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Government would not help. Churchmen should agitate in favour of a census. Mr. Raikes concluded by moving a vote of thanks to Canon Williams for his paper.

Mr. G. F. CHAMBERS, in seconding the motion, expressed his belief that no faith was to be put in Mr. Gladstone's declarations concerning the Church in England and Wales was, so far as the Liberation Society was concerned, only a question of time, and Mr. Gladstone was a creature of time. It behoved Churchmen, therefore, to bestir themselves in Church defence, whilst time was at their command, so that when the storm did come they would not find themselves taken unprepared, as they were when the storm came in 1868, to desolate the Irish Church.

Earl NELSON, in putting the resolution, thought Church prospects in Wales very encouraging. He thought Churchmen in many respects had been too severe on Dissenters, had done too much to repress and depress them. Men's minds, when moved as Wesley's mind was, should be gently handled. Shorter services in Welsh and a system of lay co-operation and lay-work would do much to recover Welsh Dissenters to the Church.

Canon WILLIAMS, in returning thanks, stated what Convocation was doing to promote a religious census in 1871. Let the Church generally, and the Church Institution in particular, seek to influence the government to induce them to sanction a religious census, and after all it might perhaps be obtained. But let it not be any such delusive contrivance as was that of 1851. He pointed out that there were three meeting-houses in one parish returned as having had on Census Sunday in 1851 900 worshippers. Last Sunday week they had respectively 19, 25, and 45, as he learnt on trustworthy authority, there being at church 94. He thought this was a sample of the credit to be attached to religious statistics of the Dissenting type.

A vote of thanks to Lord NELSON for presiding, was moved by Mr. PRIDEAUX and seconded by the DEAN of St. ASAPH. Also a vote of thanks to the authorities of King's College for the use of the library for the meeting.

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noted that of all our Reformers cited by Dr. M'Caul as having accepted the authorized version as to the rendering of Lev. xviii. 18, there is not one who has gone with him in the application of it which he advocates, inasmach as they have all either explicitly or implicitly received our table of prohibited degrees : a proof that even from Dr. M'Caul's premiss, as to the translation, they have not come to his conclusion as to the interpretation. And it is plainly in the interpretation, not in the mere translation, that the above-mentioned contradiction is involved.

*From the Author*

(3)

# Cathedral Reform

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A LETTER

TO HIS GRACE

THE LORD

ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

BY

ROBERT HAKE, M.A.

PRECENTOR AND MINOR CANON OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

**London**

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## A LETTER, &c.

MY DEAR LORD ARCHBISHOP,

I trust that I need offer no apology for addressing your Grace on the subject of Cathedral Reform. The facts that in the early part of this year, in conjunction with his Grace the Archbishop of York, you collected at Lambeth an assembly of Bishops, Deans, and Canons, to consider this subject, and that questions have been addressed to the several Chapters with the view of obtaining more complete information and a fuller expression of opinion on a matter on which opinions are much divided, and in respect of which many interests have to be regarded:—these facts alone would warrant the belief that your Grace will readily receive suggestions on this subject respectfully tendered by any one whose experience might qualify him to offer them. But especially the words which at the Visitation of your Cathedral at Canterbury your Grace addressed to the whole Cathedral body there present, assure me that I cannot be wrong in anticipating your attentive consideration of anything which I may have to say on this important question.

It is not my purpose to traverse the whole wide field of discussion opened by the words CATHEDRAL REFORM; I only desire to lay before your Grace

a few observations on those parts of the subject which my own position and the experience of several years have set most prominently before my own mind.

I know not whether I shall startle your Grace by announcing at the outset my conviction, that any scheme of Cathedral Reform which aims at being complete and effectual must involve as one of its necessary provisions either the abolition of the office of Minor Canon, or a thorough change of the conditions under which that office now exists. But I have the advantage of being able, in support of this position, to refer to one of the most solemn of those admonitions which, on the occasion I have mentioned above, your Grace addressed to the staff of your Cathedral. You then said, "I think it is impossible for any one to have been habitually present in the Cathedral without sometimes being struck that a little more is sometimes sacrificed to the exquisite music by which the services are adorned, than perhaps is conducive to the real devotion of spirit in the great majority of those who gather here."

