

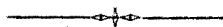
him. John, Paul, Jesus Himself—we can claim them all for our own. We do not want ‘missions’ to convert us.”¹

Dr. Gottheil, a Rabbi in New York, already quoted, is a good example of the attitude of modern Jews towards Christianity. In a series of lectures on “Jesus and the Jews,” he maintained that the Jews neither accepted nor rejected Jesus as the Messiah, but that He was loved and respected, and spoke in the highest terms of His followers, who were far more zealous in maintaining the authority of the Bible than the Jews themselves.²

It may indeed be said that such sentiments as I have quoted indicate a development in Judaism, and that Neo-Judaism is in reality disintegrating Judaism. The reformed synagogues that eliminate from their doctrine and worship all that is peculiarly Hebrew are becoming nothing more than way-stations on the road to Christianity, or on the well-trodden slope that leads to freethinking.³

W. T. GIDNEY.

(*To be continued.*)



ART. IV.—IS THE CHURCH A FAILING CAUSE?

THE publication by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge of the new “Year-Book of the Church” offers to every one of its readers the material for an inquiry into the present condition of the Church. The statistics, compiled with so much care and labour under the direction of Canon Burnside, are, we may assume, got together for this very purpose. The parochial incumbents who spend no little time and trouble in preparing the returns from which these statistics are constructed may also be expected to work with the common advantage of the Church before their eyes. And yet it must be confessed that the use made of the labours, both of the clergy who furnish the figures and of the editor who has them digested, is inadequate and unsatisfactory. Only two Church newspapers, as a rule, examine the statistics with any care, or endeavour to draw any inferences from them. The rest seem content to print summaries, and draw attention to a few sets of figures which suggest prosperity. It may, of course, be due to a settled conviction that statistics are of no

¹ “Judaism at the World’s Parliament of Religions,” p. 303.

² “Justice to the Jew,” p. 261.

³ *Church Quarterly Review*, April, 1897, and Beaulieu, “Israel among the Nations,” p. 141.

particular value, and that they can be made to prove anything. But if that be the reason, why refer to them at all? And why dwell with complacency on any details which suggest the progress of the Church? The truth seems to be that Churchmen are sadly indifferent to the general welfare of their Church. They may be concerned for its parochial progress, or for the interests of a few societies, great or small, but the progress of the Church as a whole is a subject to which they give little or no attention, and about which they exhibit exceedingly little interest.

It is time that this disregard of the general position of the Church came to an end. The statistics in the new "Year-Book" force upon us the question, Is the Church a failing cause? And the answer to that question, as these figures outline it, is by no means satisfactory. So far as the work of the Church is concerned, it is clear that we are losing ground, and that in the face of a growing population. In regard to finance, the position is more hopeful; but it is certainly not one for complacency.

If this be so, it is our truest wisdom to look the facts fairly in the face. We may be quite sure that when the time comes for the next formal attack on the Church the evidence of these returns will be brought up against us, and the worst made of them. We may as well anticipate hostile critics by considering them ourselves with as much detachment of view as we may be able to command.

We will begin with the statistics of ordinations. At p. 563 of the "Year-Book" is a table giving, from official records in the custody of the Bishops' secretaries, the number of deacons ordained in each diocese within the provinces of Canterbury and York during the years 1887 to 1900 inclusive. Apparently the computation is from September to September. The totals (deacons only) are as follows :

DEACONS ORDAINED.											
1887	771	1892	...	...	737	1897	...	...	652
1888	739	1893	...	...	747	1898	...	...	638
1889	777	1894	...	...	684	1899	...	...	661
1890	746	1895	...	...	720	1900	...	...	650
1891	745	1896	...	...	704				

Thus it will be seen that, whereas from 1887 to 1893 the downward tendency of the figures, if unsatisfactory, was not startling, the totals since that date have been most disquietingly low. People are speculating as to the increase of population in England and Wales which will be disclosed by the census. From the computations of the Registrar-General, we are justified in assuming that the increase will be considerable.

able. But whereas in 1890, the year before the last census, the deacons ordained numbered 746, in 1900, the year before the recent census, the total was only 650. In some dioceses the variations have not been great, and the fall is barely, if at all, in evidence; but in others the loss is most distinct. Here are the totals from 1887 to 1900 inclusive for three dioceses:

York	36, 33, 39, 31, 32, 25, 22, 23, 23, 16, 15, 15, 13, 12
Gloucester and Bristol	30, 21, 29, 28, 34, 17, 23, 14, 21, 17, $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 14, 7, 9, 6 \\ 2, 4, 7, 7 \end{array} \right.$
Chichester	13, 15, 22, 20, 23, 19, 17, 14, 11, 11, 16, 13, 6, 12

London has seen some curious variations. Its total has been as high as 89, and as low as 43. Manchester has been more steady, going as high as 49, and as low as 31. Liverpool has been still more regular, though the total has been as high as 35, and as low as 20. Ripon has varied from 38 to as few as 16. Rochester has been as high as 57, and as low as 33.

