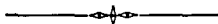


history? First, in the "Ecclesiastical History" he has given us a work which is (to use Westcott's words) "the last great literary monument of the period it describes." That he should have written such a book argues many things; among them this, that he was a man of wide knowledge and varied attainments. As a matter of fact, he was not only an eminent scholar, but an accomplished "man of the world" in the best sense of the term. We may safely discount Gibbon's careless sneers at the honesty of the historian, when we remember the verdict of Bishop Lightfoot. It is certainly a noteworthy fact that, though Eusebius was suspected of unorthodoxy amid the confusions of the Arian controversy, and despite the odium attaching to him in consequence, no historian for nearly 200 years after his death attempted to rewrite the history of the Ante-Nicene Church and improve upon the work of the Bishop of Cæsarea.

We cannot close this notice of Dr. Gifford's great edition of so celebrated a work as the "Præparatio Evangelica" without cordially thanking him for this contribution to English scholarship. The need of new editions of patristic works is a crying one.<sup>1</sup> The Germans are content with monographs on various writers or critical editions of the texts. This is not all that is required. Who will undertake editions of the Letters of Jerome, of Augustine's "De Civitate Dei," of the Hymns of Prudentius, of the major works of Tertullian, to name but a handful? The harvest is ready; the labourers are indeed few. That the noble example of Dr. Gifford may stimulate our younger scholars to the work of investigation in the vast field of patristic literature, must surely be the earnest wish of every sincere student of antiquity.

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BORLASE, MARLOW.



#### ART. IV.—THE CONCENTRATION OF EFFORT.

FOR many months during last year there appeared each week in the *Daily News* the results of a census of those attending all the various "places of worship" in a particular district in London or the neighbourhood upon the preceding Sunday. These figures, together with certain chapters upon the conditions of religious work in the different parts of both "Inner" and "Greater" London, have recently been

<sup>1</sup> Something has been done of late; Hort and Mayor's edition of the fifth book of Clement's "Stromateis" is a case in point.

published in a large volume, entitled "The Religious Life of London."

The census appears to have been taken with great care. "In only seven cases," writes the editor, "were our figures disputed. In each of these a recount was made, which completely substantiated and verified our first enumeration. We were convicted of three errors on the ordinary returns, and four in connection with early Communion services."

It is, of course, quite easy to lay too much stress upon numbers, especially when these are used to measure religious *influence*. But numbers do tell us a great deal, and I think that these particular figures, which have now been tabulated and published in a very convenient form, deserve the careful consideration of all who wish to gauge the apparent "attractive power" which various religious bodies or movements have at the present time over people in general.

There can be, I confess, no greater mistake than to *limit* the influence of Christianity through "the Churches" by the numbers of those whom they succeed in inducing to attend public worship. As the Bishop of Rochester has recently pointed out, there is an immense amount of "diffusive" Christianity in the world to-day. Christian ideals and Christian standards, to a varying degree, and often quite unconsciously, rule the lives of thousands who never enter church or chapel. But this "diffusive" Christianity depends, not only for its efficacy, but for its existence and its growth, upon the lives, upon the example and teaching, of those who possess and exhibit an *intensive* Christianity. The diffusion of light depends upon the existence and activity of "centres of light," whence it is diffused. Christ is "the Light of the world," but He still walks among the lighted candlesticks, and He still holds "the stars" in His right hand.

And few will doubt, especially with regard to the generality of people, that when the religious life has arrived at a certain stage of growth it will manifest its presence by leading its subject to join some assembly of Christians. Thus, while we do not limit the influence of religion to those who attend public worship, we cannot evade the conclusion that the numbers of these must be at least some measure of both the extent and the strength of Christian influence to-day.

I have no intention of attempting to review this book as a whole, or even of referring to the immense number of interesting and important questions which are suggested by a study of the figures and the essays which it contains.

I would much prefer to limit my purpose to drawing attention to three important points which, among others, this study seems to force upon our consideration.

