fact that such incumbents have to pay a heavy additional rate, which is not payable by those whose income is derived from other sources. And this is how it works out :

A. and B. are incumbents of adjoining parishes, living in houses of similar value, on which they alike pay rates amounting to £13.

A.'s income, which comes to him without any deductions, is £290.

B.'s income is entirely derived from tithe rent charge commuted at £300, and its present value is £327. But this sum is assessed at £250, on which, at 4s. in the £, B. pays rates amounting to no less than £50 over and above the £13 paid both by A. and himself on their houses. B.'s 'net income' is, therefore, only £277.

Under the scheme, A. is eligible for a special grant of £40 as supplementary to his benefice income of £290, making a total of £330.

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But B. is declared to be ineligible for a grant, and his income accordingly remains at £277, or £53 less than that of his neighbouring brother. Yet the ‘cost of living’ is equally ‘increased’ for B. ; and he has no less ‘need for assistance towards’ meeting it than A.

Yet again, the assessment of tithe is often out of proportion to that of the parish. ‘I have not heard,’ says one, ‘of a single case of the reassessment of a farm, though farms have enormously increased in value ; yet they have just doubled my assessment of tithe. I am the largest ratepayer, though farmers are making thousands a year here.’ But for a rector to appeal for reassessment of the parish is impracticable.’ One who did so writes, ‘It was a most miserable time for me with some of my parishioners, and the experience has made me shy of doing anything of the kind again.’

Further, in consequence of the rise of rates, the ‘redemption of tithe,’ in accordance with the Tithe Act, 1918, will in almost every case cause a permanent reduction of income, apparently to £80 or less for every £109 now received.

On the whole question, whatever may have been the position of the tithe-owners in the time of Queen Elizabeth, and before the industrial revolution, when real property was the sole source of income, the conditions of to-day are

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entirely different. In face of the facts set forth above, British sense of fair play will surely refuse to allow such a crushing burden to be any longer placed upon the parson's shoulders while shoulders financially much broader carry what by comparison is a mere feather-weight. It will demand that legal technicalities be brushed aside, and the broad, and only equitable, principle of taxation according to 'ability' be applied to local, equally with 'national,' finances.

Another burdensome outgoing which has a universal application, and which is a grave menace to the Church's welfare, is the working of the law of dilapidations. The house of residence and all the buildings, walls, gates, and fences belonging to the benefice must be put into complete repair by the incumbent, under abnormally strict and uneconomical conditions, after a survey by the diocesan surveyor, either every five years or at the end of his incumbency. In the case of his death, the liability falls upon his widow, or other heir. Grave anxiety as to the possibility of fulfilling this legal requirement is sadly common. And if the benefit of assurance against dilapidations is wisely desired, the annual premium constitutes a substantial addition to the already too numerous outgoings, which it is frequently very difficult, if not impossible, to undertake.

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'We went away so sadly,' writes one, 'for our only comfort was this, that to obtain these benefits we must contribute the money we did not possess.' Yet if repairs are deferred, as they sometimes have to be, for many years, the church property deteriorates, and the ultimate cost, by whomsoever met, is greatly enlarged. And meanwhile the incumbent's inability to face his dilapidations is a bar to his promotion or transference to another benefice, however desirable and in the best interests of the Church it might otherwise be.

'Dilapidations to me in this huge, unwieldy house, are a continual nightmare. No smaller one is to be secured, so I am tied fast, when the house of itself (nothing else) would make me go to-morrow if I had the chance and there were no dilapidations.'

But this is not all. The enormous advance in building costs has spread the difficulty broadcast through the country, and increased it beyond measure, while incumbents appointed during the War find that, the actual cost of their predecessor's dilapidations being more than double the sum at which they were assessed, they are themselves legally bound to make up the difference—in one case just reported to me £100, and the net income is £140—for something which is not their liability.

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In short, the burden of dilapidations, which is growing heavier and heavier, is now literally unendurable, and its effects are disastrous.

And we have a 'housing question' of our own. The trouble with us, however, is not the deficiency, but the excess of accommodation. A large number of the rectories and vicarages are wholly disproportionate to the financial position of the incumbent (who is no longer the Squire's brother or near relative). And modern systems of education have cut off the supply of 'private pupils,' for whose reception many of these houses were enlarged. The keeping up of these houses, and of the extensive grounds which often accompany them, involves an expenditure which, at present prices, can hardly be justified in the better-endowed parishes, and which is a cruel incubus when the income is small.

Even a canon residentiary, with an income of £500, does not find himself overpaid, but he is certainly overhoused. For the rates and taxes on his canonry house, with the most economical possible expenditure on the garden and grounds attached to it (which cover several acres), absorb £250, and income tax has still to be paid. The somewhat meagre remnant is £140.

A rector writes : 'Of course I am one of the fortunate ones as regards *professional* income. But it is a continuous struggle to live up to one's

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house and grounds, which are very suitable for a "country gentleman," but a real burden on a parson who does not want them and yet has to pay rates according to his "mansion-like" residence. I employ a man and a boy—a great expense in these days—and yet have to spend a great deal of time working in my garden to keep it as one's people expect to see it; and I always feel that to a certain extent one holds it in trust for them—it is the "Rectory" garden.'

Other examples of the housing difficulty :

Net income £137. Three large reception-rooms, 9 bedrooms, stabling, glass-house, garden (1 acre)—'Would take £1000 per annum to keep up.'

Net income £500. House built for £6000 in 1880 by wealthy rector. 'Involved his successor in financial ruin.' Seventeen rooms, coach-house, stables, &c. *Grounds over 5½ acres*, of which garden and lawns occupy 2½ acres, shrubberies nearly 2, and orchard 1.

Net income £143. 'Large house, in bad repair, calls for immediate attention. I can do nothing but let things slide from bad to worse.' (Diocesan Fund makes grant of £40.)

Net income £154. 'House 400 years old, leaky roof; subject to floods; is injuring wife's health.'

Net income £355. 'Overhoused; wages

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and upkeep reduce available income below that of a much smaller nominal income with a more manageable house.'

Net income £436. 'After payment of income tax (£100) and gardener (£100), this leaves the rector with a huge house, described by a visiting dignitary as "an episcopal mansion," and £236 to live on. We must be relieved from the obligation to live in these unduly pretentious places, really out of harmony with the life and position of a country priest.'

'The vicarage contains nineteen rooms, and is much too large. The garden is 1 acre, and costs £65 per annum. Because I live in such a house people naturally conclude I am a rich man, and do not believe me when I tell them I am not. After paying gardener and annual repairs, my net income is £440 (still, however, to be reduced by income tax). There are dilapidations waiting to be executed at the present time of £100. In these days one has to practise the strictest economy in order to keep out of debt. A few years ago, as a result of having to wait for my tithes, I was literally, for a fortnight or so, entirely penniless, with an exhausted bank account and no private means. I have not been able to save sixpence a year till just lately, and I see no likelihood of being able to leave sufficient to support my wife and family at my decease.'

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'The rectory house is an absurdly large one, with ten bedrooms, large drawing and dining-rooms, study, morning room, kitchen, two sculleries, dairy, and large coachhouse, stables, &c. No man without private means could afford to live in it. When I came the rectory was in a very bad state of repair. The drains were in a shocking condition, and the entire house very uncared for. I had to repair the drains, and do much other work of a very expensive nature, which cost me nearly £300, besides nearly £50 for fixtures. Having no private means, I had to borrow, and began my incumbency with a weight of debt round my neck. The Bishop then allowed me to let the rectory, and by dint of much economy I have been able to get the property into excellent repair, but have not yet been able to pay off all I owe to the bank.'

Some laymen allege that the church income is so badly administered—*i.e.* so much given to one man and so little to another—that it checks their sympathy and desire to help. 'Tax the rich benefices heavily to assist the poor ones.' Well, on two separate occasions I was myself invited by the late Bishop to take charge of one of the best livings in the county. Twice I went into the whole finance of the parish, and twice I found that the real amount at my disposal would be less than one-third of the supposed income, with a very large house in which to

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reside. Twice I was obliged regretfully to plead inability to make the venture.

The nominal income of another 'rich benefice' is £950. But there are sixteen cottages and houses on the glebe, the repairs to which have averaged £113 for the last twelve years. The repayment, with interest, of loans obtained from Q.A.B. by a former rector, when they were in a more or less ruinous condition, and of a further loan to meet initial expenses, added to rates and taxes, brings the present income down to £535 (with income tax still to meet). And during most of these twelve years tithe was considerably below par, and the income was about £440.

There does not seem to be much scope here for further 'heavy taxation' in aid of the poorer benefices.

Further examples of the deceptive character of apparent incomes are summarised as follows :—

Gross income exceeds £1000. Rates on tithe, house, and glebe, £98 ; tithes and tenths, £36 ; taxes and insurance on house, £34 ; repairs, £100 ; curate's stipend, £200—*i.e.* £468. Income tax adds £88, leaving £444 as the true income : and out of this an exceptionally large house has to be maintained, the last dilapidations for which were assessed at £700.

Gross income £1110, almost the best living

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in the diocese, recently refused by several clergy. Why? The rates and taxes and repairs reach £250; the curates' stipends, £330—*i.e.* £580. The smaller half left is still subject to income tax and to a pension of £100 to the late incumbent.

Gross income £1370, 'net' £1096. Acreage 11,000. Four churches. Assistant curates' stipends last year £470, when two were absent at the War. True income now about £500, not counting the deduction for income tax.

Autobiographical account from an incumbent :

'I gladly give you a frank and full statement of the facts relating to this benefice, which is considered of fair average value, and is probably a typical instance of a country parson's position with wife and family. Our chief difficulty for ten years has been the call to sacrifice portions of our capital, representing private means, to meet special needs—the education of our children, illnesses, and operations (four or five in a few years), moving into the vicarage in 1913, dilapidations, the cost of training my daughter, &c. This has led to a considerable reduction of income, and, in addition, when I first came here I had to borrow £70 from Q.A.B. for kitchen range, bath, and other necessary permanent equipment; also £100 on my life assurance policy, and £70 besides. I do not think I have ever pleaded poverty, but I have

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always parted with my capital with the most extreme reluctance. My eldest son's education at Oxford was, of course, a heavy item. (He died of wounds in 1916.) My second son, who served for four years and was wounded, is now at Oxford. My third son, after two and a half years in R.G.A., will return to a firm in the City, but will need some help for a time. My youngest son is at school, and, like my two elder sons and myself, has undergone an operation for appendicitis. These are the kind of circumstances under which we live. You may imagine how carefully we have to live, and how closely we have to cut down expenses, which is not easy in a country vicarage, where things must be somehow kept up and the garden attended to. Unfortunately, my age and health do not allow of much physical exertion. I cut down travelling expenses, clothes, &c., to the lowest limit, but, of course, I have as vicar to subscribe to various things in the parish and the church collections.'

A recent article in *The Times* points out that 'the transference from the caste to the professional basis' in the Army, with the elimination of 'the possession of private means as one of the qualifications' of an officer, involves the rates of pay being 'the same as are given to other professional service.'

Now there is a close parallel in the traditional position of the clergy of the Church. Is not a

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similar modification in the rate of their pay now required? Under the recent warrant, officers in the Army are receiving pay which is at least double that of clergy who may reasonably be regarded as holding corresponding rank. Thus a lieutenant commences with £375; an assistant curate with £180. A captain has £500; an incumbent perhaps £250. And it would not be unreasonable to bracket the rector of a fairly large parish with a married major, 'whose £868 (according to *The Times*) is not far from the competent but undistinguished first-class Civil Service clerk's salary.' But how many rectors receive half that sum? And the comparison is not yet complete. For the officer's pay advances by £100 after a certain number of years in each rank; but the parson's pay stands still, and if he is unbeneficed he finds himself considerably depreciated in value by middle life.

But besides the legally compulsory outgoings there are others which are practically compulsory, of the extent of which, in many parishes, the general public has little or no conception.

In fact, clerical incomes suffer a heavier comparative taxation, alike legal and moral, than those of any other section of the community.

The laity do not realise how constant is the drain upon the rector's purse for parochial organisations—Sunday School, Club, Guild,

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C.L.B., Scouts, &c., &c.; for putting up and fetching from the station deputations, Harvest Festival preachers, speakers, singers; for heading subscriptions of every kind, the individual amounts of which may not be large, but which in the aggregate come to a substantial sum, especially where it is far from being the case that 'silver is nothing accounted of.' Moreover, there are extra-parochial claims, too. 'Diocesan work should be recognised as part of a parish priest's duty,' says one, and I quite agree. But travelling expenses in connexion with education, for example, or finance, involve a quite appreciable outlay. And to be Proctor in Convocation means hotel or club, as well as railway expenses at least three times a year, and much oftener if serving on its committees, besides an assessment to defray *all* the cost of Convocation, including printing its numerous reports, one of which recently cost £300. And the same applies to membership of Central Boards or Societies. Of course, it is impossible for the poorer clergy to attempt it. But this must sometimes mean that the men who are best fitted and have the most free time for such work are precluded from undertaking it.

Should not churchmen in the diocese or in the province insist upon paying the out-of-pocket expenses for this unpaid work--without

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which, in these days, when ‘unity of command’ is a condition of effectiveness, the full power of the Church cannot be put forth?

3. *Action, alike Prompt and Effective, is Imperative.*—The Church’s work, which is vital to the nation’s welfare, cannot be carried on as things now are. Meanwhile, in the present reconstruction, social and economic, its employees are coming between the upper and the nether millstone.

Yet in the Church’s service, if anywhere, the principle of the divine action, which is to ‘render to each according to his works,’ should be reproduced. And we know that St. Paul specifically applied it to the ministry of the Gospel. But in the Church of England the clergy are not paid the wage that they have earned. The ancient endowments are quite insufficient to meet the demands of the twentieth century—and happily so, for two reasons.

In its own moral interests every generation should pay its own way. It is not in a healthy condition unless it has to work for its daily bread—of every kind. And every individual should contribute his quota to the Church of which he is a member, for services rendered to it, whether or not he makes direct and conscious use of them himself. But if the true inwardness of profiteering is the neglect of the

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rule that the workman has a first charge on his output, the bulk of the members of the Church of England have been profiteering for a long time. A large amount of conscience-money is outstanding. And, secondly, there is no more sure road to Disendowment than liability to a just taunt that, while other people have to pay for their religion, we get it for nothing.

Moreover, so long as patrons and parishes ask for ‘a man with private means,’ they must not be surprised if he is sometimes inclined to be his own master seeing that he is allowed to be his own paymaster.

It is true that neither the soldier’s heroism nor the parson’s devotion bear any relation to the amount of their pay ; but there is a practical difference in that the soldier is provided with rations and uniform and munitions, while the clergyman has to forage for himself, and to find somehow his clothes and his books, or he simply cannot do his work.

And there is a real relation between sufficient pay and functional efficiency.

Anxiety as to next week’s rations, dread of leaving wife and family unprovided for, the pain of seeing children debarred from proper education, the struggle to keep out of debt, these and such-like things necessarily react upon mind and soul and body. If a man tries to supple-

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ment his income by growing his own vegetables, this means so much time withdrawn from the care of the parish or necessary preparation, as well as a measure of bodily fatigue which impairs the value of his ministerial work. ‘The establishment of a minimum which will give a sense of security is necessary,’ according to Mr. Clynes, ‘for the utilisation to the full of the skill and ability’ of industrial workers. Is it any less necessary for the clerical workers?

Failing a prompt rise in clerical remuneration, the alternative is a widespread ‘dilution’ of skilled labour. ‘District’ priests must supervise a body of lay workers, male and female. Rural Brotherhoods, on the lines of the ‘Bush Brotherhoods’ in Australia, must hold services over extensive areas. And it is probably desirable that parishes within a certain radius of selected centres, such as Sherborne and Milton Abbeys and Wimborne Minster, should be placed under the corporate charge of a dean and a chapter of incumbents. But the general abolition of the parish priest and the vicarage house is a different matter. Such changes, too, must await an alteration of the system of patronage—and, indeed, the grapes are fully ripe. There are 240 parishes in this diocese in private patronage. The incomes of 150 of these do not reach £250, 75 being under £150 and 30 under £100.

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While some of the patrons act with generosity, the majority contribute little or nothing to the improvement of the stipend, which has to be provided, if at all, by the congregation or the diocese. And yet the patron retains the sole appointment! Either the limitation of the rights or else the enlargement of the duties of patrons is urgently required. But this is only one of the numerous prescriptions and legal enactments with which the Church of England is swathed like a mummy, and the unwinding of which is essential to its utilisation of its personal and material resources to the best advantage, and its effective increase of its productive power.

But 'the Enabling Bill,' which alone gives promise of action being taken before it is 'too late,' has not yet been passed by Parliament, and even earnest churchmen do not rally round their leaders and insist upon its enactment 'without delay.'

In conclusion, I invite attention to one more revelation of what has been going on.

The incumbent of a very small living had to face these extraordinary repairs to his house : 1911, corner of house cracked, £213 ; 1913, defective drains, £23 ; 1917, roof and walls 'gave,' £120 ; 1918, scullery roof 'gave,' £60. Total, £416. He paid out of his own pocket

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about £80 over and above annual payments of £5 for ordinary dilapidations, and £2 10s. for underpinning of house thirty years before.

He also had the church refloored and reseated, the tower reroofed, and the bells rehung, as well as £30 per annum added to the benefice income, *which was previously £80.* Is it not a matter for wonder that he can write with such self-restraint, painful as it is to read, as follows : ‘ I have had sixteen long years of raising money and shouldering heavy burdens. I am now spent. The strain of the War and its increased prices, added to the previous strain of money obligations and liabilities, is getting almost too much. As I look back I wonder how I managed to get through the years. I have had no help except from the diocese and leading diocesan people, for which I am very grateful. By such help I have kept my head above water. The Diocesan Board has been a sheet anchor to clergy in my position. Please forgive some show of feeling ; but it is very difficult indeed to speak of one’s monetary struggles without some expression of feeling rising to the surface. I am shaken, and only escaped a breakdown by a short holiday.’

