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A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

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to cope with the spiritual needs of the multitudes, wherever they were most densely congregated.

Time would fail me to tell of the numberless cases in which the Society has been able to lend a helping hand to the cause of Temperance, the sanctity of the Lord's Day, and the holding of special missions in parishes.

Suffice it to say that there is no present indication that the Society is no longer needed because its work is done.

On the contrary, an ever-widening field of usefulness is opening out before us, and we have only to step in and to occupy the ground now lying fallow.

May God give us grace to recognise and seize the opportunities which He Himself provides.

As we see around us so many tokens that the time is short, and as we realize that our redemption draweth nigh, let us once more, as fellow-workers with God, renew our resolution that by His grace we will be found waiting and watching, and hastening our Lord's return.

RICHARD G. FOWELL.



ART. III.—THE BENEFICES BILL OF 1897.

IT is a wholesome sign of the revived and increasing activity of the Church of England, that schemes for reform are both abundantly propounded and receive on all hands careful attention. Time was when it was otherwise. Any thought of change or suggestion of improvement was either regarded as revolutionary, and therefore dangerous, or as an unwelcome disturber of somnolent indifference.

In that, as in many other things, we may say, *Tempora mutantur*. Most ecclesiastical periodicals of the day have occasionally had able articles on the subject, written by men whose very name is a guarantee for sober as well as able treatment of the subject they tackle. This magazine has been no exception.

The projected schemes of reform wisely refrain from the formularies of the Church; they address themselves more to its discipline, its machinery and temporal interests. Hence have arisen the insistence of the increase of the Episcopate, the desire for a reformed convocation, the amalgamation, occasionally at least, of the two Provinces, and now a society has been floated with extensive schemes for Church Reform, calling itself the Church Reform League. This league, instead of being scouted and denounced, as would have been the case in

the memory of some of us, has received very great encouragement, even from members of the Episcopal Bench. One prelate, the Archbishop of York, has shown his earnestness for reform by a willingness to sacrifice one-fifth of his income for one scheme alone. These, it may be repeated, are wholesome signs, and should gladden the hearts of English Churchmen.

Perhaps there is no point on which Churchmen are more unanimous than the reform of Church patronage, especially as regards the unhallowed traffic in livings. Other points of reform receive partial support, but it may be safely said that on this point Churchmen are of one heart and one soul. That a pastor should be appointed to a parish, not because he has earned an excellent reputation as a minister of the Church of God, not because he is of blameless life and of tried ability, but simply because he can pay so much money down or can get it paid for him, shocks, and has long shocked, the religious instincts of mankind, excepting those whose moral judgment is warped by vested interests in the traffic.

Perhaps the Church of England has been more assailed on account of the continuance of this abuse than on any other faults, real or supposed. If a Liberationist aims an onslaught on "The Establishment" either by speech or pamphlet, his paragraphs are filled with descriptions of unseemly scenes at such sales when public, or with the glowing advertisements of the negotiating agents. It is of a verity a sickening literature; "pity 'tis 'tis true." Nonconformist pulpits have portrayed these practices as characteristic of "a State Church," and Roman Catholic preachers both at home and abroad have held them up as specimens of the worldly degeneracy resulting from Protestantism.

This universal reprobation has not been solely external. Archbishop Thomson never failed to express his condemnation, whether addressing his own diocese at his conferences, or when seeking the aid of legislation from the peers of the realm. Archbishop Magee, with that impassioned eloquence which marked his public utterances, made the exposure still more painful and harrowing to the religious sense of the nation. When, then, a Bill was brought into the House of Commons, which was called "The Benefices Bill," and which was designed in some measure to mitigate the crying evil, Churchmen hailed it with acclamation. The framers trod, indeed, very gingerly, and were very moderate in their proposals. But it was a step in the right direction; it was a public admission of an ugly spot, and the simple admission was something gained.

Alas for the vanity of human wishes! The promoters of

the Bill were unable to carry it to a successful issue, and the hopes of English Churchmen were blighted.

It is not difficult to account for the defeat of the movement thus far. It was a first attempt, and there never was a reform, however salutary in its scope and general in demand, that was carried without opposition on its first proposal. Every institution has some vested interests, and in the benefices of the Church of England the vested interests are very strong. It is calculated that at least 6,000 benefices are in private patronage; it is an admitted fact that the presentation to these by purchase is lamentably on the increase; depressed incomes and other causes are making patrons mercenary who would otherwise have scorned it. Thus their opposition is intelligible. A few arguments also are brought forward in their favour, though not of any great value if tested.

It is said, for instance, that such a measure takes away private patronage. That is not the case, nor is it ever intended. Private patronage, if rightly used, is a great blessing to the Church, as the owner of an estate is most likely to present an incumbent who will be acceptable to himself and his neighbours.