The *first* of these is the, apparently, almost universal failure of so-called "Church of England Missions"—that is, of services held each Sunday in buildings other than the parish church—*i.e.*, in mission halls, mission rooms, and schools.<sup>1</sup>

The *second* is the, apparently, far greater relative success of the Nonconformists in attracting men to their services.

The *third* is the, apparently, enormous waste of resources, both in men and money, which seems to be taking place owing to the multitude of "small efforts," especially in connection with the Church of England.

## I.

In dealing with these "Missions," I propose to consider only *evening* services, because the morning services in the great majority of these buildings are evidently, from the figures given, just children's services. The few adults recorded as present at the morning services will generally be found to have been officials—that is, superintendents and teachers.

As it is obviously impossible for me to consider the figures of each London borough in detail, I must content myself with quoting those of certain typical instances.

In the borough of *Stepney* there are 15 "Church of England Missions." On the Sunday evening on which these were simultaneously visited, there were present in the whole fifteen 226 men and 257 women (I am taking no account of the children); but of these, 133 men and 110 women are accredited to Christ Church Hall. This leaves 93 men and 147 women to be divided between 14 mission services, or an average of 6·6 men and 10·5 women at each service!

In the borough of *Hackney* there are 19 "Church of England Missions." On the Sunday evening on which these were visited the aggregate adult attendance numbered 194 men and 467 women. Here the average—about 10 men and 24 women—in each congregation is better, but it is still lamentably small.

Passing now to West London, we find that in the 8 "Church of England Missions" in *Marylebone* there were 103 men and 203 women, or an average adult congregation of about 13 men and 25 women.

In *Westminster* the conditions are rather better, for in the 9 "Church of England Missions" in that borough there was an average of 20 men and 36·5 women.

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<sup>1</sup> These in connection with the Church are, almost universally, *small* efforts.

In North and South London the figures tell a similar tale. In *St. Pancras*, with 6 Missions, the average attendance was less than 10 men and less than 16 women; while in *Wandsworth*, with 10 Missions, the average was less than 9 men and less than 20 women.

That large congregations can be attracted into mission halls in various parts of London the following instances are a proof, though, unfortunately, not one of these instances can be found among the multitude of "Church of England Missions."

The most striking figures are those of the West London Wesleyan Mission in *St. James's Hall*, where the Sunday evening congregation included 800 men and 1,495 women. On the same evening the 9 "Church of England Missions" in the same borough (*Westminster*) had in them together 179 men and 329 women!

Another example is that of the Conference Hall, *Mildmay Park*, where the Sunday evening attendance is given as 763 men and 1,687 women. The same evening, in the same borough (*Islington*), there were in the 26 "Church of England Missions" but 366 men and 709 women.

A third instance comes from *Bermondsey*, where in the "Evangelistic Mission Hall" there were 359 men and 403 women. The same evening, in the same borough, in the 10 "Church of England Missions," there were 105 men and 233 women.

To arrive at the full significance of these various figures we must give a little exercise to our imagination. At the 26 Mission Services in *Islington* there must have been 26 men to give the addresses, another 26 men (or women) to keep the doors, still another 26 to play the organs or harmoniums, and, at the lowest computation, an average of at least 6 other persons at each service, who would help with the singing, collect the alms, etc. Added together, these various people, all in a more or less official position, account for 214 out of an aggregate of less than 1,100 adults. Had there been no Mission Services, the great majority of these helpers would have been at Church; hence we shall probably be justified in concluding that not more than 900 adults were drawn from the non-churchgoing population by these twenty-six efforts; whereas in the *one strong "effort"* at *Mildmay Park* we have 2,450 adults, of which not more than 50 would be "officials."

The Church may at the present time be weak in men who have the power of attracting and holding the masses, but she is surely not so weak as to make it impossible to find at least one man who, on a Sunday evening in each of the London boroughs (not, of course, always the same man), could

in some large and suitably arranged mission hall gather a congregation of at least 2,000 adults. But, of course, this proposal would mean a readiness on the part of the parochial clergy to waive (as far as this particular service was concerned) the rights and the etiquette of the parochial system. Would the clergy be prepared to do this?