It must be plain to all that, unless a remedy is speedily discovered, a great reduction in the number of ordained clergy is inevitable. For

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if it is not effected by design, it will work itself out by a process of exhaustion. The existing clergy will be starved out, and men will not be forthcoming to take their place—not because they will not, but because they simply cannot, accept responsibilities which are not accompanied by a wage on which it is possible to live.

For, turn to whatever quarter he may of the financial compass, the parson usually finds himself doomed to difficulty, discomfort, and diminished efficiency, unless he is possessed of a private purse which allows him the privilege of giving his services for nothing. The clergy are commonly overrated, constantly overhoused, continuously overburdened—but they are nearly always underpaid.

Reticence and reserve have been carried too far, and somebody must now speak out and tell the country the facts.

But let no one make a mistake. We are not asking anyone to ‘pity the poor parsons.’ It is no case for charitable gifts, but for the honest discharge of a debt.

VIII

IN THE MANCHESTER DIOCESE

By Canon PETER GREEN

I. THE GENERAL SITUATION IN ENGLAND

THE question of the financial position of the clergy is such an important one, not merely for the sake of a large body of cultured and educated men, the great majority of whom are wretchedly underpaid, but even more because of the effect which such a state of things must inevitably have upon the supply of suitable men for the ministry, that a careful and judicial inquiry into the actual conditions of clerical life is of the first importance. And such an inquiry, as a preliminary step towards a united effort to improve matters, not merely in this or that parish or diocese, but throughout the whole country, has long been called for. The War, however, with the consequent tremendous rise in the price of every necessity of life, has converted what has long been a pressing matter into one of absolute and urgent necessity, without which it is difficult to see how the work of the Church of England can be carried on for

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another generation. Out of 12,990 livings¹ in 34 dioceses in the Church of England (the diocese of Norwich and the Welsh dioceses being excluded), 3275, or just over a quarter of the total, are worth less than £200 a year; while a further 2585 are worth less than £250 a year, bringing the total number of livings under £250 a year to 5806, or very nearly half (45·11 per cent.) of the total. When it is remembered that the purchasing power of money is not more than half what it was before the War, and that the rise in prices has been heaviest in the actual necessities of life, such as food, clothing, and boots, it is obvious that a large proportion of the beneficed clergy, and practically all the unbeneficed clergy, are either living on their own private means or attempting to live, and in many cases to bring up and

¹ Most of the figures in this article are taken from the admirable statistical table in *Revenues of the Church of England*, by the Rev. A. C. Headlam, M.A., D.D. (John Murray, London, 2s. 6d. net). For reasons which Dr. Headlam explains and fully justifies in his most valuable book, the diocese of Norwich is excluded. The figures for the dioceses of London and Liverpool are gross, and not *net*. And there is nothing to show whether the figures quoted include any allowance towards the rent of a house where no parsonage is provided, or any equivalent for house rent where there is a house. But the table is, notwithstanding, the fullest and most valuable I have been able to meet with, and I have therefore made use of it.

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educate a family, on less than the pre-war equivalent of £125 a year. It is obvious that this is not a state of things which can possibly be allowed to go on. The authorities of the Church will be forced to take action. Even if small livings are amalgamated, and country districts worked by means of colleges of priests residing at a convenient centre, and by a much more general use, as in our Colonies, of the services of educated laymen, it is still true that large sums of money will have to be raised.

Whether the attempt is made to raise a large capital sum for permanent endowment of livings, or whether the responsibility of paying their clergy a living wage is thrown, as an annual charge, upon the congregations and church officers of our parishes, the first step in either case is to awake the nation to a sense of the need for the effort which will be required. And to that end all that is necessary is that the laity should realise, to an extent to which few of them do realise it at present, how the clergy actually live and are paid. Plain facts and figures are what is needed, and such will speak, and speak eloquently, for themselves.

II. THE DIOCESE AND CITY OF MANCHESTER

This essay will treat only of the diocese of Manchester, the most populous in England,

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with the exception of that of London, Manchester diocese containing 3,251,014 people, as against the 3,811,827 of London diocese. When it is realised that only one other diocese has a population of over two millions (Southwark, 2,235,352), that twenty dioceses have populations of under one million, and eight dioceses populations of less than half a million, it will readily be understood that the problems of Manchester diocese are of a special type. No diocese, perhaps, presents such contrasts as exist between the crowded industrial districts of the south-east of the diocese, the archdeaconries of Manchester and Rochdale, and the lonely and scattered parishes of the northern part, the archdeaconry of Lancaster and part of that of Blackburn. The last two archdeaconries contain all the twenty-seven parishes with populations of under 500 (five of them containing less than 200 souls), with which the Manchester diocese is credited. Indeed the Lancaster archdeaconry alone contains, along with many large and some huge and unwieldy parishes in Blackpool and Preston, no fewer than twenty parishes of under 500 souls, and averaging 334. Clearly there can be little in common between the conditions of life and work of a clergyman in a big working-class district in Manchester, Bolton, Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Blackburn, Burnley, Preston,
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or Lancaster, and one in one of the lonely upland parishes of the rural deaneries of Tunstal and the Fylde. It will be better, therefore, to treat chiefly of the clergy of the big towns, leaving the conditions and life of the clergy in the comparatively small number of rural parishes in the diocese for brief treatment at the end of this essay. It will also be necessary to discuss separately the question of the beneficed and unbeneficed clergy.

III. FINANCIAL POSITION OF THE DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER COMPARED WITH OTHER DIOCESES

In considering the financial position of a diocese, and comparing it in this respect with other dioceses, two different things need to be considered. The *average value* of all the livings in the diocese may be taken as the test, or, again, the test taken may be the proportion of the total number of livings which fall below £200 per annum and £250 per annum respectively. According to the first test, the dioceses in which the average net value of all the livings exceeds £300 (Southwark £354, Sheffield £336, Manchester £332, Durham £324, Rochester £323, Wakefield £321, and Birmingham £307) are the seven wealthiest, and those in which the average net value of all the livings does not

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exceed £250 (Carlisle £250, Bristol £236, Worcester £232, Gloucester £229, Hereford £227, and Bath and Wells £224) are the six poorest, the figures for the remaining nineteen dioceses¹ all lying between £250 and £300. If we consider the percentage of livings which are under £200 and under £250, respectively, the results are much the same as in the case where the test of average value is adopted. The same six dioceses head the list, though not in quite the same order (in Durham 3·5 per cent. of the total number of livings are under £200, and 14·8 per cent. under £250 ; Wakefield 4·95 per cent. and 17·76 per cent. ; Southwark 7·37 per cent. and 20·19 per cent. ; Manchester 8·09 per cent. and 19·76 per cent. ; Rochester 12·5 per cent. and 30·5 per cent. ; and Sheffield 13·6 per cent. and 31·95 per cent.), while the six at the bottom of the list (Truro 35·02 per cent. and 53·58 per cent. ; Chichester 36 per cent. and 53·68 per cent. ; Bath and Wells 37·1 per cent. and 57·97 per cent. ; Gloucester 39·62 per cent. and 62·75 per cent. ; Salisbury 40·65 per cent. and 59·77 per cent. ; and Hereford 55·73 per cent. and

¹ For the reasons given above, the dioceses of London, Liverpool, and Norwich are altogether excluded from the calculations. But London and Liverpool would almost certainly figure among the richer dioceses, and Norwich possibly among the poorer.

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82·62 per cent.) include three of the same names as the earlier list—namely, Hereford, Gloucester, and Bath and Wells—Salisbury, Chichester, and Truro replacing Worcester, Bristol, and Carlisle.

An inspection of these figures shows that Manchester stands third in the first list, only Southwark and Sheffield having a higher average value, and third or fourth in the second list, according as we consider the percentage of livings under £250 or the percentage under £200, the dioceses of Durham and Wakefield being better off than that of Manchester in both particulars, and the diocese of Southwark being better off as regards livings under £200, but worse off as regards livings under £250. Whichever test, therefore, is adopted, whether that of the average value of livings, or that of the proportion of very poor livings to the total number in the diocese, Manchester diocese would seem to occupy a very favourable position. But conclusions drawn merely from the position of a diocese in such statistical tables need to be checked by some further considerations.

IV. RELATIVE VALUE OF URBAN AND RURAL LIVINGS

The most cursory glance at the figures given in the last paragraph will have revealed the obvious fact that the dioceses with the lowest

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average value for their livings, and with the largest percentage of very poor livings, are purely agricultural dioceses, such as Hereford, Salisbury, Gloucester, Bath and Wells, Worcester, and Chichester ; while the dioceses at the other end of the scale—Southwark, Sheffield, Manchester, Durham, and Wakefield—are urban and industrial in character. A diocese such as Exeter, with no fewer than 183 parishes out of its 522 under £200, and 303 under £250, will have the *average value* raised by the presence of one large town such as Plymouth. Dioceses, on the other hand, like Hereford and Gloucester, which are without big industrial centres, will take a low place in both tables, the number of poor livings being great and the average value not being swelled by the figures of any rich urban parishes. But without for a moment denying that the position of a country clergyman with less than £250 per annum, and much more the position of one with less than £200 per annum, is a miserable one, yet the mere monetary value of two livings—one an urban and one a rural one—cannot be taken as a true test of their actual value.

When the cost of vegetables, fruit, eggs, and milk—some, if not all, of which things a country clergyman can produce for himself at small cost—has been taken into account, a town living is

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probably not actually worth more than a country one of 20 per cent. or even 25 per cent. less apparent value. If that is so, it would be necessary, in order to get a true comparison, to count a town benefice of £300 as the equivalent of a rural one of only £240 or £225. This view of the relative value of urban and rural parishes will doubtless be disputed by some country clergy, and it is specially urged that the great rise in wages since the War, which makes the cultivation of a large garden or the keeping of a cow or cows difficult and expensive for a clergyman, has more than balanced the increased price of fruit, vegetables, eggs, and milk from which a town clergyman suffers. If, however, we omit cases where there are exceptionally large parsonage houses, and grounds, and stabling, expensive to keep up—and the question of large parsonage houses will be considered later—it is probably still true that from £75 to £80 of money-value in the country equals £100 of money-value in a town. In considering the *average values* of livings in any diocese, as compared with those of other dioceses, it will be necessary, if a true view of their actual worth is to be obtained, to ask the question, What percentage of the livings of the diocese in question are rural, and what percentage are urban parishes? Now, of the dioceses included

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in this inquiry, none except Southwark has anything like the same high percentage of urban and industrial parishes. A clergyman of Manchester diocese, therefore, with a living of £332 per annum (the average for the diocese) might well be no better off as regards real value than one in Carlisle diocese with £249 or £265.

V. LIVINGS OF EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

In estimating the average value of the livings in a diocese it is also desirable, if we wish to get a true conception of the financial position of the clergy, to check the merely arithmetical average by the inquiry as to whether the diocese contains an exceptionally large number of very rich livings. It would seem that Manchester diocese does contain such an exceptional number. Thus we may note : Burnley, £2000¹; Bury, £2000; Manchester, £1500²; Sacred Trinity, Salford, £1380³; Rochdale, £1268; Standish, £1057; Leigh, £1050; Blackburn, £1044; and Ashton-under-Lyne, £1000. And the average value of the twenty-four richest livings in the diocese is well over £1000 per annum net. If

¹ Gross value. Being attached to a suffragan bishopric, there are heavy expenses for curates, travelling, &c.

² Manchester Deanery counting as a rectory among Manchester livings.

³ Gross value. Present net value about £1200.

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no deductions from the gross value except cost of collection and stipends of licensed curates¹ are taken into account, the net value of these twenty-four livings works out at £1083 per annum. It will therefore be safe, when livings of exceptional value, say those over £1000, at one end, and livings of exceptional poverty, say those under £200, at the other, are excluded, to put the real average value of a normal benefice in the diocese of Manchester at from £280 to £300 per annum with a house.

VI. LIVINGS WITH AND WITHOUT A PARSONAGE HOUSE

In speaking of the normal benefice in the diocese of Manchester as being provided with a house, we may seem to be claiming more than the figures justify. The 'Diocesan Directory' returns the number of livings provided with a parsonage house as 464, and the number not so provided as 152. But the ancient parish of Manchester contains no fewer than 54 out of the 152 parishes without a parsonage, and all these parishes receive an allowance in lieu of a parsonage from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as administrators of the cathedral surplus

¹ At £200 per annum each, and assuming that the incumbent pays the whole.

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revenues. Whether grants towards house rent are made to parishes without parsonages in any, and if so in what, other cases, it is not possible to say ; but in raising the endowments of poor livings, and in making special grants, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners do not take the existence or absence of a parsonage house into consideration. It is frequently said that the clergy would be better off if there were no parsonage houses provided, but a grant of, say, £40 per annum were given in lieu of a house. If a house, it is argued, is big enough for a man with a large family, or for a man with a private income who likes to live in style and to entertain freely, it is a needless burden on a bachelor, or married man without children and of small means. A small house, on the other hand, may be almost useless to a man with a large family. It would, therefore, so it is urged, be better to leave each man free to hire the kind of house he needs. And by this means the clergy would be freed from the heavy burden of dilapidations. But it must be remembered that in many country parishes, and in central city parishes, and parishes in poor working-class districts, if no parsonage house were provided it would often be impossible to hire a suitable house at all, either because there was no such house in existence, as would be the case in many country or poor industrial

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parishes, or because the rent of such a house would be prohibitive, as would be the case in the central parts of Manchester and other big cities. That this argument is true is proved by the large proportion of the parishes in the heart of Manchester, the clergy of which live in the suburbs, owing to there being no parsonage house. The subject of dilapidations is a more serious one, and in many country parishes, and not a few urban ones, the cost of the upkeep of the parsonage is a determining factor in the question whether or not a living can be held by a man without private means. Two examples may be quoted—one a country and one a town one, and both in Manchester diocese.

The first is that of a country benefice of under £240. The late vicar, who took pupils, borrowed from Queen Anne's Bounty to enlarge the house. The present vicar, for whose requirements the unenlarged house would have been more than ample, has paid back five annual instalments of £10, and has three more to pay. In addition, he estimates the expenditure necessary for keeping house and stables in fair condition at an average of £15 a year, apart altogether from anything spent on the internal painting and decorating of the house, or the cultivation and upkeep of a large and expensive garden. And all these figures are calculated on a pre-war

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basis. Clearly, even before the War no man without private means could hold such a living.

The other is the case of a town benefice. When, some years ago, a parsonage house was built, a site was badly chosen on a slope, and in a position which required the maximum of fencing. The garden walls, the steps up the slope to the house, and the foundations of the house itself, need constant repairs, and just before the War £130 was the estimate for putting these into good repair, leaving the repairs to the roof and all external painting to be done. Even at pre-war prices £250 would not now put the house into repair. And the net value of the living is not more than £280. In this case the house is a badly built, extravagantly planned house in a bad position, and the matter is aggravated by the fact that a thoroughly suitable house, on a good level piece of ground, equally near the church, could have been provided at about two-thirds of the amount actually spent.

Apart, however, from exceptional cases such as these, it is probably true that if large and extravagant houses were got rid of, even at a loss, and if the administrators of Queen Anne's Bounty had always refused in the past, and could always be trusted to refuse in the future, to make any loans for alterations and additions unless these were manifestly needed by the

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conditions of the parish, and not merely by the private tastes of the individual incumbent, and, finally, if a scheme for dealing with the whole question of dilapidations could be evolved which would not be weighted with needlessly heavy official fees and expenses, the existence of a parsonage house is a real benefit alike to the incumbent and the parish.

It must, of course, be remembered that a parsonage house does not represent a net gain to the clergyman equal to what he would pay in rent for a house of similar character. The incumbent has to pay not merely for internal decorating and painting, as a tenant does, but for ‘landlord’s repairs’—*i.e.* external painting and structural renewals. The amount which should be allowed for these varies. Some towns—as, for instance, Manchester, and indeed most Lancashire towns—are very expensive on external ironwork, owing to the damp atmosphere and the high percentage of coal smoke in the air. Indeed, some landlords who keep their property in a high state of repair paint all external iron-work every second year, where once in five years would be ample in many country villages. Then, again, a house that has once been allowed to get into a thoroughly bad state of repair will always be expensive to keep up unless a large capital sum is spent in putting it again into perfect condition.

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Finally, some houses are, by their character and through the material used in their construction, more expensive to maintain than others. This is especially true of houses built seventy or eighty years ago, which seem to have been built with little or no eye to economy of upkeep, and which are therefore much more expensive than good modern houses.¹ Several large firms of house agents and property managers agree, however, in putting the upkeep of an ordinary town house at from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. of the rent. Taking, then, the value of the average parsonage house in a town as £40 of annual rental, the incumbent should allow, say, £5 annually for repairs. He may not have to spend so much every year, but there will be years of exceptional expenditure for which a reserve fund should be formed.

VII. POSITION OF THE AVERAGE TOWN INCUMBENT

From what has been said above, it would appear that the average incumbent holding a town living has, apart from private means, an

¹ This does not, of course, apply to modern jerry-built houses run up by speculative builders. Such often begin to show their incurable defects within two years. But a *well-built* modern house is cheaper to live in and cheaper to maintain than one built before 1850.

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income of from £280 to £300 a year and a house for which he would pay £40 a year rent, but which actually costs him £5. This is exactly the position of the majority of the incumbents in the Ancient Parish of Manchester, where the 'Manchester Parish Division Act, 1850,' provides that every parish shall be raised first to £150 per annum, and then, if the funds allow it, to £250 per annum, out of the 'surplus revenues' of the Manchester Cathedral. All are now raised to £250 from the surplus revenues, the Commissioners further raising them to £300 out of their general funds. The Act has been called the 'Charter of the Privileges of the Manchester Parishes.' As a matter of fact, it has acted disastrously. For if any effort is made to increase the endowment of a large and poor parish, it is stifled by the provisions of this Act. Thus the very generous helper of one poor city parish writes : 'Saint ——'s Church has an endowment of £139, and gets £111 from "surplus revenues" and £50 from the Commissioners. If I gave a sum sufficient to raise the endowment to £200 per annum the incumbent would receive £61 less from "surplus revenues," and would not be one penny better off. Before the War money invested for increase of endowments yielded $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. I might have given, or the people raised, £5700, and

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the incumbent would only be 10s. per annum better off.' Such a system is a direct discouragement to builders of churches who desire to endow them properly, and to congregations who seek to increase the stipends of their pastors. Since Disestablishment, if accompanied by Disendowment, would put an end to this source of revenue, the effects on Manchester parishes, which have depended on it so largely, would be felt more heavily than in almost any part of England.