None can doubt the wisdom of the warning which is here conveyed, or the fatherly care which prompted the utterance of it. But I would ask your Grace's serious consideration of the question, whether there is any justification for the maintenance of a clerical office, which, by giving its holders a paramount interest in the direction and cultiva-

tion of the musical portion of divine service alone, and cutting them off from any but the slightest participation in other ministerial work, exposes them in a very unfair degree to the danger against which your warning is directed.

I need not remind your Grace that when I was called to the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, I was thus addressed by the Bishop who had laid his hands upon me: "Take thou authority to preach the Word of God, and to minister the Holy Sacraments in the congregation where thou shalt be lawfully called thereto." I have now been a Minor Canon for more than eighteen years, and during that time the only opportunities of preaching which have come to me by the strict requirements of my Minor Canonry<sup>1</sup> have been two sermons each year on week days in Lent; and the only occasions I have had of ministering the greater of the two Sacraments, have been when one or other of the residents in the Cathedral Precincts has been sick (and the number is always very small) during the three years in which I have happened to be Sacrist. I would again ask your Grace seriously to consider whether an office can

<sup>1</sup> I should be ungrateful if I did not mention here, though I conceive it does not in the least diminish the force of my argument, that through the great kindness of one whom I, as well as your Grace, can only think of as a friend, Dean Alford, I have enjoyed frequent opportunities of preaching in the Cathedral, beyond those which the duties of my office supplied; but this has occurred to no other of the existing body of Minor Canons; and the last time when I thus occupied the Cathedral pulpit on a Sunday, was on the Sunday after the late Dean's funeral.

be maintained, which requires a Priest to fill it, and which yet practically cuts him off from the exercise of the chief functions of his Order.

Thus far I have asked your Grace's attention to points of the highest spiritual and ecclesiastical importance in respect of the office of Minor Canon. But in our present imperfect state it is quite impossible, and, if possible, would not be right, to exclude considerations of an inferior, but still most important character.

Regarding the question *a priori*, one would hardly predict the successful working of an institution containing within itself two bodies of men, of precisely the same Order, education, and standing in society, one of which bodies should be in permanent subjection to the other. The inconvenience of such a condition is greatly increased, when members of the superior body are younger than their subordinates.<sup>1</sup> This state of things constantly happens in our Cathedrals: and if we have

<sup>1</sup> I am well aware that this last observation is open to the reply, that the same subordination of elder men to younger often takes place in other portions of our Church organization. Bishops and Archdeacons must often be younger than some at least of the Clergy who are under them; elder Canons see their juniors set over them as Deans; and Rectors may sometimes be younger than the Curates who work under them. But I submit that none of these cases are so far parallel to that which I am discussing as to be brought fairly into the question. A Bishop is of a different Order from his Clergy, or at least holds a mission superior to theirs; and in his case and that of the Archdeacon, the occasions of contact are comparatively rare, and no inconvenience is felt. In the case of Deans and Canons, the subordination is wholly different from that which exists between the capitular and non-capitular members of our Cathedral foundations. The Dean is, with respect to his

not experienced, to their full extent, the evils which might naturally be expected to follow from so faulty an arrangement, we may, I think, congratulate ourselves on our escape, and thank God for His merciful bestowal of those good qualities by which men often rise superior to the influences of the system by which they are surrounded. The difficulties arising from the fault in our Cathedral system which I have just mentioned, would be lessened, and the inconveniences therefrom arising would be more easily borne, if there were a reasonable hope that, after any number of years spent in the faithful discharge of his allotted duties, a member of the inferior body might be promoted to the higher;<sup>1</sup> but the hope does not exist, and the inconveniences have to be borne, and the difficulties remain, to mar the influence and to hinder the working of what ought to be one of

Canons, *primus inter pares*: a very different relation exists between the junior Canon and the senior Minor Canon. The only case which bears any comparison is that of a young Rector with an older Curate, but in this case the subordination of the elder man is the immediate result of his own voluntary act, no Curate having a new Rector set over him, but always needing a new nomination on a fresh appointment to the benefice.