Upon the question of relative expense it is more difficult to form a judgment, but, as far as maintenance is concerned, surely one large hall would not cost more than, say, six small ones. To the workers, a concentration of effort should be a real advantage, not only in the way of maintaining enthusiasm, but because it would bring together a greater variety of workers and work, and so would give to each worker a better opportunity of finding the particular kind of work for which he was best qualified.

## II.

Upon my second point—that the Nonconformists seem to attract to their services a greater proportion of men than does the Church—the collected and tabulated figures give some remarkable evidence.

As I am thinking mainly of the industrial classes, I will again, at first, confine my attention to evening services.

At the various places of worship belonging to the Church of England in London itself—including cathedrals, churches, and missions—there was counted on Sunday evenings a total attendance of 51,324 men and 102,728 women; thus the number of men was just about 50 per cent. of that of women. If now we take the aggregate totals of the following five Nonconformist bodies—viz., the Baptists, Congregationalists, Wesleyans, Presbyterians, and the Salvation Army—we find that on the same Sunday evenings the attendances amounted to 56,508 men and 89,026 women, which shows that the number of men was about 63 per cent. of that of women. Among the Congregationalists and Presbyterians the proportion actually exceeded two-thirds, or 66 per cent.

Turning now to the figures for Greater London, which includes such places as Acton, Croydon, West and East Ham, Ilford, Walthamstow, and Willesden, we find the same results. The total attendances at the Sunday evening services of the Church of England in Greater London are given as 29,292 men and 61,958 women. Thus the men are here less than 50 per cent. of the women. Taking now the same five Nonconformist bodies, we find that the aggregate attendance of adults among them on the same Sunday evenings amounted to 30,320 men and 49,447 women, or again the proportion of men to women is above 60 per cent., while the proportion for

both the Wesleyans and the Salvation Army is above 66 per cent.

In order to test whether these figures were or were not due to certain particular congregations, I worked out the figures in detail for several of the London boroughs and suburbs. Of course, the proportions vary in different localities, but almost universally it will be found that among those attending places of worship on a Sunday evening the proportion of men to women is far larger among the Nonconformist bodies than it is among members of the Church of England.

It then occurred to me that these proportions might possibly be explained by the particular classes of society from which the Nonconformists are generally supposed to gather the greater number of their adherents—that is, from the higher strata of the working classes and the lower strata of the great middle classes—because it is of the members of these classes that a Sunday evening congregation is generally regarded as chiefly composed.

To test this question I worked out the various proportions of men to women at the *morning* services, with the following results:

1. For "Inner London": In the total attendances of adults recorded at all places of worship belonging to the Church of England on Sunday mornings the proportion of men to women was 55 per cent.

Among the Nonconformist bodies this proportion was as follows: Baptists, 85 per cent.; Congregationalists, 90 per cent.; Wesleyans, 95 per cent.; Presbyterians, 73 per cent.; while among the Salvation Army, the Primitive Methodists, and the Society of Friends it was in each case considerably over 100 per cent.

2. For "Outer London": The proportion of men to women in the Church of England was 58 per cent.; among the Baptists and the Congregationalists it was 83 per cent.; among the Wesleyans, 92 per cent.; among the Presbyterians, 71 per cent.; while among the Primitive Methodists, the Friends, and the Salvation Army, in each case it was above 100 per cent.

A comparison of these two sets of figures reveals some very striking resemblances, and the same larger proportion of men to women among the Nonconformists has been observed in other places where a census of Church attendances has recently been taken; *e.g.*, in York and Lincoln.

How are we to account for, or to explain, these figures?