What are the expenses to be met out of this income? They may be roughly divided into rates and taxes, fuel, light, and water, food, clothes, and boots, insurance, wages of servants or charwomen, medical attendance, expenses of holiday, and incidental expenses, such as stamps, stationery, books, tobacco, &c. Taking the case of a married man without children, we may suppose that his wife does the housework with the help of a charwoman one day a week to do the washing and one day a week to do general house cleaning. And in this case nothing need be allowed for education of children. At the moment of writing, rates and taxes on a £40 house, assessed at £33, are, in the town where I am writing, £22 5s. 6d. per annum. Coal, light, and water vary greatly. One budget before me, that of a married man with one

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child, puts them at £8, which seems very low; another, that of a married couple without children, but with one servant, puts them at £25 16s. 9d., an obviously excessive figure. Taking the present price of coal, and allowing five tons per annum, which is little enough where no gas stove is used, coal alone would cost £9 11s. 8d. Water, paid for by meter, and gas can hardly be less than £5 per annum. If we say £16 for gas, coal, and water, it will not be excessive. The budget (couple and one child) quoted above gives £130 per annum for food. This was a very sparing diet—meat once a day on four or five days a week, home-made jam or treacle in place of margarine whenever possible, plentiful use of porridge with syrup in place of milk, &c. No servant was kept, or such rations would not have been possible, since no servant would submit to them. It is doubtful if two persons living together can be fed properly at present prices at a less cost than 50s. a week unless meat is altogether excluded. And the addition of a young child, needing much milk, or a growing boy or girl eating heartily, would seem to make £130 per annum for the three almost impossible. But a man and wife, with an extra mouth to feed twice a week, might put food at £130. Of clothes it is very difficult to speak. If the wife makes any large portion of her own things,

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and possibly part of her husband's underclothing and socks, the £15 for man, wife, and child, which appears in one budget before me as I write, may be possible. But in this case the husband admitted he had had no single article of new clothes except a black straw hat and some collars for two years. With suits at £10 10s. to £11 11s., and boots 54s. a pair, it is obvious that £20 does not go far. Our budget for a childless couple may then read :—

	£	s.	d.
Rates and taxes . . .	22	5	6
Repairs of parsonage . . .	5	0	0
Income tax	21	11	3
Insurance	5	0	0
Food	130	0	0
Clothing	20	0	0
Fire, light, water	16	0	0
Charwomen's wages (day and a half at 5s.). . . .	19	10	0
 Total	£239	6	9

Leaving £60 13s. 3d. for holiday expenses, doctor's bills, books, stationery, and incidental expenses. No doubt a very careful housewife will save here and there, so as to bring down some of these estimates. And a holiday may be made less expensive by taking work as a locum tenens. And there are Easter offerings, and

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wealthy parishioners are generous in the matter of gifts of vegetables, fruit, game, &c. But the questions remain, How do many of the clergy live? and Is it a life to which educated gentlemen ought to be exposed?

VIII. POSITION OF THE AVERAGE CURATE

There are still curates in receipt of £150 or £160 a year, but the usual stipend in town parishes in this diocese is, since the War, at least £180, usually £200, and occasionally £220. But a curate who is unmarried, unless he lives in a Clergy House, and Clergy Houses are not common in Manchester diocese, or unless he lives in the parsonage with an unmarried vicar, has to live in lodgings, which is neither an economical nor, in many cases, a comfortable way of living. If married, he has no parsonage rent-free, but must pay at least £26 a year for a house, rates and taxes being included in the rent. It is daily more difficult to get a cottage or small house fit for a curate and his wife to live in for anything in the neighbourhood of 10s. weekly. And, indeed, it is now very difficult to get a house at any rent. It is also not usual for the curate to have Easter offerings or similar gifts. Here is the budget of a married curate, seven years in Orders, with one child,

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and no private means. His stipend is £220 a year:

	£	s.	d.
Rent	2	8	12
Coals, gas, and water . . .	8	0	0
Food	1	30	0
Clothing	1	5	0
Income tax	7	1	2
Insurance	5	0	0
Doctor's bills	4	10	0
<hr/>			
	<u>£</u>	<u>198</u>	<u>3</u>
			2

Here we have a balance of rather under £22 for holidays, books, stationery, trains and trams when preaching out, &c. As a matter of fact, the man, after rigid economy, would have been just over £10 overdrawn but for the help of friends. What will he do when his child is of an age to go to school?

IX. EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

The problem of the education of their children must always be a serious one for the clergy. In many cases, of course, the cost is borne by relatives. Such a school as St. Elphin's School for the Daughters of the Clergy, which serves the dioceses of Manchester, Liverpool, and Chester, though a boon to clergy of moderate means, is quite beyond those to whom £20 a

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term (with a temporary increase for maintenance during the War) represents more than a fifth of the father's total income. The big day schools for boys and for girls, such as Manchester Grammar School and the Manchester and Pendleton High Schools for Girls in Manchester, the Bury and Lancaster Grammar Schools, which send many boys to the Universities, and the excellent Municipal Secondary Schools both for boys and girls, are a boon to the clergy. But against low fees must be set the expense of tram or train fares, and often the cost of midday meal (now at least 1s. a day, five days a week), where that meal is taken at school. The constant raising of the fees at many boarding schools has pressed heavily on the clergy, and the new Government scale of salaries, and requirements in the matter of pensions, are likely to increase this burden. But governors, and even headmasters, might do much good by discouraging the multiplication of needless extras. *Res angustae domi* are often robbed of their healthy influence by the quite needlessly extravagant standard set at school.

X. COUNTRY LIVINGS

It is not possible in this place to discuss the question of country livings, which indeed, as has been said, form but a small proportion

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of the total in Manchester diocese. The great majority of them are such as no man without private means can hold, and many are loaded with a needlessly large and expensive house. The person best qualified to judge declared recently that in one country rural deanery there was not a single living which could be held without private means. The livings are held either by men of means with country tastes, or by men who worked in towns while educating their children and retired to the country when their children became self-supporting. The whole question of the ministrations and remuneration of the clergy in country districts needs investigation and re-organisation.

XI. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The general conclusions to which one is driven by an examination of the facts in Manchester diocese seem to be :

(a) The clerical profession nowhere affords, either in town or country, what can be considered a living wage for the average incumbent.

(b) The great mass of the incumbents and curates either have private means or are living in actual poverty.

(c) The laity are quite unaroused, in most cases, to the conditions under which the clergy live and work.

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(d) The present conditions of work have produced a grave falling-off in the supply of ordination candidates, and this falling-off must be a progressive one in the future.

(e) Many central city churches might be closed with advantage, and many country parishes amalgamated and worked from the centre. The best possible use is not being made of the funds at the Church's disposal.

(f) Those funds, even if used to the best possible advantage, are inadequate for the work which needs to be done, and the laity must be aroused to the duty of paying for the spiritual ministrations they enjoy.

IX

THE DIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM, AND A COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

By Bishop HAMILTON BAYNES

It is assumed, as an obvious principle, by all writers and speakers, that wages must be increased in proportion to the rise in prices which the War has caused.

On the other hand, it is assumed, as no less obvious, that patriotic citizens must make great sacrifices and bear great hardships in time of war for a cause so great and righteous as that which brought the whole nation to be of one mind in 1914, and has kept it steadfast and stalwart through the five tremendous years of conflict.

What is not often discussed or explained is how these two assumptions are to be adjusted and co-ordinated. If it is suggested that the workers should bear their share of the national sacrifice—that they should face the fact that no part of the community ought to claim or expect to be as comfortable and prosperous as before the War—the answer is obvious. It is that in general (though there are many exceptions) their employers, so far from making sacrifices, are

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making big profits. That being so, it is urged that employees should have their fair share of these profits. And if this claim is conceded as just (as it obviously is), what becomes of the assumption that all must be ready to bear the burden of sacrifice? In a large number of cases both employers and employed, so far from suffering, are more prosperous than ever. And yet there is no question that the nation, and indeed the whole world, is poorer through the waste of war—waste of capital and waste through stoppage of productive industries. And so it comes about that the impoverishment caused by war falls with crushing injustice on that part of the community which is not engaged, whether as employer or employed, in war-inflated industries. And of this part of the community those who live on fixed incomes suffer out of all proportion. While receiving the same amount of money as before the War, the purchasing power of that money is halved, and the contribution demanded as rates and taxes is more than doubled.

Among those whose incomes remain at a fixed point there is one section which is worst off of all, because, even in the normal times of peace, they were scandalously underpaid, and had even then the greatest difficulty in making two ends meet. This section is the poorer clergy. And now the position of large numbers

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of them is intolerable. The marvel is how they still manage to carry on at all, and how they succeed in keeping up even the appearance of respectability. And they bear their heavy burden in silence. There are no agitators to proclaim their wrongs and rouse indignant protests ; there is no revolutionary Press to inflame passions ; there is no trade union to champion their cause ; there are no strikes to compel the attention of the world and to demand a remedy. On the contrary, for the most part, they have rejoiced to offer the contribution of their poverty to the national cause, in addition to the service which they or their sons have rendered in the field.

But is it good for the community to allow this gross injustice—this inequitable distribution of the hardships by which the victory of righteousness and liberty has been secured ?

I have been asked to give some facts and figures from the diocese of Birmingham. I should venture the guess that our diocese is one that furnishes less examples of extreme hardship than others, and this because it is, for the most part, a city diocese. It is, as a rule, the country parishes where stipends are so lamentably inadequate ; where so-called ‘livings’ are to be found with incomes of less than £100 or £150 a year. We have few such, but none the less, as

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the figures show, there are many cases of real hardship, and many others where a man could not live if he had not private means.

Like other large towns, Birmingham has suffered from the fact that the incomes of the clergy were in many of the older parishes dependent on pew-rents ; and with the migration of the more prosperous parishioners to the suburbs, these have decreased to a mere pittance. In some cases this condition has been mitigated by grants from the surplus revenues of the old Parish Church of St. Martin.

In the diocese of Birmingham there are three livings with an annual stipend of less than £100, but two of these are at present held in plurality with another parish. There are eighteen parishes with net incomes varying between £100 and £200. There are nine parishes where the net stipend is between £200 and £300, and where there is no parsonage house. And there are six parishes with a net income of less than £300, all of which have populations of over 10,000.

To meet this state of things the diocese has organised a Poor Clergy Fund (now called the Clergy Aid Society), which has done something to relieve the position during the years of war. In 1916 the Diocesan Board of Finance contributed £150, and the Queen Victoria Clergy

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Fund gave a grant of £135, so that £285 was distributed in half-yearly grants to the poorer clergy. In 1917 the Diocesan Board of Finance doubled its grant, making it £300, and by the aid of private subscriptions and collections in churches another £350 was raised, making, with the Q.V.C.F. grant, £785. This enabled the Society to help thirty-nine cases (nineteen beneficed clergy and twenty unbeficed) to the extent of £595, together with £120 to clergy widows and orphans. In 1918 these grants were increased to £427 to beneficed clergy and £300 to unbeficed, and £140 to clergy widows and orphans. This Fund, which had aimed at raising all incumbents' stipends to £300 a year, and all assistant curates' to £200, having proved insufficient, a special appeal was made to wealthy laymen as an emergency measure, and this has brought in about £1800 a year. This, however, is a temporary effort, and it is open to the serious objection that it seems to make the poorer clergy recipients of charity. They naturally desire to know for a certainty what their regular stipends are to be, so that they may cut their coats according to their cloth, and they feel that their claim to a living wage ought to be a matter of justice, and not of charity.

The case of the unbeficed clergy has complications of its own. Whereas before the War

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it was a common practice to offer a deacon £130 to £150, and a priest anything from £150 upwards, according to length of service and other circumstances, it is now felt that no curate—whether deacon or priest—can live on much less than £200 ; but in many cases this demand only inflicts new hardship on incumbents, who are either unable or unwilling to ask additional contributions from their parishioners. The grievances of curates have been sometimes urged with a want of discrimination. There are few professions in which a man can start his career with a certain salary of £200 a year. But, on the other hand, the curate may remain for many years with little or no increase in his stipend, and the hardships and financial difficulties of an elderly and married curate are acute. These hardships are accentuated to-day, when so many skilled artisans are getting much higher wages than the clergy, though they have not had to face heavy expenditure on education, and have not the same demands on their charity or the same appearances to keep up.

To a colonial bishop the cause of these financial difficulties seems obvious, and the remedy plain. It is clear that the Church of England has been pauperised by her endowments. In new countries, where no ancient endowments exist, it is as plain as a pikestaff

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that if people desire a clergyman to minister among them they must find his stipend. They accept this principle as a matter of course. If the community in question is too small or too poor to raise the clergyman's stipend, they have to do without a vicar, and depend on a lay reader from among themselves, with such occasional priestly offices as a neighbouring clergyman can give them—'neighbourhood' being liberally interpreted as anything from thirty to sixty miles. But naturally the question sooner or later arises as to whether the time has arrived when the community in question may establish its own parochial machinery ; and naturally the Bishop does his utmost to obtain an affirmative answer to that question and hasten the starting of a new parish. But the machinery of a parish includes more than the bare supply of an incumbent's stipend. Some sort of church, or, failing that, a temporary building where services can be held, must be obtained. Then a house must be acquired for the priest. These last requirements are of the nature of capital expenditure. While the stipend is an annual charge, the church and parsonage will benefit the community for many years to come. It is not fair, therefore, that the first generation should bear all the cost. And yet they cannot share the burden with posterity except by the method of borrowing

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money and leaving the repayment of the debt to those who come after. This is an undesirable method, and in order to avoid it the Bishop and his Board of Finance often meet the community in question by an offer to assist towards the stipend of the new incumbent for the first few years on a diminishing annual scale until the parish is able to become self-supporting. The theory, at least in the diocese of Natal, is that the clergy are paid by the diocese, and that each parish is assessed at a certain amount towards the central fund of the diocese, which normally would be the amount of their own clergy's stipends. But new and struggling parishes would be assessed at a lower figure, which means that the diocese contributes something towards the pay of the clergy of these parishes. In such cases the annual Diocesan Synod would expect the parish in question to accept each year a somewhat increased assessment until at last it had become self-supporting, and so liberated diocesan funds to assist other new parishes. The amount of increase of assessment which each parish could afford was, not unnaturally, a question which gave rise to spirited debate and added to the animation of the annual synod, which was a very much more lively and well-attended assembly than the Diocesan Conferences of England. Sometimes, indeed, the

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atmosphere became a little heated, above the normal temperature even of Natal. I remember one occasion on which the lay representative of a country parish which was being honoured by a considerable increment to its assessment exclaimed, in a moment of excitement : ‘ Well, my principle is that you ought to be generous before you are just ! ’ and when this moral aphorism was greeted with a slight degree of merriment, he added, ‘ Well, you know what I mean, even if I did put the horse before the cart.’ But, in spite of these little contests, the parish almost invariably accepted the increase of assessment, and loyally and generously raised the amount which had been suggested by the Finance Committee and passed by the Synod.

I remember—as an example of this process of starting new work and creating new parishes—the case of one remote district in the south of Natal. Hitherto the little township had had to be content with a quarterly visit from a priest who lived some forty or fifty miles away. On my annual visit my host kindly invited about a dozen heads of families to a Saturday afternoon tennis party to meet the Bishop. This gave me an opportunity of feeling the pulse of the neighbourhood as to whether the time had arrived for starting church work for themselves. After some general conversation on the question, it

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was suggested that we should pass round a hat into which each person present should put a piece of paper indicating the sum he was prepared to subscribe annually. When the hat was emptied and the figures counted it proved that those twelve men had promised between them £104 per annum. I congratulated them and promised that when they had canvassed the neighbourhood and ascertained how much more could be collected from those not present, the diocese would make up the deficiency needed to raise £300 a year as the stipend of a clergyman, with the understanding, of course, that each year the parish would be expected to raise a little more until the whole £300 was provided locally. This was done, a clergyman was appointed, and I have no doubt that long ago the new parish became self-supporting.

Now, contrast this with our habitual practice in England. Let me set over against this example a case I well remember in the diocese of Southwell. It was the case of a small, but not unimportant country town in Nottinghamshire, where I should guess that the population was eight or ten times larger than that of the Natal township, and the wealth certainly not less than eight times as much. There is a stately and beautiful pre-Reformation church, but the endowment is so small that, after paying

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so much of his curates' stipends as (with strange injustice) he is expected to do, the incumbent finds himself with an income to which a minus sign must be prefixed. When the living fell vacant it proved, not unnaturally, extremely difficult to find an incumbent with the private means necessary to enable him to accept the 'charge' (as it may indeed be appropriately called), and I think I am right in saying that it was successively offered to eleven men before one was found wealthy enough and generous enough to undertake the unremunerative task. It never seemed to occur to the parishioners, as it would have done as a matter of course in Natal, that if they wanted a vicar and curates they must pay for them. Instead of this they went about complaining how unfortunate it was that the Bishop could not find them a clergyman, and there was a danger that the appointment would lapse to the Crown.

This is what I mean when I say that the Church of England is pauperised and demoralised by her endowments. It cannot have been the intention of pious benefactors in past ages that churchmen of future generations should be relieved of all call to self-sacrifice and their natural sense of duty and equity atrophied.

It is remarkable how slow people are to recognise this elementary and obvious principle,

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that it is their duty to provide a living wage for the clergy who serve them. Any solution of the difficulty rather than this is suggested. If a rich man is appealed to he often takes refuge in the inequalities of clerical incomes and the need for reform and redistribution of the finances of the Church. If a poor man is appealed to he is apt to point to St. Paul, the tent-maker, and suggest that he was a poor working-man, and that the clergy should follow his example and earn their living by manual labour. And such arguments are held to be sufficient ground for putting the matter aside and doing nothing. It is worth while, therefore, to consider these criticisms a little more carefully.

