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THE CHURCH IN WALES.

R E P O R T

OF A PAPER READ BEFORE

The Church Institution,

JULY 6, 1870,

BY

THE REV. CANON WILLIAMS,

*Rector of Nannerch, and a Proctor in Convocation
for the Diocese of St. Asaph.*

(From the "English Churchman" of July 7, 1870.)

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THE CHURCH IN WALES.

At a meeting of the Central Council of the Church Institution, held on July 6, at King's College, a paper was read by the Rev. Canon Williams, on the Church in Wales. Earl NELSON, presided. Amongst those present, we noticed the Dean of St. Asaph, Mr. Prideaux, Q.C., the Rev. J. W. Buckley, Mr. J. Richardson, the Rev. J. Bardsley, Mr. Raikes, M.P., Mr. G. F. Chambers, Mr. W. Jones, Mr. Pulman, the Suffragan Bishop of Nottingham, &c.

Prayers having been read as usual by the Rev. T. Darling,

The noble Chairman offered a few observations by way of preliminary comment on the paper of the evening. He said that the lecturer was a man of great knowledge and experience, a most efficient diocesan secretary of the S.P.G., Chairman of the Committee of Convocation on the Church in Wales, and in every respect, a gentleman calculated to do justice to the cause of the Church in Wales.

The Rev. Canon WILLIAMS then read as follows:—

Since I undertook to prepare this paper, the Church in Wales has gone through a trying ordeal, and her friends have every reason to be satisfied with the discussion that took place in Parliament on the 24th of May last, and the result of that discussion, as shewn in the division list. But I may be told, if you and your friends are satisfied, why not let well alone? Why continue the discussion? The Council of the Church Institution, however, think, and I quite agree in the opinion, that the present is a very suitable time to draw further attention to a subject on which there is much ignorance even among our own friends. I have been asked seriously at different times, whether it is not true that the Church in Wales has disappeared entirely except in name. Circumstances have led me to make minute enquiries, and I am in a position to state that her condition is not nearly so bad as is generally supposed, and, indeed, much better than her enemies would wish to represent it.

Perhaps the best order to follow in this paper is that which has been adopted by a Committee of Con-

vocation of which I have the honour to be chairman, and consider

I.—The progress which the Church has made in Wales since 1831, and her present state.

II.—The causes of dissent.

III.—The remedies which I would venture to suggest.

In tracing the progress of the Church in Wales during the last forty years, it will be impossible within the limits of this paper to go into details of the work done in all the four Dioceses; and as one Diocese was selected as a specimen of neglect and abuse, perhaps it will be only fair if I take the same Diocese, and show what has been done in it since 1831.

The hon. member for the Denbighshire borough quotes from a book published in 1831, and would have the House of Commons to understand, at least by inference, that St. Asaph is now in the same state as it was forty years ago. The hon. member has lived in the Diocese more or less during the whole of those years, and he cannot be ignorant of the fact that the state of things described in that book no longer exists. If he really feels an interest in the prosperity of the Church of his Baptism, he would have rejoiced over and gladly acknowledged the exertions which have been made in that Diocese for the social and spiritual improvement of the people. But as he is silent on this point I must supply the omission.

Since 1835, £460,000 have been expended in building and restoring churches; 52 new churches have been built, 19 old parish churches rebuilt, 49 restored or enlarged; 43 of the new churches are centres of new parishes, separately endowed, at an average annual income of £262. When it is considered that the Diocese had only 140 parishes in 1834, it will be readily admitted that the progress has not been unsatisfactory. The residence of the Clergy within their respective spheres of work is one of the most important elements in the Parochial system, and, therefore, it is a matter of some interest to mention that 43 new Parsonages have been built in St. Asaph within the last twenty years, making a total of 167, or 18 more than there were of parishes in 1834.

