

and adverse criticism from portions of the hierarchy than did his discussion and advocacy of fixed Canon Law for the United States. In advocating the parochial, Canonical status of the inferior clergy for our country, McMaster ran counter to the views of many of the prelates. It was a very grave discussion. Had the time come when the United States, with its millions of Catholics and numerous well equipped dioceses, could be considered no longer a mere missionary country, necessarily to be continued to be favored with the most sweeping dispensations and extensive privileges; a country, where its bishops hitherto enjoyed practically almost papal "Faculties" and absolute power without reclaim, over the inferior clergy who had no fixed tenure by law whatever? The privileges were all on one side.

McMaster opened up the question, discussed, advocated and supported the Canonical rights to be enjoyed by the inferior clergy. The discussion went on for months. It culminated in action. The Plenary Council of Baltimore wisely, we will add, divinely, provided a Canon Law to fit the condition of Catholicity in the United States. But the adaptation of the general Canon Law of the Catholic Church would have been too cumbersome legislation for our American Catholic Church passing out of a missionary to a fixed status. Out of the general Canon Law, all the Canons were framed, necessary to serve the progress, with none to retard the rapid development of Catholicity in the United States. Somewhat of a contentious spirit among a few of the inferior clergy naturally grew out of the agitation by the *Freeman's Journal* of the adopting fixed Canon Law in this country. The prelates by this discussion found their established almost unlimited Faculties from the Holy See, and privileges and breadth of action, confronted and objected to, especially in the sole appointment and arbitrary removal of priests, and in the selection of episcopal candidates, entirely at their choice.

Now, that McMaster has gone from our midst, and those questions of legislation have been acted on, we may be pardoned for the declaration that in his day, the time really came to open up the discussion of some (if not the whole) Canon Law for the Church in the United States.

David could not walk in the cumbersome army of the king.

Our young Church in the United States may not put on the complete Canon Law of the ancient Church in general, that has grown old in battle with ages of error. Our young Catholicity would be loaded down. It had to have a vesture to suit its age, environment and necessities.

The Canon Law of the Church in general has grown out of periods of time with their circumstances, wants and claims. Our American Catholicity is yet in its youth, and time must make for it Canon Law, called forth by exigency and circumstance. Our youthful Catholicity cannot walk in the full armor, wherewith two thousand years of conflict hath clothed the invincible champion of the Gospel, the Church of Christ. Nor does the Church insist that our Catholicity put it on. Some souls more zealous than wise, who do not comprehend the genius of our free Republic, have advocated to be applied to our American Catholicity, an ecclesiasticism as foreign to it, as it is baneful to the spread of the same faith and its charity in our midst.

McMaster advocated a good thing in this Canon Law discussion. By it, he contended for a more Canonical legislation of church affairs, and an approach from exemption and dispensation, nearer to the fixed discipline of the Catholic Church in general.

That the *Freeman's Journal's* discussion on Canon Law created obstinate party men, McMaster would be the first to deplore. It is objected that the *Freeman's Journal* engendered and fostered an antagonism, a spirit of opposition, if not of insubordination in clerical ranks, by the championing a fixed Canon Law for Catholicity in the United States.

It is true that the *Freeman's Journal* heralded those questions, especially, of clerical rights in parishes and of episcopal nominations, with all its fearless and bold spirit. It is also true that the *Freeman* in this heated discussion became an organ of distrust to many of the prelates, and an unwelcome visitor to some episcopal residences. But now, at this date, no prelate or priest finds fault with the general course of the *Freeman's Journal* for the advocacy and support of the latter grave questions. They were legitimate questions of discussion. They were strongly, perhaps vehemently,