With regard to the first—the need of financial reform—no doubt there is good ground for the demand. There is no apparent justification for the fact that the endowment of one country parish is less than £100 a year, and that of another—not unlike it in size and population—£1000. Something might well be done to rectify these inequalities, but this would go a very little way towards solving the problem. And when it is hastily and thoughtlessly suggested that there should be a general equalising of stipends all round, it is plain that the remedy would soon be found unworkable and unsatisfactory. It is essential to successful organisation

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that there should be certain strong centres where able leaders should have a free hand to plan operations on a large and liberal scale. And it is not for the real good of the Church that there should be no posts with larger stipends where leaders in thought, and elder men who have done long years of good service, should have the chance of pursuing studies and taking part in public life and work untrammelled by too narrow circumstances. Such, at all events, is found to be the best plan by unendowed churches.

In Nonconformist practice there is much the same inequality of stipend between ministers. The leaders, the thinkers and writers, the great preachers and organisers are constantly given relatively large stipends even when compared with endowed dignitaries of the Church of England. But whatever view may be taken as to this, the fact of chief importance is that mere redistribution of endowments would not provide the funds needed to secure a reasonable remuneration for all the clergy, and that rich laymen have no justification for shirking obvious duties by alleging economic scandals in the present system.

With regard to the working man there are two classes to be considered. There is (1) the avowedly hostile critic who attacks the Church

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from outside. He says the parson has a soft job, does not do an honest day's work, and is a parasite on society ; and (2) there is the religious working man who is yet scandalised and perplexed by what seems to him the great wealth of the higher classes of the clergy. The object of this paper is not to discuss with the former of these two. No doubt there are grounds for his objections. There *are*, no doubt, idle clergy, as there are idle workmen. But no one who knows the life of the ordinary town parson will accuse him of having a soft job and living an easy life. And, again, we are not concerned to deny that from the purely economic point of view the parson is a parasite—that is to say, he must live on the products of those who do the work, mental and manual, of producing material goods. So also is the man of letters, the poet, the painter, the musician, and the actor. None of these is producing the material necessities on which he, as well as others, must depend for existence. But the answer is ‘Man shall not live by bread alone,’ and it would be a poor world if we lost our real life for the sake of the means of living.

But it is the second class of working man—the devout but perplexed artisan—with whom we are concerned. There are thousands of such who are either driven from the Church

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to Nonconformity, or rendered critical and alienated churchmen by the economic questions suggested above.

We all know the story of the cabman who, on setting down Bishop Temple at Fulham, said : ‘ If St. Paul were alive to-day, would he live at Fulham Palace ? ’ and we all know the Bishop’s reputed answer : ‘ If St. Paul were alive to-day, we should make him Archbishop, and he would live at Lambeth.’ But there is another answer. St. Paul was *not* a poor working man. He was either a rich man, or at least had control of considerable funds. Sir William Ramsay has furnished what seem to me convincing proofs of this statement. St. Paul belonged to the so-called ‘ upper classes ’ ; he had a distinguished education ; he was employed by the high officials of his nation ; he was a Roman citizen ; he was able to travel freely to and fro, from one end of the Roman Empire to the other. And travelling cost money then as now. He was treated throughout by high Roman officials in a way which shows that he was a man of prominent position. The Governor, Felix, kept him in bonds in the hope of receiving from him a bribe, and the bribe which a Roman Governor would receive was such as no poor man could pay. His appeal to the Emperor was allowed (which it would certainly not have

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been if he had been merely a poor and insignificant workman). And on the voyage to Rome it is plain, both from the courtesy of the officials and the way they listened to his advice, that he was regarded as a man of importance and one who could pay his way.

It is true St. Paul worked with his hands and made tents with Aquila and Priscilla. But he tells us that this was an exceptional practice to meet the exigencies of an exceptional case. The Church of Corinth was split by factions. Some claimed St. Peter as their leader, and some Apollos, while others tried to form a Pauline party. One controversial method of St. Paul's opponents was to call in question St. Paul's commission as an Apostle, and to challenge his right to claim financial support. St. Paul was bound, in the interests of the truth, to vindicate his apostolic authority ; he was under no obligation to claim a stipend. And therefore, in order that the Gospel he preached might not be prejudiced by, or neglected for, the side-issue of his right to payment, he magnanimously waived his rightful claim and at the same time provided the Corinthians with the object-lesson of a missionary who claimed nothing but earned his living by manual labour. That this, however, was an exception to his general rule, St. Paul's letters indicate. He had no hesitation in receiv-

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ing remittances towards the expenses of his living and travelling from other churches which trusted him, and on whose good faith and right understanding he could rely. He mentioned in his letter to his beloved church at Philippi that once and again they had ministered to his necessities, and as at Corinth he had foregone his right to a stipend for the sake of his flock, so at Philippi it was for the sake of the flock, as much as for his own sake, that he encouraged their self-sacrificing gifts as a means whereby their own spiritual life might be advanced and their love increased.

But while, in the case of Corinth, St. Paul refused to receive anything lest his message might be prejudiced, it is to Corinth that he writes the strongest statement of the principle that clergy ought to be paid by their flocks. In 1 Cor. ix. he piles argument upon argument in defence of this principle. Because he claims to be an Apostle, he asserts his right to maintenance, and that not for himself only, but for his wife if he chose to marry. He claims the right to be relieved from secular labour. ‘Who goeth to warfare any time at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock?’ This, he says, is the principle of the Mosaic law:

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‘Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.’ ‘If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?’ ‘Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? And they which minister at the altar are partakers with the altar. Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.’

If, then, the appeal is made to St. Paul, on the ground of his exceptional practice at Corinth, we have St. Paul’s answer, straight and strong, that it is the law of God and of Christ, the principle of both old and new dispensations, that the priest should be set free from worldly business and supported by his flock.

That the Church needs reform, and not least in the matter of finance, is not disputed. But the line which that reform should take is not merely that of redistribution : it should be based on the principle of self-support by all parishes which can afford it. Sudden and violent changes are always undesirable and unfair. Men who have made their plans and framed their domestic budgets on the assured expectation of a certain income, cannot without hardship and injustice be suddenly dispossessed. Therefore vested interests have a claim to be

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equitably regarded. But powers should be granted to the Ecclesiastical Commission to make an assessment on all endowed parishes where there is wealth enough to provide an adequate stipend. This would take the form of a levy on the endowment, and might be recoverable at law. This levy would be small at first, but would gradually be increased until the parish (if it could afford it) was self-supporting.

A considerable and ever-increasing amount would thus be set free, and this might be made use of—first in raising the obviously inadequate stipends of parishes which cannot reasonably be expected to raise the stipend themselves (though, when once the principle of self-support has been recognised, the number of such parishes would probably prove to be less than might at first sight be expected). And, secondly, the funds thus liberated might be used in grants towards new parishes in the poor and growing areas of large towns and generally in promoting new work. No doubt the details of any such scheme would be difficult. The question whether a parish could afford to support its own clergy would give rise to controversy. That, as we have seen, is already the case in the self-governing dioceses overseas. But it is a difficulty which has never proved insuperable. And it is one which might safely be left to Diocesan Finance

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Boards and Diocesan Conferences or Synods to deal with. It would give new life and interest to those bodies. The laity who were summoned to Diocesan Conferences would soon feel that they were not, as at present, summoned to a mere debating society. If these conferences had to advise the Ecclesiastical Commission as to what parishes might be reasonably expected to become gradually self-supporting, the members would come to their deliberations with a new sense of reality and responsibility, and so the reform would have the indirect advantage of giving vitality and reality to the Councils of the Church, and would in time go far to remedy the present injustice and place the finances of the Church upon a sound and equitable foundation.

X

THE HOUSING AND GLEBE-LAND PROBLEMS

By the ARCHDEACON OF NOTTINGHAM

FOR over three hundred years an outstanding characteristic of English life has been the homes of the clergy. From these homes have gone forth sons and daughters who have served their country in Church and State in large numbers, and with most remarkable credit. Clearly those homes have been a national asset, and if there is any danger of their coming to an end some steps should be taken to save them. And no one who knows the present financial straits of the clergy to-day can be content. The following facts will indicate what is happening, and how even the so-called 'fat' livings no longer provide for those who hold them.

The poverty of the clergy is no new cry. Novelists have made us painfully familiar with sad stories of privation and utterly harassing cares. Every generation has had to be reminded of the problem, but the present generation has now to deal with it on a larger scale. The fact that even the 'fat' livings are no longer truly 'livings' is a new fact, and points to the need

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of very drastic reconstruction if the family life of the clergy is to be maintained.

It is probably true that nowhere could be found so much happy family life as in our vicarages. There is no excess of money; food is simple, with surprisingly little meat; holidays are rare. But in spite of the absence of many of those things which are generally supposed to be essential to happiness, the whole household sets a high example of family life, and it would certainly be an untold loss to our country-side if our villages were no longer to have these centres of real home life. In them is an atmosphere of refinement and gentle learning, and with the revival of village life England cannot afford to let her vicarages go. Even though there may be exceptions—perhaps many exceptions—to this happy state of things, taking England all through, the presence of the vicar and his wife and children in the near and remote places of our shires is a support to what is best in the people of our land. Very often there is no one to take the lead except the parson. The squire is frequently away: he may help on big occasions; but the parson is on the spot at all seasons. In some instances, notably in our colliery villages, those new centres of population, where the pit is new, the houses new, and only the church and vicarage are

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old, there is no one but the parson to take the lead.

And now, in so many country places, the old family at the Hall is selling the property, and a new owner with no local interest enters in, and the parson finds himself still more the one to whom the people turn, so that he and his family find their influence stronger than ever.

Yet, with all these opportunities, the burdens of poverty increase.

No doubt some ease has recently been found in the increased value of tithe, but it only eases the situation. The solution has yet to be found, if men without private means are to be able to be our country clergy. The Church ought not to have to ask a man, ‘Can you afford to take such and such a living?’ A Church that does so is pauperising itself. It is living on the generosity of others, and fails in that self-respect which refuses to use the services of men without adequate payment.

Our difficulty is increased by the big ideas of the past. The clergy were expected to live in big houses, with big gardens, and these are now a sore burden, too heavy for us to bear.

Take, then, first of all, the benefice which has the reputation of being ‘the best in the shire.’ After paying all charges and outgoings, exclusive of income tax, its value is £1226 per

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annum. To use the house agents' phraseology, 'The rectory house is a delightful country residence containing fourteen bed- and dressing-rooms, bathroom, one linen cupboard, five living-rooms, large dining- and drawing-rooms, large kitchen, scullery, servants' hall, butler's pantry, two larders, three store-rooms, and usual offices, standing in its own grounds of four and a half acres.'

To put it another way, the house has sixty-two doors, and there are forty-three windows to clean. The outbuildings are extensive—four blocks—but we will leave them out of calculation.

The expenses of upkeep are as follows :—

<i>Outside</i> —two gardeners, one at 45 <i>s.</i> , the other at 37 <i>s.</i> 6 <i>d.</i> a week	£214
Extra help at busy seasons, insur- ance, seeds, &c.	30
Four indoor servants, wages £125, keep, insurance, &c., £208 . .	333
Average of repairs to house and buildings, per annum	40
Income tax on £1226 at 3 <i>s.</i> 9 <i>d.</i> , £229; rates on house and inhabited house duty, £21 . .	250
<hr/>	
	£867

It is impossible to keep the place up with a smaller staff, either indoor or outdoor. In
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normal times forty-five tons of coke and coal are required for the necessary warming. Next year the whole of the outside painting must be done. This will swallow up about £120. We will say nothing of the calls, parochial, charitable, &c., to which the holder of ‘such a fat living’ is naturally expected to respond. My friends are somewhat credulous when I tell them that, from a financial point of view, I should be better off without its responsibilities than I am with them.

At the present cost of living and the high rate of wages, if a man without private means took this living, ‘the best in the shire,’ worth £1226 a year, he would be faced with three alternatives:—

1. Let the ‘desirable country residence, standing in its own grounds of four and a half acres,’ and live in a small house in the parish, which does not happen to exist.
2. Let the place go to rack and ruin, always an expensive step to take.
3. Keep it up, and find himself in perpetual financial straits.

The unavoidable expenses of this living, worth £1226, will this year amount to, roughly, £1000—rather over than under that sum.

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Here is another instance of a large house with twenty-two rooms ; a garden of over three acres. Servants' and gardeners' wages alone amount to £250 ; rates and taxes another £150. The keep of indoor servants cannot be reckoned at less than £150. Repairs work out at £30 a year at least. This means an expenditure of £580. As the living is put down as worth £700, not deducting taxes, there remains only £120 upon which the parson and his wife and children are to be fed and clothed, to say nothing of education and the hundred and one calls which are made upon the man in his position. Consequently it cannot be done. Coal alone costs £30, and even then only one room besides the kitchen can have a fire in the depth of winter. And food in these days costs 15s. a head every week. So a man, to hold this living, must have a considerable private income.

In estimating the above expenses, it will be noticed that no charges are made against the upkeep of the garden. And clearly a garden is of value. If well cared for, it is probably worth in food quite £1 a week—say £60 a year—and much of the fruit can be sold. Except, therefore, for wages, the garden pays for itself. But that is a big exception.

This question of wages is such that many a parson works the garden for himself, and

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virtually becomes a small-holder or market-gardener. There are some who actually farm their own glebe, and drive their cattle to market. In this way they can do well financially, but the strain on the whole man is often too much, and though he finds himself thrown into very close relationship with his parishioners, the bargaining that is necessary does not exalt him in their eyes, and the time he has for reading, visiting, and prayer, is so greatly cut short, that he is in danger of losing that spiritual outlook which alone is his real business. And yet what is a poor man to do? Before long the physical strain proves too much. He is trying hard to be a just steward and pay his way by digging, but he sooner or later finds himself agreeing with the unjust steward and being compelled to say, 'I cannot dig.' Few people know how hard it is to dig. It requires both skill and life-long practice. A man must be hardened to it. For a parson to take to it in middle life is to court physical disaster. Some can stand it, but very few. So the remedy does not lie in the vicar becoming a farmer.

The following is 'A Day of my Life,' written by one who did work very hard, and was able to stand it for nearly two years, being an exceptionally strong man. The living he went to had been held by a poor man, and consequently

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the place was in a terrible state of neglect, and there was no money for dilapidations. It was only by very special arrangements that the matter was put right. In desolation, the new vicar found himself in a house suitable for a rich man, with a garden needing at least three gardeners. He had, however, the good fortune to come in the early autumn, and so could sell what was left of the fruit, which was some slight benefit.

‘When first I accepted this country “living,” I found that my predecessor had not sold all the fruit from the garden and paddock. An offer was made to buy the remaining stock, which was agreed to. At once, with the help of my youngest lad, I set about picking and storing, and as a consequence we had sufficient fruit for the winter and early spring, in addition to experiencing the pleasure of giving some “pick-ups” to friends. This was a preliminary to taking up residence in a magnificent country rectory and grounds suitable to an income of (£1000 a year, did I hear?) £122 net. The house itself contains ten bedrooms, two dressing-rooms, bathroom and lavatory, dining- and drawing-rooms (each about 22 feet by 18 feet), morning-room, study or housekeeper’s room (there is evidence of its being used in both capacities), hall, kitchen, and scullery. Below these rooms were a cellar (once used as a servants’ hall), wine cellar (with stone bins), beer

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cellar, game larder, cellar for general storage, and an ordinary pantry. The outbuildings include a wash-house and laundry, both forming part of the house itself, but only accessible from the outside ; large coach-house, harness-room, and stable (with lofts over), small coach-house, pigsty and yard, stokehole (for what was once a greenhouse), and tool-shed. Also outside larder (with specially constructed roof), lamp-room, and boot-cleaning shed.

‘There are two kitchen gardens, each containing about one-third of an acre ; a paddock of an acre ; and nearly the same area of shrubberies, lawn, and pleasure grounds.

‘In order to grow sufficient vegetables, with a few over, to assist in food-production, to keep the lawn in some kind of order, and generally attempt to clean up paths, and so forth, it was necessary literally “to rise with the lark” and go to bed with “the dark.” Many a morning, digging and planting have been tackled at 4.30 A.M., and in hay-making time cutting with the scythe commenced at 3.30 A.M. Hay was cut, turned, cocked, and stacked by “the family”—father, as was right, doing the lion’s share. By doing as much work as possible in the early and later hours of the day, time was found for reading and study in the hotter hours, and it was possible to cover the ground supplied by the “Book Society” almost without exception. A bountiful crop of fruit in the summer and autumn of 1917, together with a heavy crop of potatoes, supplemented the official income to

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the tune of £35, and thus helped to keep our heads above water. With the surplus vegetables and some meal and fruit, a pig was reared for home consumption, and a few fowls supplied the necessary eggs during the greater part of the year. It need scarcely be added, yet, lest some might overlook the fact, it was absolutely necessary to *work seven days a week*.

‘Our food consisted mainly of vegetable diet. Seldom, except when the boys came on furlough, did we have more than one small joint of meat per week. Breakfasts of porridge and some fried-up potatoes, with an occasional egg, were the rule. Of course we made all the home-made jam possible, and it was a staple relish for more than one of the members of the family *at tea time*, as well as flavouring the familiar roly-poly, &c.

‘The housework, including the washing for a family of seven, increased to eight as each son received his leave from France, was all done by the girls, sometimes termed the “young ladies.” Spring cleaning was a serious tax upon their strength, but it was accomplished somehow, and it was even possible to have an occasional caller to tea, in addition to the Sunday School Treat and the Choir Tea (for juniors) and Supper (for the grown-ups).’

Such is the history of a brave man facing fearful odds. And it is sad that both his sons, who were so welcome whenever they had leave, and were so glad to come back to the poor home

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and lend a hand, died in the War. One died of starvation behind the German lines ; of the other no news will ever come. Such are the sorrows and trials that have beset our poverty-stricken clergy. And the wife and daughters share it all.