I may be told that I only show material progress, and that I do not prove an increase of real spiritual work,—that the number of Church worshippers has not increased. Perhaps the best answer is to give a short account of a parish with which I am personally

well acquainted, and of what was done in it during the ministry of one man. If we look back to 1830, we shall find this parish with one church, and two services, and only one sermon on the Lord's Day. Now there are four churches, with ten full services and sermons on Sundays, to say nothing of services on other days. These churches are generally well attended, and the number of communicants has greatly increased. The 50 free and open sittings which was all the accommodation offered by the Parish Church to a population consisting of many thousands of poor people, are now increased to 2350. In 1830 the number of children receiving instruction in the Church Schools was under 100, and there was no other denomination of Christians supplying gratuitous instruction, or semi-gratuitous, to the poor; now there is accommodation for 1270 in the Church Schools. And when I add that all this provision for supplying the spiritual wants of the inhabitants at large has been made at a cost of upwards of £20,000, I think it will be admitted that the Church has not been unmindful of her duty. An adjoining parish shows an equal amount of progress and expenditure of money during the incumbency of the present rector. These two instances are given as specimens of what has been done in St. Asaph during the last forty years.

To leave St. Asaph, let us see what has been done in the Diocese of Llandaff. Here, again, we have the same signs of progress—the same amount of earnestness and activity on the part of the Church in providing means of grace for the rapidly increasing population, which in 1801 was only 107,000, in 1861 was 421,336, and now much more. And when it is considered that there are in this Diocese 59 separate parishes, with an endowment of less than £100 each, and that the largest and most rapid increase of population has taken place in some of these ill-endowed parishes, it will be readily admitted that the Church has had no ordinary difficulties to contend with. She has, however, manfully struggled against these difficulties, as will be proved by the following statistics, which have been kindly supplied to me by the Archdeacon of Llandaff. Within the last 30 years 55 new churches have been built, and 124 have been thoroughly restored or rebuilt at a cost of not less than £278,950, without mentioning the cathedral, which has been restored at a cost of £30,000. But when it is considered that this venerable fabric was a

perfect ruin within the last few years, and that it now affords accommodation to a very large number of worshippers, it will be admitted that I have a full right of mentioning its restoration as fairly coming under the head of Church extension in the Diocese. Here, again, the great importance of having a resident clergy has been recognized. 106 new Parsonages have been built during the Episcopate of Bishop Coplestone and Bishop Ollivant, at a very large outlay of money. The number of children under Church instruction is about 26 954; and the Archdeacon informs me that there is now scarcely any parish or district which has not its school.

In the Diocese of Bangor and St. David's there has been the same amount of activity—the Church caring for her children, and seeking to supply her spiritual wants. If I do not offer any statistics to prove my assertions respecting these two Dioceses, it is not because they are not at my command, but from a desire not to make this paper too long. I have said enough to show that the Church in Wales is not in that state of sickness and decrepitude which many suppose—that there still remains in her much vitality and power for good; and I believe she is destined at no distant period to exercise a much greater influence for good among the masses of the people.

I feel, however, that it would neither be honest in me, nor answer any good purpose, if I were to try to ignore instead of lamenting the fact, that a very large proportion of our population are estranged from the Church of their fathers. In dealing with this part of the question I shall endeavour to avoid any uncharitable, harsh, or unkind remark; the truth, however, must be spoken, but it will, I hope, be in love. And first, with regard to the numerical strength of Dissent in Wales. I find it impossible to reconcile the assertions generally made with the facts of the case as tested by actual statistics furnished by Dissenting publications. Much has been said of nine-tenths of the Welsh people being Dissenters, and this has been so positively asserted that many have found themselves forced to believe the assertion. Without denying the possibility of such proportions between Churchmen and Dissenters in some remote Welsh parishes, where the Clergymen have not done their duty, or have been patterns of morality to their flocks, I believe that such instances are rare, and are becoming more rare every year. I have taken some trouble to examine

the almanacks published by the four principal Dissenting bodies in Wales, and the result has been to demonstrate the utter want of foundation for the assertion already referred to.

The whole number of worshippers claimed by the Calvinistic Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists, Baptists, and Independents, is under 500,000, and if we reckon the adherents of the small sub-divisions of sects, including Roman Catholics, at 100,000, we shall still have to account for one-half of the population of Wales and Monmouthshire. I have mentioned Monmouthshire advisedly, because this county is claimed for Wales in all the Dissenting almanacks, from which I am quoting. The majority of the population not claimed by the Dissenters must be Churchmen, because it would be paying a very bad compliment to the teaching of Nonconformists to suppose that any considerable portion of our Welsh population are still in a state of heathenism.