I pass now to the statistics of confirmations, provided by the Bishops themselves. The following ("Year-Book," pp. 566-569) are the grand totals from the years 1890 to 1900 inclusive:

CONFIRMATIONS.

1890	197,421	1894	214,484	1898	217,045
1891	214,730	1895	217,228	1899	214,191
1892	219,671	1896	228,348	1900	195,569
1893	223,115	1897	219,658		

Here, then, in the confirmation totals we have the signs of steady decay since the high-water mark of 1896, and that, as we must always remember, in the face of a growing population. The confirmees for the year 1899 were practically the same as those for 1891, but the candidates for 1900 were even fewer than in the year 1890; so that we may be said to have lost all the new population, and have gone behind on the old. The best that can be said for the confirmation statistics is that they spell stagnation. In getting hold of the young people we are making no progress, but losing every year a larger percentage of those who are reaching the age of confirmation. And this, let it be remembered, is in the face of the formation of new dioceses and the greatly increased employment of suffragan and assistant Bishops.

Coming now to the large tables of Church work at pp. xvi, xvii, and xviii, we have some entries which are, at least, a little reassuring. The figures for baptisms are amongst the most satisfactory in the return, for the infant baptisms are the highest for five years, and the adult baptisms are but a few less than those for the preceding year. Although, as we have

seen, the number of confirmees has for some years been falling steadily, the estimated number of communicants has during the last five years steadily risen. The total last year was 1,974,629, five years ago it was 1,840,351. As the estimated number of communicants thus regularly increases, whilst the number of confirmees steadily falls, the inference is that communicants are being gathered in from the ranks of the careless. But it must also be remembered that, whilst the numbers of the confirmation candidates are exactly ascertainable, the number of the communicants year by year is only "estimated." In considering Sunday-schools, classes, guilds, and temperance societies, the position varies a good deal, as will appear by setting increases and decreases side by side :

INCREASES.	DECREASES.
Girl Sunday-School Scholars.	Male Communicants' Classes.
Male Members of Guilds.	Female Communicants' Classes.
Female Members of Guilds.	Infant Sunday-School Scholars.
Temperance : Non-abstaining Members.	Boy Sunday-School Scholars.
	Male Bible Classes.
	Female Bible Classes.
	Temperance : Adult Abstainers.
	" Juvenile Members.

On a balance this is unsatisfactory, the fall in the membership of communicants' classes and Bible-classes taken with the decrease in the number of confirmees being especially regrettable. It is quite possible that membership of guilds is to some extent displacing membership of communicants' classes and Bible-classes ; but the rise in the guilds' membership is not enough to cover the deficiency under the heads of the older organizations.

Under the general title of Lay Work we have a very wide and varied collection of offices of very different degrees of importance. Again we will place the increases and decreases side by side. They will stand as follows :

INCREASES.	DECREASES.
Female District Visitors.	Male District Visitors.
Paid Choirmen.	Male Sunday-School Teachers.
Bell-ringers.	Female Sunday-School Teachers.
Licensed Lay-Readers.	Voluntary Choirmen.
Paid Deaconesses.	Paid Choir-women.
Voluntary Deaconesses.	Voluntary Choir-women.
Paid Sisters.	Unlicensed Lay-Readers.
Voluntary Sisters.	Voluntary Nurses.
Paid Nurses.	Paid Mission Women.
Voluntary Mission Women.	

This table suggests a certain tendency to lose in voluntary and gain in paid helpers. The fall in the number of Sunday-school teachers is the most distinct and unsatisfactory item in

the comparison. But taking this table as a whole, it will be agreed that it furnishes no ground for satisfaction. So far as statistics are any guide to work, they again suggest stagnation rather than progress, and a failing rather than a prosperous cause.

Two other tables (pp. 591, 592) ought also to be considered. One gives us the statistics of "New Churches Built or Rebuilt and Consecrated" in the ten years from 1890 to 1899 inclusive. The other shows us the "Churches Restored or Enlarged" during the same period. The first return, that applying to "new churches," is in some respects satisfactory. The totals for the ten years, beginning with 1890, are: 69, 54, 48, 73, 36, 38, 43, 42, 50, 60. Here, then, are signs of some progress during the last few years. Although the total for 1899—namely, 60—is below that for 1890—69—there is a distinct and welcome advance on the five preceding years. But the high-water mark of 1893—73—is still some way off reattainment. The figures as to "Churches Restored or Enlarged" in the ten years are as follows: 245, 250, 254, 264, 301, 234, 299, 308, 311, 264. The drop in the year 1899 is a considerable one, but the upward tendency since 1895 had been marked. Taking the two tables together, they hardly spell progress, although they are more satisfactory than some of the statistics before us. Looking at the figures for the separate dioceses, they are found to be curiously uneven. I will take the five highest totals for the ten years in the schedule of new churches, giving the population for each diocese at the census of 1891. The five are:

DIocese.	POPULATION.	NEW CHURCHES.
Llandaff	799,376	47
London	3,245,533	41
Manchester	2,644,424	38
Rochester	1,938,787	31
Winchester	976,385	27

That Llandaff should stand first shows with what unremitting energy the work of church building has gone on in Wales. If the other Welsh dioceses do not make quite as good a show, their figures are at least encouraging. The five lowest figures for ten years (excluding Bristol, which has not been separate for ten years) are:

DIocese.	POPULATION.	NEW CHURCHES.
Truro	325,031	1
Hereford	217,699	2
Sodor and Man	55,608	2
Newcastle	509,414	4
{ Bangor	215,956	5
{ Ely	524,112	5

The great diocese of York can only show 23 new churches for the ten years' work, an ominous sign to be set beside its ordination returns. In the list of churches restored or enlarged, London stands first with 189; York and St. Albans second, a long way off, with 129; and Truro, again, at the bottom with 4. Since 1890 not one new church has been built, and not one restored or enlarged, in the diocese of Truro.

We come now to the financial side of the Church's life. Here the results are, upon the whole, more satisfactory. I will take first the table (pp. xx, xxi) of voluntary contributions for Church work, and will arrange the several items as before under the head of increases or decreases. The comparison then works out as follows:

INCREASES.	DECREASES.
Assistant Clergy, from parochial sources other than the Incumbent.	Assistant Clergy, paid by Incumbents.
Church Collections and Easter Offerings.	Voluntary Subscriptions for Day-Schools.
Salaries of Lay Helpers and Church Expenses.	Support of the Poor.
Voluntary Subscriptions for Sunday-Schools.	Other purposes, Religious or Secular.
Maintenance of Day and Sunday-Schools (endowments).	Schoolhouses.
Church Societies: Home Missions.	
" " Foreign Missions.	
" " Diocesan.	
" " General.	
Church Building: Fabrics.	
" " Fittings.	
Burial-grounds.	
Endowment of Benefices.	
Parsonage Houses.	

Here the comparison is wholly on the side of progress. There are only two real blots on the return: one is the smaller sums contributed for Church day-school purposes; the other, the tendency year by year to give less for the support of the poor. But remembering that the period covered by this return included the darkest part of the South African War, it will be agreed that Churchmen did well. Apparently there were not more givers, but the scale of giving must have been enlarged.

There remains the return (pp. xviii, xix) of the sources from which clerical incomes are derived, and the deductions from them. Constructing, again, a table of increases and decreases, we get this result:

INCREASES.	DECREASES.
Church Collections and Easter Offerings.	Tithe, at present value.
Fees and Easter Dues.	Glebe, at present value.
Interest on Funded Property, etc.	Pew Rents.
From Ecclesiastical Commissioners and other sources.	

The fall here is where we should expect it, and unhappily it is just where the rural livings, which are in the main the poorest, feel the loss most heavily. Pew-rents have fallen but slightly, and in the last five years have fairly held their own. Tithe, steadily decreasing in value, still provides one half of the net income of the beneficed clergy. The gross income of all the incumbents represented (£4,386,451) shows an increase on that of the preceding year. The deductions also are lower; and the result is a total net income of £3,412,839, against £3,357,006. Here, again, then, the survey is not without its consolations. But there is nothing in these figures to suggest any real mitigation of the sorrows which dog the steps of the underpaid clergy. Progress where observable is too slight to affect in any marked degree the condition of the poorer incumbents.

On a general survey of these statistics, what conclusion can be drawn? It is clear that nowhere are we making up lost ground. Whatever progress is visible seems no more than will keep pace with the growth of the population and its advance in wealth. But so far as work is concerned, we seem to be losing, and not gaining, ground: I do not offer any explanation of the figures. It is true that the enormous increase in ritual development has gone on during the years covered by these returns. It is fairly clear, so far as the statistics of Church work are evidence, that the movement which bears this kind of fruit is not influencing for good the spiritual life of the Church. It might also be alleged that this development of ritual, by exciting controversy, has tended to check the development of work, both amongst the friends and the critics of the ritual movement. There may be something in this. But whatever the causes, there are the facts, and they are far from warranting the complacent tone in which so many of the lay and clerical leaders of the Church discuss her affairs. What is their answer to the question which heads this article?

A. R. BUCKLAND.