It is, of course, possible to go from village to village and never know what the true conditions are in the parson's life. There are nearly always the respectable appearance, the bearing of a gentleman, and an air of refinement, which hide poverty. But the man is in a false position. He cannot do what he wants to do for his wife. His children grow up with none of the advantages of education he had himself. He feels crushed.

And no one seems to care. Nothing is done to make things less unbearable. 'My ambition,' said a thoughtful working man, 'used to be as a boy to grow up and be a country parson, with house and garden provided for life, out of which no one could turn me, whether I did my work or not.' That is the usual idea about life at the vicarage, and there may be such places still, as no doubt there used to be. But it is only one side of the picture. If we would know the truth, those pretty country vicarages are often scenes of clerical privation, scenes of work carried on painfully but very faithfully.

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The wonder is how so high a standard of spiritual service is maintained.

England should help such men, who are among her best servants, true ministers.

It was Sydney Smith, early in the last century, who first pointed out that the average private fortunes of the clergy exceed their professional income. He takes seven clergymen promiscuously, in his own neighbourhood, and finds that the aggregate of their permanent income from private sources amounts to about the same as the aggregate of their clerical income from Church preferment. This is recorded in an essay, written in January 1834, on ‘Ecclesiastical Economy,’ which was one of a series that appeared anonymously in the *Edinburgh Review*, the author (the Rev. W. J. Conybeare) subsequently publishing in his own name. The essay states :

‘We have ourselves made a similar estimate, and found that in twelve adjacent parishes the total ecclesiastical income of the incumbents was £4200, and the total private income £6400. And we believe that it would be found generally that Sydney Smith’s calculation underrates the usual proportion of a clergyman’s private to his professional resources. . . . Thus the clergy, while poor as a profession, are rich as a class—a fact which goes far to account for the popular notions of “the vast wealth of the Church.”’

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It would be interesting to make a similar investigation to-day. Would there be much difference? The property of the Church is still being maintained to a very great extent by the private incomes of the clergy.

And so long as this is so, the laity will not know the true state of affairs, nor realise the need of reform. But with increased burdens of income tax, and the high prices of food, and the advance of wages, the time seems to be coming when the clergy can no longer go on doing what they have done. The last hundred years may have seen little change, but the next ten seem likely to demand that the problem should be faced if grave impoverishment is to be averted.

But at the back of the mind of most laymen is the thought that the Church is not using its financial resources to the best advantage. Expression is at last being given to this feeling. The appeal for a large central church fund has made many people speak out what is in their mind. Why are glebe lands notoriously badly farmed? Why are they let at absurdly low rents? Why are tenants' repairs so often included in dilapidations? There is obvious mismanagement. And such will go on so long as the clergy act as their own agents. It is easy enough to see in what a difficult position a parish priest finds

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himself when he has to make up his mind whether to go on charging a very uneconomical rent or have a row with the tenant, who is also very likely his churchwarden. When once the parson tries to be business-like he stirs up a hornet's nest, and his life is a burden. Little wonder if he prefers to let things alone. But in doing so he not only impoverishes himself, but his successor. For it is well known that a tenant who pays a low rent pays also the less attention to his farm. A high rent is an incentive to good farming. The bad condition of our glebe lands can often be traced to the fact that the incumbent has, either out of mistaken generosity or from fear of unpleasantness, allowed the tenant to go on year after year paying a rent far lower than his neighbours.

And so long as the clergy act independently this will go on. The best remedy is for clergy in a diocese or county to combine voluntarily and form a glebe agency, appointing a known and tried land agent to act for them, paying him a percentage. Such an agency is now in existence in the county of Nottinghamshire, and in the first year of its operation the summary of its effect is that thirty livings are in the aggregate better off to the total amount of £900 a year.

Such an agent relieves the clergy of un-

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pleasant interviews with tenants. The personal element disappears. It is now pure business. Tenants' repairs, which should never have fallen on the clergy, but too often did, now fall on the tenant, as they should do, and the burden of dilapidations is at once considerably lightened.

And, further, the vexed problem of income tax and rates, the calculation of which can only be made by an expert, is handed over to the same agent, with the result that many clergy are able to recover excessive payments of the past and pay less in the future.

If such an agency existed in every county, or other suitable area, the argument that the present property of the clergy was being badly handled would lose much of its sting, and the laity would be more ready to support some scheme for the relief of those country clergy who find themselves falling into poverty owing to the burdens of their heritage.

That such an act of co-operation between glebe owners as is being tried in Nottinghamshire is at least worthy of consideration, is proved by the first annual report, which gives the following information of work done :—

'*1. Correspondence.*—1884 letters have been written from the office on the business of the Agency. This number excludes rent and tithe notices for payment.

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‘2. *Inspection of Land.*—Eighty-four visits of inspection have been made, including a few in Derbyshire.

‘3. *Action taken.*—In twelve cases the rent of the glebe has been raised without disturbing the tenant. In sixteen cases the glebe, or some portion thereof, has been sold to the advantage of the benefice, or such sale is under negotiation. In these cases of sale mineral rights are reserved. In all but two cases the whole expense attending the sale falls on the purchaser. In one case the farmhouse is being converted into the rectory, and the rectory house, with some portion of the glebe, is being converted into the farm-house, to the manifest advantage of incumbent and tenant alike. In two cases tithe has been redeemed. One claim for compensation for damage to land by the ploughing-up order of a War Agricultural Committee has been made. In one case glebe has been advantageously exchanged for other land.

‘4. The annual value of thirty benefices in the Agency has during the past year been increased by a sum of no less than £900, and in many cases there is the additional advantage of relief from liability for dilapidation and the worries of management.

‘The questions of Income Tax Assessment, of the proper rating of Tithe Rent Charge, and of the Redemption of Tithe, have been most carefully taken up by the Agent, and an extension of this side of his work will, it is thought, be gladly welcomed not only by the members of the Agency, but also by many clergy who are

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not members. The Committee commend this to all concerned, and point out that here again everything depends upon the clergy combining and co-operating to ensure the common good.'

Such a business-like move is full of promise, but at most it can only bring relief. It cannot bring opulence. The clergy will still have their financial difficulties and require outside assistance, unless they have private means. The large houses and extensive gardens yet remain, and it will be for the laity to decide what is to be done with them. It ought not to be left to the clergy to decide, for although they are legally freeholders, they are really trustees holding Church property, not merely for their own advantage, but for their successors. Consequently no clergyman should part with the property of his living without the consent of the Church. At present such consent is left to the bishop, or the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, but what is needed is far more local interest. If the parishioners wish their vicar to go on living in the big house, they should know the facts and act accordingly. If, after going into every detail, they conclude that the thing is impossible financially, they should then see to it that the present house is sold and a smaller one built instead. So long as the local churchpeople are in no way consulted, they cannot be expected

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to look on their vicar's difficulties as any concern of theirs. At present it is not their business. Some method must be devised whereby it does become their business. If Parochial Church Councils are duly and legally formed, and the Church secures some fresh measure of self-government, it will then be more possible to hope that the burden of finance will be eased from the shoulders of men whose calling demands that they should give themselves wholly to the ministry of word and sacrament. Poverty is not a blessing. The cares of this world choke the word, even when those cares come unsought and contrary to the will of him who suffers from them. Enforced poverty has none of the good of voluntary poverty. Enforced poverty crushes the one who bears it and hardens the community that allows it to continue. The clergy do not ask for wealth, but for freedom from such cares as harm and hinder their work as ministers of the Gospel. They ask to be set free from the appearance of wealth, from having to try to maintain the status of rich men. Such an appearance does no good—rather it is a stumbling-block. But it is not the fault of the clergy. They find themselves in a false position. The laity—that is, the whole body of the Church—alone can put the matter right. So nothing can adequately be done until the

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laity, entrusted with new and effective powers, and instructed with full knowledge, are seriously concerned with needful reform.

If we have had our country clergy chiefly in mind, we are very far from forgetting the clergy in our towns. In many ways their difficulties are similar, though as a rule the houses in which they have to live are of a more reasonable size, and they have little or no garden to maintain. The matter is urgent there as well as in our villages, and the remedy lies chiefly in securing the sympathy of the laity. In a colliery town, for example, a church was built and a vicarage, but a wholly inadequate income was provided for the incumbent. The priest-in-charge broke down under the strain, and the Bishop refused to institute anyone in his place so long as the financial position remained as it was. In order to put things in a better condition, the Bishop calls a meeting of the laity, and tells them the plain facts. ‘What do you want for the parson?’ asks a miner. ‘A miner’s wage,’ is the Bishop’s answer. The men who were present, seeing the reasonableness of such a request, and being surprised that so little is asked for—like all Englishmen, they had been obsessed with the idea that the parson is always rich—there and then promised the adequate, though far from excessive, amount.

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It may be well for the future of the Church that in our colliery and other industrial centres the vicar and his curates should be among the poorer of his parishioners. But unless something is done, before long the clergy will simply not be able to go on. They will have to resign, and no one will be found able to take their place. One good result must then arise. The laity, the local church members, will see that a first charge upon their own earnings must be the maintenance of the ministry. So will good come out of evil.

It is, however, not our present intention to go more fully into the question as it affects our town clergy. We only insert these few sentences to show that what is true of the country can be easily discovered in a somewhat different form in the town, and that it remains for the laity to make the discovery and provide the remedy. The laity do not yet realise the loss of spiritual power that arises through the clergy being put into houses which are too big for them, and make financial demands which oppress and crush the spirit of many a parish priest. And the laity should also remember that their choice of a parish priest is seriously restricted so long as their vicarages are so big that only a very limited number of clergy can afford to go and live in them.

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Such, then, is the present-day problem of the housing of the clergy. It is the very opposite of that which confronts the rest of the nation. The clergy are over-housed, while the mass of the nation is crying out for more and better houses. It will be a good thing when the clergy find themselves no longer compelled by law to live in houses so much bigger than those of their neighbours. It will break down something of the class distinction which separates the clergy from their people. They will then be identified far less than at present with the wealthy. Both spiritually and financially the gain would be considerable. Not that the clergy could be suitably housed in an artisan's dwelling : every parish priest must have his study of such a convenient size as to have room for his books and the many official papers he has to keep. There, too, he will have to be able to see his parishioners. And, since hospitality has always been a mark of the Church, there must be room enough to entertain visitors. But all this could be on the simplest scale. A parson's home is his office—that fact also has to regulate the kind of house he must live in. In the past these demands have been provided for too often on far too large a scale, with the result that to-day there must be a drastic change to what is reasonable. The large houses and gardens must be

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sold, livings must be united, the clergy must be more business-like, and the laity more deeply concerned with the whole matter. But always this should be kept in mind—how to save the home life of the clergy.

A celibate clergy is not what England wants. It is expensive to have married clergy ; it is far cheaper to have the bachelor priest living alone or in community with others. But are we to revert to that way of preaching the Gospel and providing the sacraments ? It may be there is no other way but that. If so, then England will have lost one of her very best features, one of the surest supplies of her most useful sons and daughters, one of the finest examples of Christian family life—the parson's home, whether in town or country.

XI

THE STIPENDIARY CURATE

By A. G. B. ATKINSON, M.A.

AFTER a period of fifteen years, during which I have been closely associated, as secretary of the Curates' Augmentation Fund, with the work of improving the condition of assistant curates, and have managed to raise for their benefit more than £130,000, I am not disposed to differ from the opinion long ago enunciated by Mr. Punch, who considered the fact of a curate supporting himself and his family on his stipend as the standing miracle of the day. Not having myself been confronted with the domestic problem of the married curate, I must still simply say that I do not know how they do it. My first curacy was what I suppose would then have been considered a good one—at any rate, the stipend was £160 per annum, which in those days was at least £10 above the average ; but even with strict economy of living I never quite succeeded in making both ends meet without some small subsidy from private resources. Had I endeavoured to do so, I should have been obliged to forgo the enjoyments of foreign travel, subscriptions to clubs, libraries, and the

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like, which, though they may not be reckoned as absolutely essential, are yet, I venture to think, to be regarded as reasonably necessary for any minister with such education as he is expected by the laity to have received, and without which, especially if promotion is long deferred, his work is likely to become uninspired and himself depressed. How often have curates told me : 'I had only one Sunday off last year,' or 'I have had no holiday for three, four, or five years !' My period of work as a curate did not exceed about eight years, which perhaps is not longer than may normally be required of a clergyman in a subordinate capacity if he is to be thoroughly equipped and experienced when he enters upon a sole charge. Here again, therefore, I have had no personal experience of the hope deferred which maketh the heart sick, and can only gauge by frequent intercourse with those who have experienced delay and disappointment how great is the depression and bitterness which is felt by those who after long years of waiting are still without preferment. It is a curious and unfortunate factor in the curate's lot, as compared with other professions, that until the very day on which the letter offering him promotion arrives, a curate, after many years of work, has no more certainty of attaining to preferment than on the day on

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which he was ordained. Such uncertainty as this should surely as far as possible be removed. It does not obtain in other services, as, for example, in the Army or Navy or Civil Service, where, as the years pass by, the holder of a subordinate position may with tolerable certainty reckon upon the advent of promotion.

I do not favour any change in the law which shall render it impossible for a clergyman in any case to be preferred until he has served for ten years as an assistant curate ; but with the proportion of unbeneficed to beneficed which at present obtains it ought, I think, to be considered as something exceptional for a bishop or public patron to prefer a man until he has served for ten years in Orders. Exceptions there may occasionally be, on account of conspicuous ability or merit, but they should be recognised as only occasionally justifiable, and not be so frequent as to give rise to general dissatisfaction. Cases of promotion of young men in the past have been too frequent, and I can recall many which have resulted in much discontent, which can hardly, under the circumstances, be stigmatised as unjustifiable.

It appears to be a failing on the part of many of our Church reformers who advocate a large increase in the numbers of the clergy, that they seem to have no reasoned judgment

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as to the number of assistant curates which there should be relatively to the permanent positions which the Church has to offer. It is an evil day, as Bacon said, ‘when more are bred scholars than preferments can take off.’ There should certainly be no reckless multiplication of curates until the laity are awakened to a sense of greater responsibility for their maintenance. If something in the nature of a ten years’ rule, such as I have here advocated, were adopted it would not indeed solve the problem of promotion. There would still be many for whom a longer period of waiting would be necessary. It may, for example, be mentioned that the average time which the recipients of the grants of the Curates’ Augmentation Fund have spent in Orders is twenty-eight years. The course proposed, however, would help to mitigate the evil, and it is one which has the advantage that it can be adopted at once without legislation. Some difficulty might occur with the private patron, but this would tend to disappear in face of the avowed opposition of the ecclesiastical authorities to the appointment of inexperienced men. The whole number of curates should surely not be allowed to outstrip a due proportion to the number of benefices. There seems a great dearth of reliable statistics, which are absolutely necessary if any sound schemes of Church

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reforms are to be initiated. Even particulars as to the exact number of clergymen who die, upon the average, every year cannot, so far as I know, be ascertained from any of the customary sources of information. Since the subject is of primary importance to the unbeficed clergy, it may be well to ascertain if possible what the average rate of promotion at present is.

It is suggested as a reliable formula that the average time of probation for each curate will bear to the whole time of clerical life the same proportion that the number of the unbeficed clergy bears to the whole clerical body. By the average time of probation I mean the time after which a curate would receive a living if promotion were regulated by the rule of seniority. Adopting this method of calculation, we may say that after the passing of the Pluralities Act the rate of promotion was eight years. After that, in consequence of the increase in the number of curates without a proportionate increase in the number of livings, it rose gradually year by year until it amounted, in 1874, to twelve years. The same process has since that time gone on, till at present it amounts to about $13\frac{1}{3}$ years. The earlier figures need not detain us ; but at the present moment the total number of clergy is 24,000, and of these some 8000 are stipendiary curates. The whole duration of

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clerical life is about forty years. Thus, if my formula is adopted, the number of curates being one-third of the whole clerical body, the average time of probation will be one-third of forty years—that is, $13\frac{1}{3}$ years. The average time of probation will, however, exceed this, because, in addition to the curates, other candidates for vacant livings will be forthcoming from the ranks of clerical schoolmasters, fellows of colleges, chaplains in the Army and Navy, and the officials of the numerous clerical societies. No doubt the number of schoolmasters and fellows of colleges in Holy Orders has been for some years a diminishing quantity. We must, however, reckon with this additional body of men, and perhaps shall not be far wrong in estimating the average time of probation at fourteen years. During the year 1918-19 the number of beneficiaries of the Curates' Augmentation Fund promoted to livings was thirteen, and the average time which they had served in Orders was $22\frac{1}{2}$ years. The length of time, therefore, which a curate has to wait before obtaining preferment continues to increase, and it is surely time that some definite policy was arrived at as to the number of those who are to be ordained relatively to the total number of permanent positions, in which there can be anticipated only a slow and gradual increase. There is a general movement at

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present to amalgamate small benefices which do not furnish a living wage or adequate work for the incumbent. This is a reform in the right direction, but it must, of course, result in rendering still more prolonged the duration of the curate's probation. The only alternative to reducing the period of probation is to recognise that some curates must always remain unbeficed, and so to improve their prospects and status as to render the curate's lot a tolerable one in itself, even for the duration of a lifetime ; but it is doubtful if many men of mature age will be contented without an independent sphere of work.

That there is at the present time much painful and humiliating poverty, and even great suffering, amongst assistant curates can hardly be denied, and the known facts are incompatible with any other supposition. Painful revelations are frequently brought to light in the public journals, and the number of general societies, to say nothing of diocesan charities, which exist for relieving clerical distress is far in excess of similar societies in other professions. Even cast-off clothes are collected and distributed.