<sup>1</sup> Two instances of this promotion have taken place within the last few years, both in the Cathedral of Manchester: but the constitution of that Church is somewhat different from that of the majority of our Cathedrals; and the circumstances which led to those instances of promotion are not likely to recur elsewhere. But even while I am writing, the well-deserved promotion of a Minor Canon of St. Paul's to the Deanery of Manchester seems to cut away the whole ground from this portion of my argument. Still I prefer not to alter what I have written, but while I let it stand as descriptive of what has been in the past, hail the new appointment as an augury of better things in the future.

the most effective elements in the system of the Church of England.

Does not, in fact, the whole arrangement savour of a state of things unsuited to the wants, and alien to the spirit, of the times in which we live? Is it not a perpetuation of the system by which in past days men were nominated to offices, the duties of which they were perhaps incompetent, perhaps unwilling, to discharge; but of which they reaped the honours and emoluments, while others did the work which they left undone? So far is this system of vicarious performance carried, that in the Cathedrals of the Old Foundation, the Precentor, whose duty is to regulate the musical accessories of divine service, and the importance of whose functions is shown by the rank (second only to the Dean) which he holds in some<sup>1</sup> of those establishments, does not in many cases pretend to any musical knowledge or skill whatever, while the duties, so far as they can be discharged by an inferior officer, are delegated to one of the Minor Canons or to the Organist.

In our general Church system abuses of this kind have been done away. If a man is appointed to a benefice, he must, except in special cases, be able and willing to perform the duties attached to it, or at least to superintend the performance of them by his assistants. And surely it is time that

<sup>1</sup> This is, I believe, the case in all the Irish Cathedrals, without exception.

a reform, which has been productive of so much good in the parochial administration of the Church, should be extended to the Cathedral system also.

I am quite aware that I shall be met at once by two objections: that it will be impossible to find persons sufficiently skilled in music, who shall be otherwise qualified to fill the superior posts in our Cathedrals,<sup>1</sup> and that if such persons could be found, it would be in the highest degree unwise so to limit, in the exercise of their choice, those who have the patronage of these appointments.

In meeting the first of these objections I know I shall have the sympathy of your Grace. Indeed I do not know in what words I can more effectually reply to it, than in those which you employed on the occasion of your Cathedral Visitation. You then acknowledged that you were "aware of the great practical difficulties which from time to time stand in the way of the sugges-

<sup>1</sup> There is an undoubted difficulty which arises from the natural want of ear in some persons, but it is believed that these cases are comparatively rare, and what I shall have to say in a subsequent paragraph will tend to obviate the force of this objection; let me here remind your Grace that in Roman Catholic Cathedrals every Canon, as a matter of course, discharges his musical part in the service, not perhaps as a finished musician, but with reverence and solemnity, and as an understood part of his duty; and this serves in a great measure to disarm criticism as to the manner of performance. But there is another side even to this question: old age is almost as great a bar to the proper performance of the musical part of divine service as is a natural want of ear; but while Deans and Canons are permitted to resign their offices when disabled by age or infirmity, and yet to retain a portion of their incomes, such a provision has not as yet been thought necessary for Minor Canons, the income of whose offices certainly would be unable to bear the twofold charge.