That it is the duty of Churchmen to attempt, not only to discover, but to remove the causes for this relatively small proportion of men in our Churches, everyone will agree. This

will not be an easy task. As far as I have been able to test the figures—and I have tested them in a large number of well-known and representative London Churches—the small attendance of men is not confined to, or peculiar to any of the “schools of thought” in the Church. In fact, the more one tries to dissect, or to account for the figures, the more puzzling does the problem seem to become.

In St. Paul’s Cathedral the proportion of men to women is above 100 per cent., while in Westminster Abbey it is not 50 per cent. Again, at the City Temple it is far more than 100 per cent., while at the Wesleyan Mission in St. James’s Hall it is only just above 50 per cent., and at the Metropolitan Tabernacle it is a little over 70 per cent.

So far I have raised two questions: (1) That of the apparent failure of small Missions; (2) that of the apparent relative failure of the Church in attracting men of all classes to her services. These questions it surely behoves Churchmen to attempt to solve. The only solution which I can suggest lies in the idea of greater concentration of resources, energies, and effort. Is this possible? One answer to this question will depend upon the answer which is given to this further question: Is the Church at present employing to the best advantage the resources which she possesses? In other words, can we detect any waste either in men or in material resources? This leads to my third subject.

### III.

At the present time we hear very frequent complaints upon: (1) The increasing difficulty of finding curates; (2) the increasing difficulty of meeting the expenses which the constantly growing number of “efforts” which, in a “well-worked” parish, it is supposed to be necessary to make and to sustain.

We cannot, of course, view the Church as if it were organized on the lines of a great commercial concern, to whose very existence “success” or “satisfactory returns” were regarded as necessary. Such a concern would have a central office, from which would be worked a great number of branches, with, at the central office, a board of efficient directors, who would be constantly “keeping an eye” on each of these branches, and sending to each the most suitable man for the special work of the particular branch, and who at the same time would be carefully regulating the expenditure at each point relative to the actual or possible “returns” at that point.

But we have been assured by those who ought to know that as a single entity the Church of England does not exist, but

that what is known as such is rather a multitude of small corporations, mainly parochial. In this fact lies the primary and greatest difficulty in effecting any economy either in men or money.

On p. 126 of the book before us we have a very striking illustration of this waste of both men and money. This page contains a table of the total attendances at every church within the City of London on a particular Sunday. The total attendances, morning and evening, at 54 Churches, including St. Paul's Cathedral, amounted to 10,561, of which 2,337 belonged to the Cathedral itself. Among the other 53 Churches were 18 at which the total attendance of men, women, and children at the two services did not reach 100 in any case—that is, less than an average of 50 persons at each service. Would anyone venture to assert that any one of these 18 Churches is necessary for the efficient working of the Church within the City? In the carrying on of these services between 25 and 30 clergy are employed, and at the lowest estimate the combined incomes of these benefices is above £8,000 a year!

At the City Temple, on the Holborn Viaduct (within the boundaries of the City), on the same Sunday, the total attendances at the two services were 7,008 persons (of whom less than 250 were children).

There is no congregation connected with the Church in the Metropolitan area which in numbers can compare with this. But is there any essential reason why the Church cannot do what the Congregationalists have been successful in accomplishing?

For £8,000 a year much could be obtained, but *only* if the money is used wisely, and certainly not if it should be squandered in a multitude of small efforts.

Where is the evidence that the Church is rousing and concentrating her energies to grapple with this problem? Where are the proofs that she is obeying the Apostolic command? It cannot be that she does not possess *ἀνδρας . . . μαρτυρούμενους . . . πλήρεις πνεύματος καὶ σοφίας, οὓς καταστήσωμεν ἐπὶ τῆς χρείας ταύτης* (Acts vi. 3). But if the Church does not possess them in sufficient numbers, is it impossible for her to *train* them? Can she not “look out” men who show some aptitude for this work? and can she not find the means and the opportunity for them to give themselves “wholly” to it?