It is sometimes argued that the clergy should be content with a lesser wage than their contemporaries in other professions, and it has been lately stated by a prominent churchman that

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those clergy do the best work who live on the wages of an artisan. I shall not seriously attempt to argue with laymen of this way of thinking, except to urge them to recollect that an impoverished clergy is no indication of a godly laity. ‘There are few fallacies,’ said Bishop Wilberforce, ‘more transparent than the argument that as no clergyman is really worth having who works for the temporal rewards of his profession, we may safely lower down those rewards, trusting that we shall thus secure the services of the more earnest-minded, and only bolt through the shaking of our sieve of misery the worldly-minded, the ambitious, and the secular.’¹

We have to deal with men, not with angels, and there is no doubt that the low rate of remuneration of the clergy is the chief reason why for many years past the number of ordinands has steadily declined, and those who are ordained are increasingly recruited from a lower stratum of society, and are often of slender intellectual equipment. The bishops find themselves obliged to accept an ever-smaller modicum of learning from those presenting themselves for ordination ; whilst the resolution adopted some years since, that after a given date they would ordain no one who had not a university

¹ *Quarterly Review*, 1867, No. 245, Art. ix.

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degree, seems altogether to have faded from their recollection. To discuss the improvements which are needed in the education of the clergy is beyond the scope of this paper. We must, however, assume that the living wage which we demand is for men reasonably efficient, and unfortunately examples are not wanting where this is not the case ; but the responsibility for securing this efficiency in the officers of the Church must in the main rest with the bishops. Quality is more important than quantity. It would be a great misfortune for the Church and nation if the name of clergyman should cease to be synonymous with that of gentleman in the public mind. A well-educated gentleman still makes the best minister, even if called upon to minister amongst the very poor. Coarseness and vulgarity will not only drive the fastidious from our churches, but will offend those who, if they make no pretensions to refinement themselves, can at least appreciate it in others. This is not snobbery, for there is grave danger at the present time that the expense of education, coupled with incomes of less purchasing power than before the War, may tend to compel the Church to select its ministers from a lower grade of society than before. The proposal to ordain within the next three years more than two thousand young men, even after a

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certain period of probation and training, cannot be viewed without concern, especially when it is reflected that many of these have had no education other than elementary, and this at a time when the general spread of education amongst the laity makes it of the greatest importance that a high standard of education should be maintained amongst those who minister to them in spiritual things. If the clergy are men who are no longer able to guide the thought of their age, eschew scholarship, and are unfurnished in historical learning, one of the greatest bulwarks against infidelity is broken down.

The question is one that comes within the scope of economics, for, however moved by piety and zeal the young man may be who seeks Orders, it is obvious that the choice will as often depend as much on the will of the parent or guardian who has to determine 'what to do with his boys,' and in making his decision it is idle to suppose that economic considerations will not play a considerable part. The lottery theory of Sydney Smith, which he borrowed from Bentley, with its commercial calculations as to the probability of a mitre or a deanery, will not often be uppermost in the parent's mind, but there will certainly in the majority of cases be the practical consideration as to the reasonable probability of a fair position of pecuniary

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independence, and a recognised social standing, which may be some compensation for what in other professions would be regarded as a scanty income. There is no doubt that for many years past these economic factors have been at work, and that there is something like a strike amongst the parents of those from whom heretofore the clergy of the Church have been customarily recruited. It is realised by the laity of good position that after long years of patient and obscure labour the clerical profession offers to the great majority nothing but a bare subsistence, and in many cases entails the necessity of recourse to doles from clerical charities, and even the workhouse. Quite recently a curate of my acquaintance, of long standing in the diocese of London, and of blameless record, was removed penniless to the workhouse infirmary. The same conviction that may move the prudent parent is also, no doubt, operating amongst the clergy themselves, who might naturally otherwise encourage their sons to follow their own calling, but who, as a result of their own experiences, refrain from doing so.

Neither should the question of the provision of suitable pensions for curates who are past work be lost sight of. During recent years the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have done a good deal towards the provision of pensions for

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retiring incumbents, but the law regulating the administration of their funds does not permit them, so it is alleged, to make any grants towards pensions for curates. For some years past I have drawn attention to the need of an alteration in this direction, and in the recent account of their work set out by Sir Lewis Dibdin, the Chief Estates Commissioner, and Mr. Downing, the secretary, it is satisfactory to notice that the claim made in this respect is admitted. If retirement on the part of dignitaries and incumbents at an earlier age became the rule, as should surely be the case, the rate of promotion would be accelerated and fewer curates of over ten years' standing would remain unbeneficed. The funds of the Ecclesiastical Commission may fairly be regarded as the property of the whole Church, and if the Church since the time when the Commission was set up has multiplied the class of assistant curates, it is obviously fair that a corresponding proportion of the total funds should be appropriated for their welfare. At the present time the grants made by the Commissioners towards the provision of assistant curates help incumbents to get curates, but do not help curates, which is an entirely different matter. Precisely the same criticism may be directed towards the operations of the Additional Curates Society and the Church Pastoral Aid

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Society, whose work is directed towards the multiplication of curates, and confers no benefit on curates themselves. Some assistance towards the provision of pensions might surely be forthcoming from the various Diocesan Boards, but at present they seem to follow in the wake of the societies above mentioned, and apply themselves rather to helping incumbents to obtain curates than to helping curates themselves. Some slight qualification must be made to the above statements, so far as the period of the War is concerned, some small war bonuses having been given intermittently to curates ; but these have been so small in amount as not to invalidate the truth of the general statement.

Poverty and slowness of promotion are not the only evils from which assistant clergy suffer. There is also the hardship of insecurity of tenure. The curate is regarded as a bird of passage—here to-day and gone to-morrow—and thus there is no particular parish or diocese which feels any responsibility for his welfare. He may, after long years of service in one diocese, be forced to remove into another, where he has to begin all over again. The law at present allows a new incumbent to dismiss his subordinates, and as a rule a change of incumbents will result in a change of curates also. There is no reason for this arbitrary regulation. It

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originated in the Pluralities Act, which required residence on the part of the incumbent, and necessitated, therefore, the removal of the curate who had heretofore been for the most part the representative of an absentee rector. It is further clearly the intention of the legislature that the curate should only be removed after permission obtained from the bishop, and this is still necessary, but in practice the law is largely abortive. The curate will rarely feel it wise to appeal to the bishop against the incumbent's desire to secure his removal.

No doubt it is a difficult point to determine how far it is desirable to give A. a fixity of tenure in B.'s parish. At present, however, the extreme ease with which an engagement may be terminated leads to such engagements being rashly made and hastily broken. The most trivial reasons will lead to the departure of a curate who is perhaps only just beginning to win the confidence of the people sufficiently to render efficient service in the parish. There are still too many incumbents who treat their curates as schoolboys, to be ordered about hither and thither, even when they are men of mature age. And there are some incumbents whose record in this particular is so bad as to justify the intervention of the bishop. Unfortunately, in recent years the action of the bishops themselves

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has been in a contrary direction from that contemplated by the legislature. Instead of issuing the formal licence, they have invented a new instrument, unknown until a few years back, which they style ‘a permission to officiate.’ These instruments, which have no legal validity, amount to no more than a promise that the bishop will not inhibit the curate. They make the curate the mere employee of the incumbent, dismissible at his pleasure, and thus defeat the intention of the law.

Much hardship is thus often inflicted upon elderly curates.

‘Frequently [writes one] the bishop expected me to take his written permission for me to work in a parish in lieu of his giving me his legal licence to work in the same parish. In this way the late vicar put me off without promising or refusing to give me his nomination to the curacy from October 1905 till his death in October 1907.’

I have known of similar cases where the rector, indifferent to the fate of an elderly colleague, holds out to him hopes of nomination to the curacy, whilst he is all the while endeavouring to secure the services of a younger man. Another explains his reasons for frequent removal thus :

‘My difficulty has been that I have always had to take the first post which was offered to

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me, and could never afford to wait till a more congenial curacy presented itself, and this to a man who thinks for himself, and has never been willing to be the mere echo of an ecclesiastical superior, has very frequently ended in mutual respect, intellectual disharmony, and final parting.'

Although curates are too easily removable from their cures at present, there are not wanting remarkable instances where they have held their posts for a surprisingly long period without recognition. Thus the late Rev. J. C. Hose was for more than fifty years curate of the parish of St. Saviour's, South Hampstead, to which he was first ordained, without obtaining any preferment ; and in the diocese of Rochester there is one now approaching his ninetieth year, who is still working as an assistant curate in the parish where he has served for many years.

A greater security of tenure is urgently needed for curates, and this perhaps might be secured by an understanding when the licence is issued that the curate should remain in his post for a period, say, of five years, except in exceptional circumstances. This would only be an extension of the principle which is recognised at present where a title is given that the curate shall remain at least two years. This is the

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method by which the bishop safeguards himself against the canonical obligation to maintain those whom he ordains.

Together with increased security of tenure should go a progressive stipend, increasing with length of service. Prior to the War the average stipend of a curate did not exceed £150 per annum. It should now surely be not less to begin with than £200, increasing by yearly increments of £5 until it reaches the sum of £250 per annum ; whilst those who remain unbeficed after ten years' service should surely be secured an income of at least £300. It seems unlikely that any system which does not enable a curate of from ten to fifteen years' standing to look forward with reasonable certainty to promotion will ever be satisfactory ; but a regularly progressive stipend would do a great deal to mitigate the hardship experienced by those who are unavoidably passed over for lack of sufficient independent spheres of work. The reverse is now commonly the case, and the curate finds his income diminishing with increasing years. Fifty years ago it was the exception for a curate to maintain himself on his professional stipend. He came, as a rule, from a family who were able and willing to supplement his stipend with a sufficient allowance during the few years which he commonly had to wait

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before obtaining preferment. There is now a great change in this respect, and the number of curates who have any means of support other than their stipend is very few indeed, which is a sufficient testimony to the truth of the statement already made that there is a growing tendency for ordinands to be drawn from a lower stratum of society.

Curates have never adopted the methods taken by other classes of the community who are underpaid—the formation of a trade union. This is partly due to lack of cohesion amongst themselves, but more particularly to the disinclination which they have felt to drawing public attention to their grievance. However hard their lot, and scanty the subsistence provided, they have preferred to struggle on resolutely as best they may in the fulfilment of their duties ; but the number of those who have gone under in the struggle is far from negligible. A layman, who is content to pay yearly a considerable sum to his lawyer or doctor for occasional services will frequently contribute nothing to the curate of whose ministrations he avails himself every Sunday.

It will be seen from this summary of facts, which are for the most part known and admitted, that the great grievance underlying the whole question is that assistant curates are neither

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established nor endowed. Being myself strongly in favour of an Established Church, it follows that I am of opinion that whatever reforms are advocated should be in the direction of giving a greater measure of establishment and endowment to curates. I am opposed, therefore, to all reforms which will tend to a greater accentuation of the division between the incumbent who is established and endowed, and the curate who is neither. This distinction is one which so far as possible should be minimised.

Establishment is a word which has no very precise significance, but one of its leading characteristics is the fact that the clergyman should have always the right of appeal from purely ecclesiastical tribunals to the State courts. This right has been a great safeguard of freedom so far as the beneficed clergy are concerned. It is otherwise with the curate. The bishop may, for example, summarily revoke his licence, when there is an appeal to the Archbishop, but this is final, and access to the State courts is denied to the curate. This distinction should be done away with, and the curate accused of erroneous teaching should have the same right of appeal to the secular courts as his beneficed brother. If, further, it became the rule that a curate should not be dismissed from his post except for reasons which would justify the

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forfeiture of his benefice by an incumbent, a sufficiently reasonable measure of establishment would be secured to the curate.

So far as endowment is concerned, it will hardly be possible to secure for the curate the same security of emolument as is enjoyed by the incumbent. A good deal more, however, should be done to provide endowed curacies in populous places. When, after the passing of the Pluralities Act in 1836, a need arose through the increase of population for more clergy, a great opportunity was missed. It should surely have been pointed out by the ecclesiastical authorities to the laity in populous places that if they required the services of two resident clergymen they should do as their forefathers did, and provide a second endowment. Such additional emoluments for the provision of a lecturer or reader were common in the City of London. Unfortunately, assistant curates were multiplied without any permanent provision being made for their maintenance. Both the Prayer Book and the statute law clearly contemplate that there shall not usually be more than one clergyman in each parish. Now, if there are to be two or more, we may remind ourselves that the ordination service contemplates that the minister shall be a householder and also 'decently habited.' And the world expects the curate to maintain

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a social status considerably above that expected of an artisan earning the same or even a considerably larger salary.

If it may be difficult at once to secure many endowments for curacies, at any rate let a decent house of moderate size be provided. There should be no insuperable difficulty in achieving this in all parishes which from their size render it certain that a curate will always be employed. A house provided in addition to the salary would be some measure of endowment, would raise the social status of the curate, and give a greater stability to his position. The old endowments, even if redistributed, are not sufficient for our present wants.

In order to illustrate these general statements, and with a view to furnishing a more particular account of the curates' mode of living at the present time, I have endeavoured to procure some more exact details as to the family budgets of curates. These have been kindly furnished me by curates with whom I am personally acquainted, but whose names I suppress.

I take first the case of one well known to me, who has been for twenty-seven years in Orders, served mostly in parishes in the East End of London, and give the figures of his average income and expenditure for the years of the War. The family consists of six in all—

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three boys and a girl, besides the father and mother.

Income

	<i>£ s. d.</i>
Stipend	170 0 0
Grant from a Clerical Society . . .	25 0 0
War bonus	8 0 0
Private income	37 0 0
 Total	<u>£240 0 0</u>

Expenditure

	<i>£ s. d.</i>
Rent and rates	40 0 0
Income tax	4 10 0
Life insurance and pension	12 2 0
Other insurances	1 9 0
Education of children	29 10 0
Food	126 0 0
Clothing	6 0 0
Coal	7 10 0
Gas	5 0 0
Charwoman	6 10 0
Sundries	5 0 0
 Total	<u>£243 11 0</u>

The figures may be taken as typical of a great many cases, but the curate mentioned was a trifle better off than some owing to the possession of the small private addition to his salary of £37. Unfortunately, during the year 1918 the financial pressure became so acute that he

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had to surrender his life insurance, being no longer able to continue the payment of the premiums. Since 1904 the family has not been able to afford any servant. The wife does all the household work with the aid of a charwoman who comes in one day a week, but since the summer of 1918 even this help has had to be dispensed with. All the washing is done at home. The wife and children have been, for the most part, clothed by gifts from relatives and friends. The diet has been planned on the most economical and simple lines. No alcohol or tobacco is consumed. Very often during the War meat was dispensed with ; the normal consumption is one joint of about five or six pounds per week. On one day in the week there is fish. In the holiday season my friend usually manages to obtain a locum tenancy, or does temporary work of some kind. Once a year he has endeavoured to take the children to some simple form of entertainment. This constitutes the whole of the relaxation possible during the year. The total amount of war bonuses received by this family, which has been mostly found from local sources, has been £32. September 9, 1917, was a red-letter day, for on that date the Ecclesiastical Commission made a grant of £2 !

A word must be added as to the education of the children, and the methods by which this

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has been achieved. The eldest son was a student at King's College, holding a London County Council Scholarship when the War broke out. He was wounded, returned to England, and went out again and was captured in the great German offensive in March 1918. He is now again at King's College, reading for his final B.A. degree by the aid of the L.C.C. Scholarship and the Government scheme for ex-service students. The second son, who also served in the War and was wounded, is now at Keble College, with a view to seeking Orders, and he also is financed by the Government scheme. The daughter has just left school, having passed the London Matriculation, and is a student at the London Day Training College ; her expenses are also largely defrayed by the L.C.C. The fourth child, a boy of fifteen, is still at school.

In perusing a number of similar statements, it is painful to notice the numerous instances in which it becomes necessary to supplement the slender stipend by means of an appeal to friends or relations.

'Neither my wife nor I myself [writes another] had any private means, and if it had not been for the kindness of friends I should either have had to educate my children myself (which would very often have been impossible), or they must have gone without any education. Mrs. W.

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paid the school fees for my eldest son, while Miss P. did the same kind office for my eldest daughter. Mrs. R. helped me by sending Christmas hampers, or a small cheque, otherwise we could not have held our heads above water. My wife has worked like a slave, and had it not been for the kindness of a friend who gave her every evening a supper, she or my children must have been half-starved. I have grown habituated, if not reconciled, to this life of practical beggary.'

Another whose salary of £12 10s., paid monthly, has in addition £12 a year as chaplain to a workhouse, and surplice fees which amount to about £12 a year. He keeps his accounts monthly, thus :

		£	s.	d.
Milk	.	1	2	6
Bread	.	1	12	0
Groceries	.	8	0	0
Vegetables	.	0	12	0
Fish and meat	.	1	0	0
Oil	.	0	12	0
Coal	.	0	12	0
Washing helper	.	0	12	0
<hr/>				
Total		<u>£14</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>6</u>

He has an overdraft at the bank of £70, and sundry bills amounting to £35 unpaid. On leaving his previous curacy he sold off his

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furniture for £50. In this family there are seven children, who have for the most part attended the public elementary school.

Something must be added about the facts relating to the married curates. Whether curates have fewer or more children than incumbents it is impossible to say. Some statistics kindly furnished me by the Rev. W. C. Cluff, secretary of the Clergy Orphan Corporation, are, however, of interest. These tend conclusively to show that the proportion of unmarried clergy to married is larger than it was a generation ago, and, further, that when the clergy marry it is at a later age than in former days. It follows, therefore, that the number of clergy children has diminished and is diminishing, and it may be hoped as a corollary that there will be in future fewer widows of clergymen and fewer children, whether orphans or not, to be educated.