tion" which you had "made being carried out;" and though the scope of my observation has naturally been less extensive, I do not pretend to be ignorant of the difficulties which attend such a reform as that which I am now discussing. But your Grace goes on to say, and I need not even suggest the slight alterations which would fit your words to my purpose: "I do not think that these  
"are insuperable, and I believe that if each  
"Canonry had some sphere of . . . work assigned  
"to it, those whose business it is to select Canons  
"would have regard to the particular work which  
"each Canon should undertake." For (and here I am replying to the second objection also) it is not by any means *essential* to such a reform as I should advocate, that *every* Canon should be able to take his part in the musical services of his Cathedral. I should indeed consider such a state of things highly desirable, and, in view of the great and rapidly increasing spread of musical knowledge and skill, it may fairly be expected to be, at no distant time, within our reach. But all that is essential is the assertion and the carrying out of the principle, that the whole of the Cathedral work is incumbent on the whole Cathedral body, and, together with its dignities and its revenues, should be apportioned among its members in a spirit of equity.

It is unnecessary, and would be improper, for me to enter minutely into the details of such a

reform as would satisfy this condition. But it is obvious that the power which Cathedral Chapters now enjoy in the election of their Minor Canons, might well be retained in the co-optation of Musical Canons into their own body, if this plan were deemed the most advisable. Nor could there be an objection to a reasonable term of probation, if such a safeguard seemed necessary; but once really appointed and installed, the Musical Canon should have an equal position with the other members of the Chapter, and should be associated with them in the discussion and regulation of all things connected with the welfare of the Cathedral.

I have a very confident belief that this, or something like this, will be the ultimate shape which Cathedral Reform will take, in respect of that branch of the subject which I am discussing; but I am ready to confess that the idea which I have been attempting to describe, is so far removed from all that we have been accustomed to connect with the thought of Cathedral life, as to have but little prospect of immediate or general acceptance. We live in an age of compromise, and in all probability the Cathedral question will form no exception to the rule which has already prevailed in so many instances.

It may not, therefore, be out of place if, without retracting any of the opinions I have already expressed, I mention a few principles which, as it appears to me, are necessary to be observed in

any attempt to lessen the evils inherent in our present Cathedral system.

If the office of Minor Canon is to be retained in anything like its present state, means should be devised for securing a succession so far rapid that its holders should never be far advanced in middle age. To young men who, though they have been admitted to the second Order of the ministry, may be considered as still on their probation, and in training for independent spheres of action, a subordinate position, analogous to that of an assistant curate, is neither irksome nor unsuitable. But when a man has ceased to be young, if his probation, however passed, has led to no promotion, and the only change in his subordinate position has been to set younger men than before in authority over him, we shall, I think, be expecting too much from average human nature, if we require from him a continued feeling of satisfaction with a position which once seemed fairly desirable.

But if there is to be a tolerably rapid succession in the office of Minor Canon, it will be necessary to withdraw the legislative sanction which now exists for the holding, together with a Minor Canonry, of any Benefice within a radius of six miles from the Cathedral Church. The holding of such Benefices is a direct inducement to those who have been presented to them to retain their Minor Canonries, and so tends to check the current of succession which appears to me to be requisite.

And, independently of this consideration, the holding of these Benefices by Minor Canons is productive of evils which it would be well, if possible, to remedy. There is a perpetual conflict of claim between the Cathedral and the Parish Church, and neither is served with the whole-heartedness which its due service requires. It may certainly be alleged that a Minor Canon so beneficed ought to be assisted by a curate, and that then neither Cathedral nor Parish Church need suffer from neglect or insufficient service. But there are two considerations which greatly diminish the force of this allegation. For, first, a man's warmest interests will centre, and his best services be given, where he has something of an independent action, and therefore a living responsibility—and so the Cathedral will suffer; and secondly, the revenues of the Benefices thus held are often so small, that it is difficult for the Incumbent to provide out of them the means of paying for such assistance as he requires.<sup>1</sup>

But while I hold it undesirable that Minor Canons should be beneficed, I would submit to your Grace that they may well be employed in some pastoral or diocesan work. There are few Cathedral cities in which some or other of the parishes are not too large to be effectively adminis-