I am well aware that much importance has been attached to the great number of chapels erected by Dissenters in Wales during the last 40 or 50 years. I admit the fact, but I deny the necessity of them in many instances. The spirit of rivalry has been so strong in the matter of chapel-building that the accommodation provided has often been twice as much as the neighbourhood could possibly require. I could quote instances of this. I also find, on referring to these almanacks, that the debt upon the chapels belonging to one of the denominations amounts to £160,271 7s. 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.—a fact suppressed in the English version of the same almanack.

I am often asked, how do you account for Dissent in Wales? I find it very difficult to supply an answer to satisfy my questioner or myself. Causes which might be thought sufficient to account for Dissent in one locality may have no existence whatever in another. But whatever may be the cause, I emphatically deny the truth of the assertion lately made in Parliament, “that the Welsh people feel that the establishments of religion by the side of the state are both unscriptural and injurious to the cause of true religion.” The Welsh people as a body entertain no ill feeling towards the Church, and whenever a church is to be built, rebuilt or restored, and a school-house to be erected, I have always found the Dissenters cheerfully helping with cartage of materials when unable to contribute money. In my

own case, when rebuilding my parish church, every small farmer helped to carry materials and was very much pleased to have a lithograph of the new church to hang up in the best part of his house. Only last week I heard of the re-opening of a parish church in Anglesea, where Dissent is supposed to be very strong, and the proceedings are thus described by my informant:—The day was kept as something very nearly approaching a general holiday throughout the neighbourhood; and a larger assemblage of happy, beaming faces I never witnessed. We had four services and on each occasion the Church was what boys call “stodge full,” &c.

My correspondent goes on to say, at a vestry last week I was asked by the principle farmer “Is there any cartage you want for the Church? We are as little busy now as at any time, and all ready and willing to work.”

I will now add the testimony of a labouring man. His letter is written in Welsh, dated June 24, 1870. I will translate a passage or two. “The Dissenters are not enemies to the Church on account of her doctrines, or formularies, or ordinances; and as to the tithes, they would prefer paying them to the parson rather than to the government, however loyal we may be as a nation.” It does appear strange that a people so loyal, so patriotic, and so much attached to old traditions and associations, should discard the oldest institution in their country, and as there must be a reason for every movement, however difficult it may be sometimes to assign it, we may well ask, have these people been fairly treated? If we consider what was the condition of our Church fabrics some 45 or 50 years ago, what do we find—the walls tottering, and the roofs anything but proof against rain; inside dirty and cold—the high backed pews monopolized by the squire and his domestics, and to please him, English services were introduced into the parish Church at a time when the bulk of the population could only worship God in their native tongue. Nearly all the gentry ceased to speak the language of the country, so that the Church became divided into the rich man’s Church and the poor man’s Church, and the practical result was, that in many places the poor man ceased to think that he had any lot or inheritance in her. Can we wonder, then, that he should desert her, in whose bosom he had been bred and nurtured, and seek spiritual sustenance in one of the conventicles

springing up around him, and where he would find welcome and sympathy, and was not repelled by exclusiveness and class distinction, which ought not to exist in the house of God.

With the neglect of the outward fabric, and the spirit of exclusion and monopoly inside, came a coldness and want of reality in her services. On this point I prefer quoting from a book which ought to be in every Welshman's hand, and written by the late lamented Sir Thomas Phillips, Q.C., a name dear to every patriot for the services he rendered to his country as Mayor of Newport during the Chartist riots, and still dearer to every Welsh Churchman for his indefatigable exertions to promote sound Church education in Wales.

“The Church in Wales has been presented in her least engaging aspect; her offices have been reduced to the baldest and lowest standard, and whilst no sufficient efforts have been employed to make the beauty of our liturgical services appreciated by the people, neither has any general attempt been made to enlist in the performance of public worship, their profound and characteristic enjoyment of psalmody, by accustoming them to chant or sing the hymns of the Church.”

It must, however, be added, that much improvement has taken place since 1847, when this book was published.