The following table shows the number of children in each of the families with which the Clergy Orphan Corporation were called upon to deal over a number of years :—

TABLE I

In 1885 the family averaged	5·4	children
„ 1895 „ „ „	5·46	„
„ 1905 „ „ „	4·3	„
„ 1915 „ „ „	4·02	„
„ 1919 „ „ „	3·5	„

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TABLE II

In 1885 there were	43 cases	}
„ 1895 „ „ . . .	51 „	
„ 1905 „ „ . . .	24 „	
„ 1915 „ „ . . .	17 „	
„ 1919 „ „ . . .	12 „	

in which the
family exceeded
6 in number

TABLE III

In 1885 there were	11 cases	}
„ 1895 „ „ . . .	15 „	
„ 1905 „ „ . . .	5 „	
„ 1915 „ „ . . .	5 „	
„ 1919 „ „ . . .	3 „	

in which the
family numbered
at least 10

TABLE IV

In 1885 there were	5 cases of an only child	}
„ 1895 „ „ . . .	4 „ „ „	
„ 1905 „ „ . . .	10 „ „ „	
„ 1915 „ „ . . .	17 „ „ „	
„ 1919 „ „ . . .	20 „ „ „	

Doubtless some allowance must be made for accident, and it must also be noted that the activities of this Society deal with only a small fraction of the total number of the clergy; but when these four groups of statistics are carefully studied in conjunction with each other they certainly seem to indicate a less opulent fecundity in clergy marriages.

To sum up. It may be urged that these are all mundane considerations, but it is obvious that the spiritual efficiency of the curates must

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be hampered, and the work of the Church suffer, when so large a body of its ministers are thus engaged in a continuous struggle to make both ends meet. What wonder if work sometimes becomes perfunctory or sermons inadequate, when behind outward appearances there are the difficulties and anxieties occasioned by a life of impoverishment and the mind is preoccupied with pecuniary cares. There is, perhaps, no subject which more urgently demands the immediate attention of the ecclesiastical authorities than this. On no principle of justice can the entire obligation of supporting the assistant clergy be thrown upon the incumbent. It is essentially a laymen's question, arising from the vast increase in the population. Neither can the burden be thrown entirely on the particular parish in which a curate may have happened to work. Curates grow old, not in the service of one but of many parishes. The recognition of such service must therefore obviously devolve in common fairness upon the Church at large. The appeal may even be confidently made to small country parishes, since whilst they enjoy their share of the old endowments of the Church, they are continuously drafting off their population to the large towns, thus helping to create the need for the services of assistant curates. It is surely unworthy of a Christian community

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to take advantage of a position on which a generous zeal has led a man to enter without the prospect of earthly rewards, and from which he cannot afterwards withdraw, and to accept his services for a long term of years at a cheap rate of payment, less than that obtainable by many artisans, and then to leave him cast-off and uncared-for in old age. We may confidently put the question to the laity of the Church of England, and ask whether they are doing their duty towards their clergy, whether or not they are acting in the spirit of the Lord's decision, 'The labourer is worthy of his hire.'

XII

REMEDIES FOR THE POVERTY OF THE CLERGY

By Canon PARTRIDGE

VARIETY of species and of type is to some extent evolved by conditions of life and by environment. It would be right to apply this general consideration to the clergy of the Church of England. The environment of religious work, and the conditions under which it is carried on, have a large influence in shaping the character of the parish priest, and in adapting him to the economic surroundings of his life. They have a secondary influence in determining the kind of men who will take Holy Orders, and therefore they have a subsequent as well as an immediate bearing on the general life of the Church.

Such environment and such conditions are capable of infinite variety. The priest's manner of life, his power of influencing the intellectual, political, and spiritual atmosphere, his capacity to rise to the ideal of a perfect ministry, are conditioned by such variations, and any generalisations passed on the life or the labours of the clergy of the Church of England must consequently be subject to wide differentiation. In

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short, the gradations of the ordinary social scale are reproduced in the ranks of the clergy.

The same applies in its degree to the intellectual scale and to the spiritual. The steps of wealth between the slum-dweller and the millionaire find a counterpart in the degrees of social and intellectual distinction in the ranks of the clergy. The difference between the sordid surroundings and depressing atmosphere in which the work of the priest in a slum district is set, and those under which the incumbent of a favoured country living works out his pleasant destiny is enormous, and the gap is bridged by numberless grades and conditions. There is a great chasm between the poor student, among his tomes of the Fathers at Sullington Parva, and the social worker, full of energy for reform, in Wolverhampton or Stepney. The chasm is filled with an almost infinite series of steps. There is a wide gap between the types, pure and simple, of parish priest of the town and of the country parson ; between the incumbent of a great church in a city where the parochial system has practically broken down, and it has become impossible for the clergy to know the members of their congregation, and the vicar who, armed with his thick stick and shod with heavy boots, finds a constant occupation in the afternoon and evening of every day in visiting

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the members of his flock. Any adequate treatment of the sociology of the clergy of the Church of England at the beginning of the twentieth century must recognise these infinite variations of type and the great divergence of circumstances which attracts the variation and develops it.

In one particular we may generalise. The financial position of the clergy of the Church of England at the present time is almost distractingly uniform : unless they have private means they cannot hope to escape the worry and the difficulties of impending debt.

It is not merely that they are compelled to live in the surroundings of poverty, but rather that their lives are in danger of becoming sordid, deprived to a very considerable extent of the enlarging ideas conferred by travel and change of scene, and the ennobling ideas of good music, or good pictures, and the intellectual advancement represented by the perusal of the books of the best modern thinkers. All are alike. Archbishops and bishops, archdeacons and canons, rectors and chaplains, vicars and assistant curates, suffer together in a Sisyphean effort, each to keep his stone of solvency on the top of the hill ecclesiastical.

In the diocese of Chichester, which I know intimately, it is certain that the Bishop could

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not live in his official residence at the present time without private means ; that the Dean in his deanery would similarly be poorer than the proverbial mouse ; and that the archdeacons, on their lordly stipends of £200 per annum, less tax before receipt, would not visit many parishes, except on foot, unless they all supplemented, with heavy donations from their private purses, this exiguous income.

We are assured that in another sphere the sale of titles is forbidden. We sometimes get perilously near selling gaiters. It is an odd kind of bargain. The ‘best’ man is invariably chosen for such offices, and vulgarly is told that he can pay his footing, and keep on paying it until he no longer needs a footing on solid earth, or retires. So also the self-sacrificing, hard-working, and hospitable band of rural deans are going on with their unpaid tasks with ever-increasing difficulty. They deserve a heavy abatement of income tax on their stipends of nothing a year. But we are, forsooth, sticklers for efficiency, and the marvel of the whole business is that we should get it under such circumstances. That we have it is due to the conscientiousness of the rank and file of those who bear office in the Church of England. How long it pays to trade on such conscientiousness is another matter, even from the purely material standpoint.

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But what can be said for the Rev. Maximus Fitzvicar, who was appointed six years ago to the new ecclesiastical district of the Good Shepherd, Rochburn? He has 5000 people to care for, and struggles Sunday after Sunday to cram them into a building capable of seating 550. His efforts sometimes now get it nearly half-full. This church was built just before the War began, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners endowed the district with £250 per annum. There is no vicarage, but Mr. Fitzvicar and his wife live very snugly in a little house at £60 a year, plus rates and taxes. This is near the church, and if it is too cold to sit in the vestry he uses his little dining-room for parish purposes. Mr. Fitzvicar is wealthy compared to some of his brethren in the country, but he finds that his yearly cash account is as follows:—

Ecclesiastical Commissioners	£250
Rent	£60
Rates	12
Income tax	13
Coal and light	20
Insurances	9
Food	104
Sundries	32
	<hr/>
	£250

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Sundries will include laundry, maid, doctor, dentist, holiday, clothes, books, papers, subscriptions, and a few other things.

He really is at his wits' end, but he plods along. He was made joyful by a gift of £40 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as a war bonus, just when he was wondering whether he ought not to do something desperate. This helped him to pay off some bills which, in spite of his efforts, had accumulated, and allowed him to begin again.

This man is given a task requiring a maximum output of energy. He has to build up the whole of the life and work of the Church in a district which has never before received an adequate consideration. On a business footing the least that wisdom and prudence demand is to put the man in such a position that he can devote the best of his energies to his overwhelming task. It does not so strike the imagination of the Church of England. A famous President of Magdalen is reported to have said, on appointing to a living in the gift of the College : ' Well, Mr. Smith, do you really think you are worth £250 per annum ? ' The Church of England obviously does not think the pioneers of its work on the outskirts of the great towns, where the virgin soil must be tilled, are worth so much.

Or what shall we say, to pass from a general

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case typical of many, to the specific case of B., with an endowment of £80 per annum, and a growing population? The Diocesan Board of Finance has here intervened, and gives an annual grant to make up the stipend of the living to £200 per annum. Even so, the vicar will not add greatly to his savings from the value of his living, and so reduces his food bill, for it is really quite absurd to spend as much as £2 a week on food, when excellent bacon can be obtained at 2s. 2d. a pound and cabbages are never more than 8d. or 9d. apiece.

I turn over a list of returns from benefices, showing the net income available from all sources after the essential outgoings have been paid :—

Alfriston	.	.	.	.	£179
Barlavington	.	.	.	.	47
Bepton	.	.	.	.	171
Billingshurst	.	.	.	.	168
Binsted	.	.	.	.	133
Bishopstone	.	.	.	.	141

I could continue the melancholy list, ranging from £39 upwards, through £91, £98, to £192, but it is sufficient to know that such benefices exist to realise how underpaid were these men in the pre-war days, and in what straits they are at the present time.

I do not in the least wish to shirk the fact

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that there are compensations to be placed on the other side. There is something in living in an old house with traditions, set in a lovely country-side, with a garden filled with the fruit-trees planted by one's predecessors, and delightful in every aspect, and to have close by an ancient church, hoary with the passing of hundreds of years; but none of these things will do much to supply food to the dining-table or clothes to the back of the parson and his children.

It is not wise to generalise, but I have heard a well-known dignitary of the diocese of Chichester hazard the statement that the number of benefices in that diocese which could be held satisfactorily by a man without private means could be reckoned on the fingers of two hands.

The results of this state of affairs are not merely the obvious ones. They emerge at unexpected times and at unforeseen angles. It is an undesirable thing for the community that the clergy of the Church of England should live in such an environment as may evolve a type of character inferior to that of the clergy of the past. The depressing influence of all these considerations on the supply of candidates for ordination is a very clearly marked result, and the future may easily have to pay for our lack of foresight and the deficiencies of our system.

It is an entirely unconscionable principle,

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moreover, that those who are occupied in performing for the community some of the most important tasks from which the nation receives great benefit should be offered less than an economic wage in recompense. Apart from the effects which it has upon the position and the supply of clergy, it is an evil thing that members of the Church of England should have ministrations supplied to them with little cost to themselves. In so far as this is an effect of endowments, endowments have been an unmitigated evil to the Church of England. It may be questioned, however, whether endowments are the only cause of the evil. The parochialism of many members of the Church of England—for it is nothing else—is to be attributed very largely to the conduct of previous generations of clergy, of whom a greater proportion than at the present time were men of substance.

They drew upon their private purses for the current expenses of the maintenance of divine worship ; they employed their menservants for the upkeep of the church and churchyard ; and they often opposed the introduction of a system of a weekly church collection for defraying of normal church expenditure. In addition to this, their charitable gifts were very large, and they taught ordinary folk to look to them for assistance in time of trouble or difficulty. Of course,

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the fact of the endowments enabled them to do this with greater ease. As the evidence given before the Commissioners who examined the question of tithe in 1834 shows, they were extremely liberal and generous landlords, and dealt easily and kindly with the occupiers of the agricultural land upon which the tithe was payable.

All this led to the formation of a strong public opinion that the parson was a rich man, that the church was his job, and that it was his business to run it, and that church membership did not involve any responsibility on the financial side.

The gradual introduction of the weekly collection at the offertory, followed in later years by the establishment of the habit of Easter Offerings, and of constant fixed contributions through what is known as the Free-Will Offering scheme, have, to a certain extent, broken down such barriers, but the evil was sufficiently well established to persist in a still aggravated form to this twentieth century.

The conditions of the present time are very serious, and the parochialism of the past is a hindrance to a speedy and effective removal of the straits in which the clergy find themselves. It may be estimated that the vast majority of the clergy of the Church of England are called

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to live upon incomes which vary between £200 and £400 per annum, with a house of residence attached and a garden of greater or smaller size. It will be agreed that such incomes are insufficient for the year 1919. Whether the conditions of cheap living will ever return in the present generation is a matter upon which opinion is divided, but at any rate it should be conceded that the cost of living will probably begin to fall gradually before many years have passed.

The Central Board of Finance has estimated that at least £300,000 per annum of additional revenue is required at present to deal adequately with this aspect of the problem. This sum will certainly be required annually for the next five or six years. It is as well to remark in passing that the policy of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, pursued consistently for many years, has had this result—namely, that the annual income of the clergy of the Church of England from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners is £1,500,000 greater than it would have been if they had adopted the policy of spending all their money in annual grants for clergy, and not devoting their attention to the permanent augmentation of benefices. To put it in other words, this means that the clergy of previous generations received lower stipends in order that their

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brethren of the present day might benefit. They are benefiting to the extent of one and a half million pounds a year. The clergy of the present generation, some of whom are inclined to gird at the Commissioners, must not forget the debt which they owe in this and other ways to the prudence of the Commissioners.

The 'Official Year Book of the Church of England' shows that the Easter Offerings in the last year for which returns are available amounted to £134,000, and that contributions to the maintenance of the clergy given otherwise were £860,000. There are, roughly, 14,000 incumbents, 8000 assistant clergy, and 5000 lay workers. The contribution of churchpeople on an average is therefore £40 for each worker. To labour the point that the contributions of churchpeople towards the maintenance of the ministry are insufficient seems hyper-superfluous.

That the present time is a difficult one for the raising of additional revenue may be conceded. We have only to consider that the general unrest in the country, and the abnormal conditions of the day, have made many people chary about their contributions to charitable purposes, and that the one-time large contributor to church funds is in the position of being compelled to contribute from an income which is about one-quarter of its pre-war value owing

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to heavy taxation and the depreciation in the purchasing value of money, to be driven to this conclusion.

In considering how remedies for this state of affairs may be found, we are immediately brought face to face with the implicit difficulties of the general state of church life and thought.

(a) It cannot be denied that the forces of religion at this particular time have little influence on the individual. Organised religion does not cover the ground in the sense of attacking every single person. Where it does reach it lacks grip. Many people do not care about it at all. Many clergy are unpopular, and while, on the one hand, there is no man so loved by those with whom he comes in contact as the hard-working parson, on the other hand there are enough idlers to give a bad name to the whole class. An unpopular parson means a general fall in the religious thermometer. Generally speaking, people will buy goods if they possess a value for them and are up to sample. If, however, they have no real use for what the Church offers them, or if the Church's offer is below sample, there is no sale, and religion is a drug on the market.

The first thing, therefore, to which we must set our minds is, to put it bluntly, an energetic development of our evangelical and pastoral work,

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and our task generally. In this matter we have to remember always—and it is an important thing to remember in dealing with the question—that the Church has to minister not merely to the individual, but to the corporation, the borough, the legislature, the university, the trade union, and to all sorts and conditions of men in their combined efforts. Besides bringing the influence of religion to bear upon the individual, it must be made a force in the national life. As this force grows the financial difficulty decreases. When a church is really efficient it evokes co-operation from all sides. But there is a most intimate connexion between these things. Efficiency in the Church includes administrative and financial efficiency, as well as spiritual, and the effort to advance financial efficiency is *ipso facto* a product of spiritual energy which reacts on the spiritual life. Efficiency in the Church cannot be attained without an efficient priesthood. It is one of the tragedies of the time, that when this body of men should be at their very best they are hampered and circumscribed at every turn by the straits to which they have been reduced. Now, all this is written in what may seem a very materialistic and commercial spirit, with little regard to the life-giving Spirit which alone hath the power of breathing upon the withered skin drawn tight

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over the bony skeleton of the Church of England and transforming it into a living body throbbing with life. God forbid that that ideal should ever be less than the whole of our thought and work. But the Church was our Lord's gift to us to use in the power of His Spirit for His divine purposes. No churchman can be content with less than the perfection of the machinery which has been the handmaid of religion for two thousand years.

(b) Amongst the members of the Church of England there does not exist at the present time a sense of the responsibility of membership. In 'Stories of Talbot House,' by the Rev. P. B. Clayton, recently published, there is an anecdote of an Australian commenting upon the churchmanship of one of his fellow-countrymen. He is reported to have said that 'Old Bill, after all, was not very much of a churchman. He just paid his church rate and his missionary quota, and left it at that !' We have as yet hardly begun to reach even this elementary stage in our church life. We badly need a new ideal of membership. A church which is a nebulous mass of unassociated units without a sense of a common responsibility, as some would fain make the Church of England, will be as flabby as the weakest of its constituents.

(c) The work of the Church of England is

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hampered for lack of an executive which can carry out the decisions of those in authority. Both at the centre and in every diocese there is a lack of a permanent organised staff which can obey the directions of the Convocations, or other authorities. It may be that the time has not yet arrived when such steps can be effectively taken, but, with the passage of the Enabling Bill, and the opening up of many channels of administrative reform and potential activity, now closed, the establishment of such executives will become imperative.

These grave difficulties may all be gradually overcome. But the process is to be a long one, and it may be well for the moment to consider less radical evils and their cure. The financial stress, so far as the personal incomes of some of the clergy are concerned, can be alleviated to a certain extent by abatements which might most properly be allowed to them in payments for income tax, by relief in the rate assessment of the tithe rent charge, by removing entirely from their shoulders the burden of dilapidations,¹ and in similar ways. Some of these involve financial outlay by the Church from sources

¹ Since this paragraph was written, the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty have adopted a scheme which will afford great relief to the incumbents of poorly endowed benefices in the payment of their dilapidation expenses.

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of which the existence is not certain, and they give only a modicum of relief. We are forced to the inevitable conclusion that what is required is additional revenue of very large amount.