<sup>1</sup> That I am speaking from actual fact, will appear when I state that for three years I held a Benefice with my Minor Canonry, and that at the end of that time I resigned my Benefice with impaired health, and a balance of 70*l.* on the *wrong* side of my account.

tered by their Incumbents, who nevertheless are able to conduct the services of their respective churches; and in several, as particularly in this city of Canterbury, there are extra-parochial places, the inhabitants of which are now under no spiritual care whatever, but might well be committed to the oversight of one of the Minor Canons. And, to a prelate of your Grace's experience, I need not say that there are departments of diocesan work which may fitly employ the powers of young and vigorous men, as well as others which especially require the exercise of discretion and a knowledge of mankind.

I have alluded in a previous paragraph to the abuse which, in several of the Cathedrals of the Old Foundation, is connected with the office of Precentor. Modern legislation, taking no note of the duties which should be attached to the office, and dealing only with the fact that it had practically become a sinecure, has, as far as these Cathedrals are concerned, stripped it of its emoluments, leaving it simply as an honorary dignity. I hold it to be an essential point in Cathedral Reform, that the Precentor, in Cathedrals of the Old Foundation as well as of the New, should be qualified for, and should be required personally to discharge, the duties which the name of his office implies. The founders of our later Cathedrals may be presumed to have seen the evils attending the delegation of the duties of a superior officer to an

inferior, which had even before their time taken place in the older foundations; and, to prevent a recurrence of the same practice, they ordained that the Precentor should be one of the Minor Canons, obtaining at once some security in respect to his qualifications for his office, and lessening the possibility of that delegation of duties of which I have complained. It would be an obvious step in the right direction if the constitution of the Cathedrals of the Old Foundation were in this respect conformed to that of the later Cathedrals. But I cannot refrain from expressing a firm conviction that if once the poison of vicarious performance were thoroughly eliminated from our Cathedral system, it would be far wiser to follow the example of our older founders, and to give the Precentor "*sedem et vocem in capitulo.*" And here I would wish to say most emphatically that I have absolutely no feeling on the question whether the office of Precentor should be a permanent one, as in the Cathedrals of the Old Foundation, or temporary, as in theory at least it is in those of the New. But what I do maintain is, that for the proper discharge of his own duties, and for the due regulation of the Cathedral services, it is essential that the Precentor, as long as he holds that office, should be a member of the Chapter, meeting on equal terms with its other members, and enjoying both the income and the authority which belong to that position. It has been my privilege to hold

the office of Precentor for eight years, under a Chapter who have always treated me with great consideration, who have attentively considered the advice which it has been my duty from time to time to offer them, and have adopted my suggestions at least as frequently as I could have expected them to do so. For the same period I have had the oversight of a Choir composed, as far as its adult members are concerned, of gentlemen who, with hardly an exception, have attended to my wishes, and done their best to carry out my directions. But the experience of eight years has taught me over and over again the lesson, that there is needed a closer bond than yet exists between the Chapter and the Choir, and that a Precentor could do his duty better both to Chapter and Choir, if, while his office binds him closely to the latter body, he were able to communicate with the former in the freedom of debate, rather than in the official formality of advice and report. The duties which a Precentor has to discharge are indeed too important to be properly entrusted to an inferior officer; while from their peculiar nature they require a corrective which, as it seems to me, can be best supplied by giving to him who has to perform them a share in the wider interests which attend the general government of the Cathedral.

One result of no small practical importance would arise from the adoption of this plan, that the Precentor would of necessity be immediately

informed of all contemplated arrangements, whereas he has now often to gather his knowledge of them where and as he may. He would thus be enabled to arrange the duties of the Choir, and to give his instructions to them with greater deliberation and more certainty than is often the case at present, avoiding the risk of confusion, which of all things is most alien from that branch of divine service which it is his province to regulate.

I have the honour to be,

My Dear Lord Archbishop,

Your Grace's most faithful and obedient servant,

ROBERT HAKE,

*Precentor and Minor Canon of Canterbury Cathedral.*