But, in preparing a paper upon the Church in Wales, it is impossible not to allude to the masterly sketch of the causes of Dissent which was drawn by Her Majesty's Prime Minister on the 24th of May last in his place in Parliament. I am glad to have this opportunity of offering him my best and most respectful thanks for his defence of my Church, and vindication of the character of my countrymen from the charge of hostility to the Church as an Institution in connection with the State. Mr. Gladstone's description of the injustice done to the people of Wales in the last century, and the injuries inflicted upon what was then their beloved Church, makes any further remarks from me on that point unnecessary. In full accordance with the views of Mr. Gladstone, is the opinion of Sir Thomas Phillips, as given 25 years ago, on the state of the Diocese of St. Asaph. The passage is somewhat long, but it is so appropriate, that I cannot curtail it by one syllable:—

“St. Asaph might be selected from all the dioceses

of the Kingdom, as that which afforded the most complete ecclesiastical provision for promoting the interests of religion, and the fairest stage on which the advantages of the episcopal system of the Church might have been displayed. The average yearly net income of the see, estimated for the three years ending 1831, was 6301*l.* and had been more—the archdeaconry of St. Asaph and the rectory of Pennant, in the county of Moutgomery, being accustomedly holden by the bishops, in commendam. Amongst the possessions of the bishopric are the tithes of sixteen parishes, which have been commuted for rent-charges, amounting in the aggregate to 6763*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* The deanery is of the net yearly value of 1185*l.*; and the tithes constituting the joint estate of the chapter, and the separate estates of the prebendaries, have been commuted for rent-charges, amounting altogether to 9735*l.* 2*s.* 9*d.* In the returns made to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, the benefices within the see, including several sinecure rectories, are said to be 143 in number and the average net income of each, 271*l.*—a sum which is nearly equal to the average for England; whilst only twenty-nine parishes were without glebe-houses. The population was, in 1841, 197,392; and, with the exception of the parishes on the confines of England, that population exhibited no considerable change of social condition, or increase of numbers. And what must be regarded as a most important element in the administration of a diocese, the bishop can select for each benefice the person best suited to promote the interests of the Church and the welfare of the people; because he has in his own hands the appointment to the deanery, to all the canonries, and to nearly all the benefices of which the see consists. Here, then, not the poverty of the livings, nor the size of the parishes, nor the abuse of lay-patronage, nor the want of means in the bishop to reward deserving merit, nor a rapid increase of population, except in a few special instances, can be assigned as causes for the extensive prevalence of Dissent, and the want of attachment to the Church. An explanation of these results must, then, be sought for in other influences: and probably no cause has been so powerful, nor has any practice occasioned so much dissatisfaction amongst the relations and connexions of several former bishops of that see, of a very large amount of the best preferment entrusted to those prelates for the reward of the hard-working clergy of the diocese, many of whom have seen the stations of distinction and profit in the see conferred on strangers to the country, not seldom ignorant of the language of the people, and unable to minister to them in sacred things in their own tongue. There is no desire to regard in an envious or depreciating temper the claims of the members of the families of

any of the prelates who have filled the see of St. Asaph, (some of whom, at least, are men of generous tempers and of a liberal disposition); but it may with truth be said, that the distribution of a very large amount of Church-preferment amongst the members of those families, has deprived other deserving men of the fair rewards of a life of labour, and has engendered a secular spirit in sacred things, most injurious to the interests of religion."

Such being the state of things, it may be asked—Is it "too late" to apply remedies? I say "No!" notwithstanding the Parliamentary authority we have for entertaining a contrary opinion. I believe that the really religious Nonconformist is becoming dissatisfied with the attitude lately assumed by the political Dissenter, and that he will, at no distant period, seek rest in the Church, from the strifes and contentions with which his spiritual life is now sorely tried. But with a view to this consummation so devoutly to be wished, let us see whether something cannot be done towards bringing about this happy result. And first and foremost comes the question of Lay co-operation in the Church.

But here I must protest against being supposed to urge the importance of establishing parochial, decanal, archidiaconal, or diocesan organizations, or conferences, simply on the ground of prudential expediency with the view of bringing back wanderers to the fold. I believe, on the contrary, that a hearty co-operation between the Clergy and Laity in carrying on the work of the Church is essential to her vitality and power of good, if not to her very existence. Such was the opinion of that great and good man, who was, if I mistake not, the founder of this Institution. He spared no labour, and devoted all the energies of a powerful mind to obtain a recognition of this principle of Church government through the length and breadth of the land; and it may be said truly, that he died a martyr to the cause he had so much at heart.

