

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

THE SUPPLY OF CLERGY.

THE Bishop of Ontario informed the synod that he could find stations for twelve more clergy. This is cheering as a sign of growth, but lamentable as a proof that the supply of shepherds falls so far below the needs of the flock. Demand, says political economy, creates supply. The law is not absolute, there are forces by which it is hindered, often rendered indeed of none effect. There was a demand for centuries of a deliverer, the cry was met, but the hour of the Incarnation was that fixed in the eternal counsels of God. History and nature have a thousand illustrations of the failure of this law to operate, owing to unfavorable conditions. The demand for power in the young is a passion, but it seldom comes until maturer life. The public life of a nation often calls for a leader in vain. There is now a demand for men to occupy the higher positions of the bar and the bench, but the supply is not even in sight. How universal is the cry for thoroughly skilled workmen, yet how few can be found! Great wars are said to breed great generals, but great wars in our day have been fought under mediocrities. The Church demands in all times episcopal rulers specially gifted for their Apostolic office, but the supply is often lamentably below the demand. So too of every parish, so too of the outside world, the call for pastors, for missionaries, for laymen, is an exceeding loud and bitter cry of want—the harvest is plenteous but the laborers few.

Gray tells us of Cromwells and Hampdens living and dying unknown. Another poet asks who shall give *qualities* to men in whom the *germs* are not inborn? He wisely adds, "Original genius in discovery is sown sparingly, but to collect and arrange, to boil and roast what others have found, so that it becomes palatable and nutritious food, plenty of people are equal who in such work lead useful lives." The Church in Canada presents just now a humiliating spectacle in its dearth of both classes of clergy—those adapted by gifts and experience for the *highest functions*, those also who are willing to give the *more ordinary powers* of mind and of grace to that sacred vocation which is not unduly exalted when described as "the highest calling on earth." We have no wish to depreciate our clergy, that task of shame we leave to those who are so meanly ungenerous and so ignorantly bigoted as to judge men by a party Shibboleth. But granting all that may be said as to the fitness of certain clergy for the responsibilities of the episcopate, how comes it to pass that a diocese has for some time been without a bishop? Why should Canadians have first selected a ruler in England, then, failing him, one in America, and failing him have resigned their electoral duty into the hands of the Primate? Glad and proud should we have been had the Church in Canada won either of these distinguished divines, honored and blessed would have been such an acquisition of

service. Still we lament the absence of confidence shown in our Dominion clergy which led to the appeal to England. Are not our unhappy, our disgraceful divisions responsible? We in western Canada cannot forget that an eastern diocese sent us an hireling agitator to whom strife and slander are meat and drink, whose evil work will curse the Church for generations. Bishops are not bred in the same soil as such an Apollyon. We in the west would be delighted to return good for evil by sending, as we could, a chief pastor for the see of the *Canterbury of Canada*.

Will not the passing over of all our clergy disastrously affect the supply of pastors for the Church in Canada? We believe that it will, we know that it already has produced an evil effect in that direction. Men are not angels, yet, we are still in the flesh; only fools of a hypocritical type pretend to be unaffected by the things of time and sense. Young men especially, with all their chivalry, are touched and moved by the nobler ambitions that stir the human soul. Great powers even before full realisation cast not their shadows, but their *yearnings*, into the future. Great dignities, wide spheres, commanding influences, seen ahead as possible achievements to crown a life of such study and such devotion as befits the clerical calling, are irresistible forces in determining the vocation of those whose talents and graces the Church demands. No candidate for sacred Orders ever sought them to become a Bishop. But tens of thousands of our most learned and most exemplary clergy have been stimulated in early student days to severe application, by the knowledge that should Providence call them to high honour in the Church, it will be because to spiritual fitness they have added such mental preparation as will enable them to fill the position to which they are called worthily and well. Every French soldier is a hero because it is said that every knapsack contains a Marshall's baton. All run in the race but one winneth the prize, but there would be no running were there no prize in view! We trust, then, that the Primate will send us a Bishop for Nova Scotia from the ranks of the Canadian clergy, as we regard it as certain to have a disastrous influence upon the supply of clergy in the future if an impression is given that clerical service in the Dominion is a disqualification for the highest honours the Church can bestow.

But upon the supply of clergy another cause is interfering between supply and demand. The congregations of our people are becoming more and more specialized by party strife. The glorious freedom of the Church and of Churchmen is becoming less and less realized and enjoyed. The idea of "Common Prayer" is vanishing, the love of mingling with "the whole family of God" is giving way to an intensely narrow preference for joining only in worship and work with persons of our own party stripe. Clergy are wanted who are not pastors of the flock, but representatives of a faction. The English clergy have long had a reputation for personal independence which has developed the loftiest type of divine in Christen-

dom. We in Canada seem bent on creating a meaner class of clergy than even that of the sects. They at least are true to a low ideal, ours will be false to a high one. A man who fills a small sphere is not dishonored thereby, but he who enters a large sphere and confines himself to a tiny section is self-condemned as unfit for his duties. Were there to be a law school started to prepare students for the service of red-haired clients and them only, and this school gave barristers' rank to such on the cheapest terms, it would degrade the legal profession and stop the supply of the higher class of lawyers. So in the Church, we are degrading the clergy, degrading the clerical order, by training men to minister only to special congregations and bribing them to so scandalous a course by offering pecuniary inducement to accept a delusive apology for ministerial education. No true churchman could demean himself by submitting to the cramping discipline of a college founded to supply clergy pledged to party views. The very aim of such a college is an attack upon the intellectual independence of our clergy, its intent is to make them not loyal to the Church but the obedient and slavish echoes of the party trumpeter. A Bishop who in any way sanctions such a work is worthy of being unfrocked, he is a traitor to the best interests, the noblest traditions and wisest instincts of the Catholic Church of England. There are others who have claims to be heard besides the faction who live by or find power in a party divinity school. These are the fathers and mothers of sons whom they are giving to the Church. Think you, my Lord Bishops, that any clear-headed parent will allow his son to take a costly collegiate course as a preparation for the ministry, when he knows that his son's whole life work will be hampered and his career blocked by a class of clergy who, although illiterate, have a party at their back to push them on? Supply of clergy indeed! The supply is being dried up at its richest source—the homes of Churchmen! They see men engaged in secular work, going constantly to dissenting meetings, giving no sign of being earnest Churchmen, who without any preparation pass in all their rawness from a store to a divinity college, and in a few months are thrust by party wire pullers into a rectory. Is that the way to provide a supply of clergy suited to the office of priest in the Church of England? Literates, we well know, who are doing a noble work, but when laymen they were Churchmen to the core, they were not dissenters at heart, nor were not are they clay in the hands of the party potter! Is then such a policy as we speak of likely to inspire gifted youths or young men with a desire to serve the Church by consecrating scholarship and earnest fidelity to her principles, to the ministry? Such an institution may seem to be supplying clergy, but its policy acts like a zero frost on the richest fountains of Church life, so that for every one it passes into Orders, wretchedly equipped in learning and even worse in principles, it gives pause to those higher intelligences who shrink from a career in which the influence of their