The object of the reformers is not to take away his right, but to prevent his abusing it. When he shows no sense of conscientiousness himself the law would rightly step in, as it does in multitudes of other cases, such as the sale of poisons, gunpowder, explosives; the liberty of the subject is interfered with for the common weal. The common weal demands that patronage should be regarded as a trust, implying responsibility in the bestower, and not a bit of property to be bought and sold.

It is also alleged that the loser of such a vested interest is entitled to *compensation*; that pretext is more plausible than real. Were the patronage taken away *absolutely*, the demand for compensation would be legitimate; but no one seeks to take it away, but to control it; the holders of the livings will still preserve their holding undisturbed. It may be illustrated by a somewhat parallel case. Some eighty years ago, Wilberforce and Clarkson roused the mind of England against the iniquities of the slave trade. Like all other projected reforms, the proposed abolition of the traffic encountered a strenuous opposition from the vested interests, and Thomas Clarkson was told that if he went to Liverpool he would find a watery grave in the Mersey. But the philanthropists persevered with indomitable energy; no midway measures would satisfy, such as emancipation after a certain term of years, or the prohibition of future sales; they insisted on a measure granting unconditional and immediate emancipa-

tion. It was then pointed out that such an immediate abolition meant certain ruin to the planters. The slaves numbered 800,000; their pecuniary value was enormous; it was certain that no free labour would be available in their place; what was to become of the estates? Certainly the owners ought to have compensation for the immediate abstraction of their all. The case was clear; they demanded compensation, and they got it. The philanthropy of England was at fever heat; £20,000,000 were voted for the compensation, and, in 1834, 800,000 slaves were at once emancipated.

No reformer is now asking for the holder of a purchased living to vacate it; he holds what he has purchased, but the money-seeking *patron's* claim for compensation, being an abuse of a trust, will not hold.

It may be remarked, finally, that the opposition to the Benefices Bill was materially aided by the sworn enemies of the Church. There is a section of the House of Commons animated by intolerant hatred of the Church of England; these dread the removal of any abuse, lest it should weaken their case for her extermination. In the discussion on the Criminous Clerks Bill this section roused the indignation of Mr. Gladstone himself; more recently these same men have aided in the defeat of the Benefices Bill.

But Church reformers are thoroughly in earnest, and a new measure bearing the same name as that of last year is to occupy the attention of the House of Commons, if its supporters can get a hearing. It bears on its back the name of men whom every English Churchman is delighted to honour, and if it is disappointing to Churchmen at large, it may be safely considered as the elaboration not of choice but of grim compulsion.

The new Bill omits the very reform about which Churchmen have been half a century most anxious, the abolition of the traffic in livings. Scared by the opposition, the promoters have produced the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet expunged. Such as it is the Bill demands attention.

The first part is intended to give the Bishops increased power as to the institution of presentees, with a view to the rejection of unworthy applicants. On paper the emendation appears admirable, and deserves the approbation which it has already received. In practice the result will be found otherwise. As the system of presentation is to remain by this Bill untouched, there will still be hundreds of presentees who will regard the benefice purchased as a *bona fide property*. A Bishop's hesitation to institute will be regarded as an interference with the "rights of property," and that class of men, not being troubled with high views of their sacred

profession, much less of a Bishop's responsibility, will to a certainty stand upon their rights, resist the Bishop and demand institution. Thus the Bishop will be involved in expensive and protracted litigation; for the malcontent if defeated in one court will appeal to another. That this is not a mere empty conjecture may be seen from past experience. A former Bishop of Exeter (Philpotts) refused to institute to a benefice a nominee, as, in the Bishop's judgment, corroborated in that case by general opinion, unfit for the sacred office. The nominee sued the Bishop at law, and the judges decided against the Bishop, as interfering with the "rights of property." The Bishop had no alternative but to institute. More recently an incumbent deprived of his benefice under the "Criminous Clerks Act," prosecuted the depriving Bishop, and obtained a verdict quashing the deprivation. At this very moment the Archbishop of York is threatened with an action by a "clerk," deprived of his benefice under the provisions of the same Act. It may be therefore safely predicted that if the first part of this Bill should ever become law, it will be a fruitful source of litigation. A Bishop may feel a firm conviction that a nominee is unfit for the post desired, and perhaps most clergymen would endorse his impression; but to put his objections in legal form so as to gain the ear of a court of law would be a difficult matter. From a strong sense of duty a Bishop under the proposed Act may still determine to refuse, but when he has been resisted, prosecuted, and defeated in a lawsuit costing hundreds of pounds, he will not be eager to repeat the process. It may therefore be safely predicted that after two or three experiments, the first part of the proposed Bill would become practically a dead letter.