The pressure may be reckoned in a degree transitory, because the present uniformity of high prices can hardly be permanent. Some suggested remedies, like the amalgamation of parishes, and the pooling of incomes, when subjected to a careful examination, which is given to them elsewhere in this book, prove valueless for our present need. They have their place in a scheme of reorganisation, with proper safeguards, but the effect of the reforms will be felt slowly, and we must act forthwith. A general pooling of incomes is illusory. Nothing is so much needed in these days as an increase in the value of some of what are popularly supposed to be 'good livings.' The benefice of Brighton, for instance, is supposed to be of this description. The income is quoted as £800 a year, with a large house. It is not unfair to say that the vicar of Brighton needs an income of from £1000 to £1500 of his own in order to carry on the difficult work of the Church in that important borough. In its civic life the influence of the Church of England must find expression in the person of the vicar

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of Brighton, and that necessarily entails an obligation of maintaining a position without which such influence cannot be exerted. He must know intimately the leaders of the public life of the town, and is called upon for expenditure in a thousand and one ways which only those who have held such office can fully understand. The pooling solution would reduce this income to £280, and make the position worse. In applying remedies of this kind it is above all necessary to maintain an elasticity of parochial organisation which shall give opportunity for all sorts and conditions of men to exercise their ministry in the community. We must never, for example, crush out the student. We must not crush out the country-bred parson, such as the man whom the writer has in mind, who is occupied all hours of every day in ministering to his 800 people. He knows them all intimately, every one of them, and his influence over them is unbounded. He carries out a system of intensive culture, which produces a crop on every inch of his little garden. There is room for work of this sort still, in spite of the need for training men to use tractors over wide areas of soul-sown fields. It is a tactical mistake to try to standardise the type of busy parson, constantly engaged in committee work and other engagements of a public character, with little

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time for the representment of the spiritual truths upon which action must always be based, or the personal dealings with souls which alone produces the fairest harvest.

The variations in size of the parishes, and the elasticity of administration which governs the parochial system of the Church of England, have values which must be duly estimated before action is taken. It is only too easy to exaggerate particular examples and build arrangements upon them. The Church Assembly may find here an immediate subject for inquiry, which must be prolonged and exhaustive. Many of our most eager reformers are men of the town, who understand only imperfectly the country problems. It must not be forgotten that the towns are nearly always understaffed, and that the Church is not weakest in the country districts. It is, no doubt, desirable to increase the staff of the towns, but too great a decrease of the country staff is not thereby made desirable.

The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have already certain powers for the amalgamation of adjacent livings. Steps should be taken to make such powers compulsory, when the consent of the bishop of the diocese or the archbishop of the province has been obtained. Since the extinction of vested interests may be regarded in itself as an augmentation of the

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value of the benefice, the provision of the necessary funds to give compensation in cases of hardship or financial loss might be safely left to the Commissioners. It might be necessary hereafter to draw upon the Central Church Fund for such purposes.

Compulsion is necessary, because in practice it is found that benefices in public patronage are the most difficult of all to amalgamate. Bishops and capitular bodies are often particularly jealous of any interference with their rights of patronage, and other corporations and trusts are more obstructive still.

I may be asked what steps the Central Board of Finance propose to take in a matter of such importance to the general life of the Church as the poverty of the clergy. The Central Board is a body with its history mainly before it, and it represents the culmination of the attempt to establish financial and administrative bodies to deal in a comprehensive and coherent manner with the problems of our corporate church life. The Central Board must obviously take the lead in accomplishing a revolution, for little short of that is required. If it has no policy it stands condemned.

It must be quite clearly understood from the very beginning that the action of the Central Board is intimately bound up with that taken

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by Diocesan Boards, and, what is also most important, with the policy and plans of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

Now, the Diocesan Boards have had this matter in hand for some years. In most dioceses attempts have been made to raise the income of every benefice to a fixed minimum, which has usually been £200. Subject to the difficulties which arise through the rights of private property which exist in advowsons, and with the help of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners under their well-known scheme, much progress has been made in the permanent augmentation of benefices, as distinct from annual grants to stipends. A fine example of what can be done in this way is shown by Carlisle, where a Laymen's Committee have brought every benefice up to the permanent value of £200 per annum, and are now proposing to advance still further. The Bishop of Liverpool, through the munificence of the laymen of his diocese, has been able to provide a stipend of £275 per annum and a house for every beneficed clergyman in his diocese. In the diocese of Chichester the minimum for parishes with a population of 1000 and upwards is £225 per annum. These results have been attained by careful organisation and administration spread over several years.

The method of co-operation between the

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Central Board and the Diocesan Boards, so far as administration is concerned, is in many respects analogous to that between the diocese and the parish. The large poor parish seeks and obtains diocesan help ; other parishes are more or less independent. The large poor diocese, which cannot hope to offer a living wage, must receive help from the Central Board, and other dioceses, *pari passu*, as they need it. The moneys of the Central Board must be sent in block sums to the Diocesan Boards, by whom they will be administered. The Central Board, the Diocesan Board, and the incumbent and churchwardens, represent three stages in the finance of the Church corresponding roughly to the Imperial Government, the County Council, and the Parish Council. Their functions are not similar in all respects, but the system is sound and can be made to work smoothly. What is at the root of our difficulties is an insufficient revenue. The real reform lies in the direction of establishing organisation to obtain the additional sum required.

Thus the Central Board of Finance stands for the setting up of such organisation for the collection of money. Various schemes have been propounded from time to time which are in themselves admirable, such as the Free-Will Offering scheme, the Duplex Envelope, and the

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like, but no general organised effort has yet been made. The Central Board advocates the appointment in every parish or group of parishes of a finance officer for the collection of funds for diocesan and central needs. In large parishes this finance officer should be supported by a number of assistants. In small country parishes one such officer would be sufficient for two or three combined. The work must be done by volunteers, and there are many such volunteers available. Steady pressure should be brought to bear by the Central Board and the Diocesan Boards until such finance officers have been appointed in respect of every one of the 14,000 parishes of England. There will then be in every area a person who, under the direction of the incumbent, is responsible to the Diocesan Board of Finance for bringing home to every church member his responsibility for the general finance of the Church. If and when statutory Parochial Church Councils are appointed, the work of such officer may be facilitated, and steps will be necessary to bring his work into touch with the general work of the Council. It is to be noted that the duties and responsibilities of this officer do not infringe upon the rights of the incumbent and churchwardens in any sense. It will be his duty to collect from every church member his quota towards the

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general work of the Church of England. It is suggested that this sum should be remitted to the Secretary of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and that the allocations for diocesan purposes and for central purposes should be made on as simple a system as possible.

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that our difficulties are mainly due to lack of income, and that our lack of income is due to lack of organisation. To say that it is due to lack of generosity on the part of churchpeople is simply to offer a gratuitous insult to those who are only too ready to respond to their responsibilities when they understand them and are given the opportunity of responding to them.

The further important question as to the provision of satisfactory ordination candidates arises immediately from the considerations which we have already set forth. The War had a serious effect upon this question, which had been debated by thinkers with much anxiety in the years preceding.

Two conditions govern the situation. The intellectual standard of the country was rising as its educational system developed, and if the clergy were to maintain an intellectual superiority to the general run of the people whom it was their duty to instruct and inspire, it was necessary that their own intellectual and educational

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standards should rise also. The bishops had determined upon demanding from all candidates for ordination the equivalent of a degree at a recognised University in the year 1921, and it was hoped that the raising of the standard would produce the desired results.

The second condition was the decline in the number of those who offered themselves for ordination. The population was rapidly increasing, spheres of work and of influence were opening out on all hands, but the supply was unequal to the demand. Amongst the causes for this falling-off must inevitably be set the financial question with which this chapter deals. That the question is mainly financial is shown by the fact that at colleges like Mirfield or Kelham, where an effort is made to provide a satisfactory education for ordinands without cost to themselves until the time of their ordination, it is calculated that some hundreds of men of average ability are rejected in the course of every twelve months. This shows that the sense of vocation is not lost, that men knowing that they cannot hope for large incomes are yet willing to devote themselves to the cause of the Church. It indicates, however, that the supply of candidates from the more well-to-do classes is drying up. Parents are unwilling to allow their sons, however strong their sense of vocation

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may be, to devote themselves to a life in which the parents think that the son must inevitably awaken later on to the hard fact that he must live all his life in a state of comparative poverty, without prospect of marriage with a woman of his own class.

The War has affected the situation in an unexpected way. While for three or four years it dried up almost entirely the stream of applicants for Holy Orders, it made at the same time the call so insistent in the hearts of others that they were quite unable to refuse any longer to hear it. Hence arose the great movement known as the Service Candidates' Movement, which has elicited a number of men of great capacity and ability for the work of the Church.

The *bouleversement* has made it difficult to estimate what the result of the forces under discussion would have been in normal times. It is sufficiently clear that the situation would have gradually got worse. In any case, it must get worse in the future unless immediate steps are taken to deal in a comprehensive way with the extraordinary situation. It would be folly to ignore the necessities of the Church of 1930, and to cut down the number of ordinands to any large extent in the immediate future would be to imperil the capacity of the Church of England to perform her mission, which would

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have a greater moral effect on the history of the country than even the present apparent incapacity of churchpeople to support their clergy.

What is wanted is really a system of bursaries which may be held by men of seventeen or eighteen, and take them to an institution, which we may call 'the Second Knutsford.' The spirit, the atmosphere, the organisation, and the tradition of that amazing institution should be continued. It should be made the nursery for the Universities and Theological Colleges. A short stay in it would provide the testing period, when a man's spiritual and intellectual capacity could be gauged. The bursaries suggested should be managed very much as the Rhodes Scholarships. A percentage of marks should be awarded for excellence in physical attainments as well as in mental and social. There can be little doubt that a supply of admirable candidates could be provided in this way. Each of them should be required on ordination to insure in the official Church Pensions Scheme, which we may hope to see completed before many months have passed, and each should be assured a satisfactory economic wage.

Thus we return to the *fons et origo* of the whole matter—the need for the provision of additional revenue for the Church of England.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Two additional statements of income and expenditure may be instructive. They are specimens chosen out of a number of similar ones that have reached the Editor.

1. The family consists of the vicar, his wife, and two daughters.

Income

From Ecclesiastical Commissioners	. £278
Fees	40
Ecclesiastical Commissioners —	
special war bonus	20
	—
	£338

Expenditure

Household (food and necessaries, laundry, &c.)	£128
Personal (clothing, subscriptions, tram fares, and holidays)	80
Insurance	25
Rates and taxes	18
Wages	26
Education	25
Lighting (oil)	5
War bonus (E.C.) given to Curate's Fund	20
Balance	11
	—
	£338

CLERICAL INCOMES

In this case coals are supplied free, and one child's education is paid for.

2. Family : Father, mother, four children (ages from fourteen to twenty), and one day girl.

Income

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Diocesan Society	80	0	0			
Commissioners (including bonus)	64	0	0			
Queen Victoria C.F.	10	0	0			
Fees	8	0	0			
	<hr/>			162	0	0
Educational grant from Trustees		65	0	0		
Earnings of apprentice son and eldest daughter		104	0	0		
Deficit		5	1	1		
	<hr/>			<hr/>	£336	1
					1	1

Expenditure

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Rent and rates	30	0	0			
Gas	3	10	0			
	<hr/>			33	10	0
Schooling—						
Reduced fees, two children	22	2	0			
Books	3	10	0			
Music—tuition	4	0	0			
	<hr/>			29	12	0
Travelling expenses—						
Passes for year	14	11	0			
Approximate expenditure at ordinary rates for parents.	3	13	0			
	<hr/>			18	4	0

APPENDICES

Insurance	£	6	8	9
Doctor and dentist	3	11	0	
Upkeep of cycle for parish work	2	0	0	
Clothing for six people, about	15	0	0	
				£26 19 9
Food for seven people—				
52 weeks at £3 18s. 8d. per week—about 11s. 3d. per head per week. Meat, &c., 9 lb. to 10 lb., 17s. ; potatoes, 2 stones, 4s. ; bread, 7s. ; greengrocery, 6s. ; milk, 4s. 8d. ; groceries, 40s.	204	10	8	
Wages of day girl at 6s. per week	15	12	0	
Church collections, £4 6s. 8d. ; missionary donations, 15s. ; donations to other chari- ties, 15s. ; Free Will Offering for six at 6d. per month	7	12	8	
				£336 1 1

In this case the only holiday is a locum-tenancy, paid for at the usual rate.

APPENDIX II

THE following series of resolutions represents a scheme recently adopted in an industrial diocese, and is reprinted from the *Diocesan Gazette* :—

A.—Sustentation

1. That a Sustentation Fund be inaugurated to meet the present cost of living with a view to raising, if possible, the incomes of all incumbents in receipt of less than £400 per annum from all sources.

CLERICAL INCOMES

All benefices with an income under that amount to be considered, and the amount of increase in each case to be determined in accordance with the result of the Special Appeal.

The proportion of contribution between Central and Diocesan Grants on the one hand, and the Parochial Contribution on the other, to be fixed in each case by a representative Apportionment Committee.

The estimated cost would be as follows :—

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------|
| (a) | To raise all benefices to £350, | £8,000 per annum |
| (b) | " " | £375, £11,000 " |
| (c) | " " | £400, £15,000 " |

2. That, wherever possible, the parishes should relieve the incumbents of some of the responsibility of such standing charges as insurance and dilapidations of vicarage houses, &c.

3. That the standard of payment suggested for assistant curates by the Board of Finance (published in the July number, 1918, of the *Gazette*) be increased by 20 per cent.

The stipends to be offered to assistant curates would thus be—

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (a) | Not less than £192 for a man in Deacon's Orders. |
| (b) | Not less than £204 for a man in Priest's Orders ; and |
| (c) | After five years in Holy Orders and proved service not less than £240. |

Married assistant curates with families should have special consideration in these difficult times.

It is hoped that the Diocesan Board of Finance may

APPENDICES

be able to render the necessary assistance to parishes which desire to adopt this standard of payment and are unable to do so without help.

B.—Permanent Augmentation

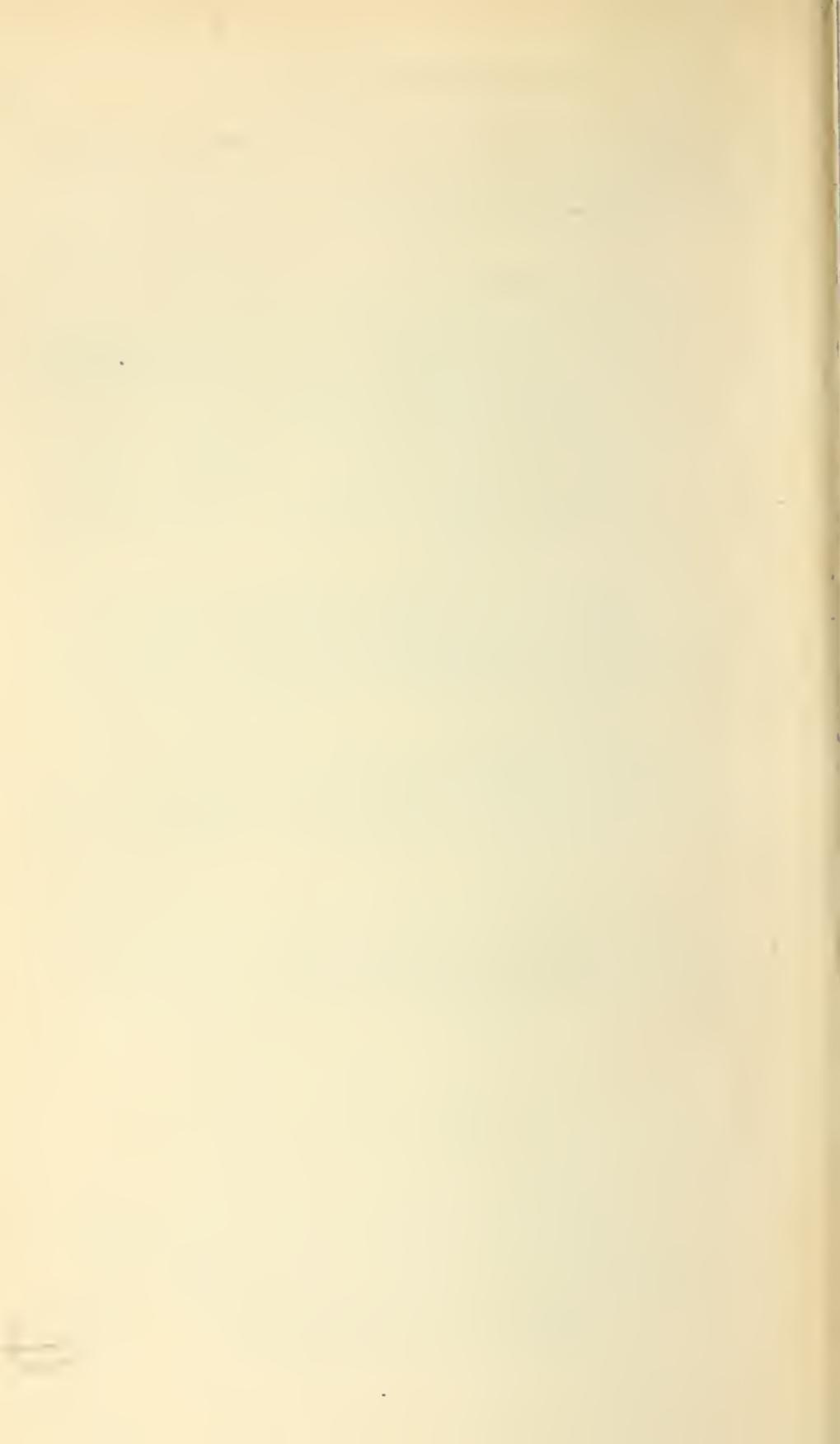
4. That an Augmentation Fund should be raised with a view to the permanent increase of benefices in the diocese to at least £325 per annum.

The estimated amount of capital required, assuming that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners should be able to meet the sums offered with an equivalent amount, would be £64,500.

It is suggested that this sum should be spread over a period of years, and that, through the combined effort of Central and Diocesan funds and the parishes concerned, the benefices would be gradually augmented to a minimum of £325.

Fourteen parishes in the diocese are making an effort this year permanently to augment their benefices, and diocesan assistance has been voted to the amount of £1700.

It is proposed to devote the Diocesan Special Fund to the above objects, and to allow parishes and subscribers to allocate their gifts, if so desired, to any particular parish.



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