But when the Church has found both the men and the money, she must find, for the men, the opportunity. To finding this opportunity the parochial system as generally worked is, I believe, the great hindrance. This opinion will to the great majority of my brother clergy sound both dangerous



and heretical. "Then, would you abolish the parochial system," I shall be asked—"that system which has for many generations been the peculiar mark as well as the strength of the English Church?" I answer, "No." But I would not regard it as a *cast-iron* system, incapable of modification. It is in one sense "broken" to-day by almost every cathedral in the land; it is broken by dozens of so-called "successful" churches in our large centres of population, whose pulpits are occupied by earnest men who have learnt to speak to the people, so that the people flock to hear them.

These breaches of the system—at any rate, in the latter case—are not "officially" recognised. Under present conditions, those clergy who do "attract" large extra-parochial congregations are not generally beloved by their brethren. Now, I know of a crowded and poor district in which at least half a dozen Wesleyan chapels were struggling for what was little more than a precarious existence. In the midst of that district a hall was erected to hold 2,000 people; the right man was put in charge of it, and it is filled twice each Sunday, and often more than that in the course of the week. The result upon the neighbouring chapels has not been to empty them still further, but to make them—as auxiliaries to the large hall—far more useful, though in special ways. All this is the result of *concentration* and *specialization*, each centre doing one thing well, rather than many centres attempting in vain to do all things.

In many of the poorer districts in London and our large towns the same conditions hold good as regards the Church of England. The figures in the book before us show how lamentably small are the congregations in different parish Churches—*e.g.*, in Stepney there are 9 Churches where the recorded attendances of men, women, and children were at each under 200 at the two services; while at St. Anne, Limehouse, St. Mary, Whitechapel, and St. Peter's, London Docks, the attendances were at each over 1,000. In Bethnal Green there were 6 Churches where the average attendance per service was under 160; while at St. James-the-Less (Mr. Ditchfield's) at the two services the attendances were 1,700, and this number does not include the "men's" service in the afternoon, in connection with which there are 1,200 men on the roll.

Where, then, lies the difficulty of specialization of effort in the Church? Does it not lie chiefly in the parochial system? What opportunities has the single-handed clergyman in a town parish of specializing? Suppose he should attempt it, he meets at once with rebukes for neglecting some parts of his

duties ; at the same time, his clerical neighbours look very askance at him.

Then a church may grow gradually empty. Yet so long as the benefice is endowed, and the moral life of the clergyman is above suspicion, he is practically irremovable. But can we imagine the Congregationalists sitting down in despair if the numbers attending the City Temple should drop from 7,000 to 700, or the Wesleyans being content to see the congregations at St. James's Hall reduced to one-quarter of their present number ?

"But what," I shall be asked, "of the parson's freehold, of security of tenure, and of the rights of patronage?" "Does the Church," I might ask in return, "exist for these?" For what did her Founder establish her? For the people or for the clergy? Is the Church to be tied and bound by the financial and legal fetters of the past? Is her work to be hindered and her usefulness to be lessened by these?

I am not asking for the *abolition* of the parochial system ; I am only asking for such *modifications* of it as may be necessary in order for the Church to do far better than she is doing to-day a very special work—that is, the gaining of a greater influence over the masses of the people.

This article is already too long for me to enter further into details. Such a book as this to which I have drawn attention at least helps us to see things as they are. And this is surely the first step towards our rousing ourselves to make them more nearly what they should be.

W. EDWARD CHADWICK.



#### ART. V.—STUDIES ON ISAIAH—IV.

##### ISAIAH AND HIS MISSION.

MODERN criticism claims to have "completely dispelled, on the evidence of the Bible itself, the view of inspiration and prediction" which has "long been held in the Church." It confesses that this view is "difficult to define." But it is explained to be "something like this: that the prophet beheld a vision of the future in its actual detail, and read this off as a man may read the history of the past out of a book or a clear memory."<sup>1</sup> It is always easy to refute a theory or doctrine when one states it in one's own language, and not in the language of those who hold it. But the theory

<sup>1</sup> "The Prophecies of Isaiah," by Professor G. A. Smith, vol. i., p. 372.