Parts two and three have reference to such clergy as are negligent in the duties of their sacred office, or are incapacitated by advancing years or impaired health from showing the energy that marked their prime. The details of both parts are elaborately worked out, the care bestowed thereon showing that the promoters at least of the measure, if no one else, conceive that they are attacking an evil alike rampant and pernicious. But if such be their conviction, why do they aim their shafts at the inferior clergy alone? Is it nothing that dignitaries should be inefficient? or, if the energetic discharge of their duties is as essential to the welfare of the Church of Christ as that of the operative clergy, why does this Bill connive at and so perpetuate their inefficiency? A dean may be absent from his deanery for months in the year, sometimes for the greater part of the twelve—such has been the case; or he may be resident in his deanery, but be

utterly incapable of "discharging the usual functions of a cathedral dean" (the language in which one of them described his office), and yet his position is unassailable. There may be murmurs loud and deep, as there always is at neglected duties, but this Bill suggests no commission, and the dignitary may smile at the murmurs, knowing his impregnable position. So a prelate may be absent from his diocese for months, as was often the case with the Irish bishops, or he may hold on to his office when his incapacity is painfully evident. Not so many years ago a northern prelate officiated at confirmations in a state of health painfully expressed on his countenance. He reduced the whole service to forty minutes. That prelate could have retired on £1,200 a year under the Resignation Act, but it was generally stated and believed that his lordship had insured his life to such an amount that the undivided income of the see was essential to him. And yet this Bill would in no way touch that abuse: the divinity that hedges a king protects the prelate, and the dean, and the canon.

Nor can it be said that such cases as are referred to above are quite exceptional. They are less exceptional in proportion than those of the inferior clergy whose eviction is contemplated by this measure. This Bill, therefore, is open to that stigma so opprobrious in the eyes of Englishmen, of making one law for the rich and another for the poor. That stigma will insure its rejection.

The title of this article is "On the Benefices Bill *so called*." These last words are appended because in its present mutilated form the title of the Bill is misleading. The Bill has nothing to do with benefices. As the first part of the present measure, if passed, would most probably remain a dead letter, this Bill might be more appropriately styled "A Bill for the Eviction of Veteran Poor Clergy."

Sir Isaac Newton, when complimented on his wonderful discoveries in science, replied that he felt like a little child picking up a few pebbles by the sea-shore while the great ocean of truth lay before him unapproached. The estimable reformers who are propounding this measure, dismayed by the opposition experienced, are contenting themselves with a few pebbles, small changes affecting very few, and leaving untouched the black spot on the Church of England—that 2,000 of her benefices are made a matter of merchandise. Their process should have been reversed: the other parts of their original Bill should have been dropped, and Part I. pressed with dogged pertinacity. The hearts of Englishmen would have been with them; men would have been full of

admiration at the sturdy courage the reformers displayed, protesting ever, like the Roman senator in every speech, "Censeo tamen delenda est Carthago."

RICHARD W. HILEY.



ART. IV.—WHAT CONSTITUTES A SUCCESSFUL MINISTRY?

IT is with no affected diffidence that I attempt to answer a question so vitally important and so deeply interesting to every faithful minister of Christ. I can only hope that the shortcomings of my own remarks may be fully supplied by the words of those speakers who may follow me.

What do we in general understand by success? Is it not the attainment of the object towards which our efforts have been directed? A man of business is successful if he realizes large profits, a statesman if his measures command the confidence of his supporters and result in adding to the prosperity of the country. Or, coming down to everyday life, a farmer meets with success if his diligence in cultivating his land, sowing his seeds at the fitting opportunity, and duly tending the advancing growth, result, through a favouring season, in his securing a plentiful harvest and obtaining a remunerative price for his grain. A fisherman meets with success if his efforts in throwing his line or casting his net result in an abundant take of fish.

In all these cases the degree of success depends largely on the fitness of the means used and the diligence with which they are applied; but it also depends in varying degree on causes which lie altogether beyond human control; so that, speaking generally of human affairs, we may say that in order to success (1) the object in view must in itself be an attainable one, and there must be sufficient warrant for believing success to be possible in our own case; (2) the right means must be employed in the right way; (3) external conditions must be favourable.

It is the same in spiritual things, and more particularly in respect of our present subject—the work of the Christian ministry. The object aimed at must be one which we have a reasonable prospect of attaining, (2) the right means must be employed in the right way, (3) external conditions must be favourable. But I may add that whilst in human affairs man often works for self, for the attainment of his own ends and object, the Christian minister has to aim at the object set before him by his Lord and Heavenly Master.