That public opinion is rife for the discussion of Lay co-operation in the Church, is evident from the unanimity with which Lord Sandon's motion was met in the House of Commons last week. This is not the time or place to go into the merits of the Bill itself. I would only observe, that there appear to me two objections to it—one on the principle, and the other on a matter of working detail. It contemplates the formation of a council in every parish. Does

not this proposal go to establish Congregationalism throughout the country, instead of recognising the Church as one great spiritual corporation apportioned into Dioceses and parishes as a matter of working convenience? It is true that an appeal to the Bishop is proposed, but practically each parish is to frame laws and regulations for itself. The other objection to the Bill is the utter impossibility of obtaining sufficient intelligent independent men in small agricultural parishes to become members of the parochial council. In many parishes the population is under 100, and all the land in it is the property of one gentleman; if he should reside in his parish, and hold peculiar views on matters of doctrine or ritual, he will, to say the least, make the position of the Clergyman a very uncomfortable and unsatisfactory one. And besides, there will be less uniformity of practice than there is now; each parochial council doing what seems good in their own eyes. That the principle however, of more extensive Lay co-operation in parochial matters is generally approved of, was clearly shewn by the favourable reception the Bill met with in the House of Commons, and there will be no difficulty in removing such objections as I have pointed out, by making the parochial council, instead of being an independent body, a branch of the ruridecanal association, and this again to form a portion of a Diocesan organization, to be called a conference or synod. In Wales, where the principle of self-government is fully recognized in all Dissenting systems, I think it absolutely necessary, if new life is to be infused into the Church, that the Laity should be represented in each parish, and have a real voice in the management of parochial matters.

Other remedies have been suggested by a Committee of Convocation, which has just presented its report on the Established Church in Wales, and therefore I will not enlarge upon this part of my subject. But, before I conclude, I must again call attention to one topic already alluded to in the quotation I made from Sir Thomas Phillips; I mean Patronage. People in England can hardly realize the soreness and irritation which is felt in Wales on this question; and this arises from the fact, that a great difference exists in England and Wales between the proportion of Episcopal and other patronage. In England Episcopal patronage is the exception and not the rule. In North Wales it is the rule and not the exception. In St.

Asaph, for instance, there are not 10 Livings worth £300 a year which are not in Episcopal patronage. We have already seen that the system has not worked well in this Diocese, and on this point I prefer quoting the opinion of others rather than offer my own. A late archdeacon, whose name is well known in the English Church, told me a few years before his death, that circumstances had led him to change his mind completely on the subject of episcopal patronage—that for 40 years of his ministerial life he had been of opinion that a Bishop required nothing but the patronage of all the livings to enable him to rule his diocese well, but that for 2 years he had been the confidential adviser of a Bishop when he had ceased to be able to transact the business of his diocese, and had the best opportunity of observing how the system of patronage worked, and the result was he became satisfied that he was wrong in the opinion he had entertained all his life. I will not trouble you with the reasons in detail which he gave for his change of mind. I must also be allowed to quote the words of a thoughtful layman in a letter addressed to myself a few months ago:—“As matters now stand the Bishop has the sole responsibility, and every appointment he makes, however good it may be, is always canvassed in an over captious spirit, which creates difficulties for the new incumbent on entering his parish, and evil to the Church generally.”

How then is this evil to be remedied? Do I propose to deprive Bishops of their patronage? On no account whatever. This would be a little short of confiscation, and could not be carried into effect without an Act of Parliament, and I am one of those who think that some of the greatest evils in the Church can be cured without having recourse to Parliamentary legislation. What I wish to see established is some kind of council to help the Bishop in the exercise of his patronage. It may be said he has his Chapter, whom he can always consult. I have no objection to this if the advice is asked for and given openly, with a due sense of responsibility. This plan, however, would not satisfy the public mind in its present temper. From some significant signs, I think that I am not wrong in saying that the time is fast approaching when the laity will demand to have a voice in the appointment of incumbents to parochial cures. God forbid that we should ever see the day when the minister shall be appointed by a popular election in the parish.

I believe that this would be a hundred times worse than the present evil. How then is the demand to be met? I believe that some such a plan as the following would succeed in allaying irritation, and would greatly help the patron without in any degree encroaching upon his rights and privileges. My plan is based on the assumption that a diocesan conference, with branch associations in each deanery, will soon be established in all the 4 Welsh dioceses, and then there will be no difficulty whatever in carrying it out. When a living in the Bishop's gift becomes vacant in the diocese, I would suggest that a meeting of the association, consisting of clerical and lay representatives from every parish, be convened in each deanery, and after joining in public worship—and I think, I would add, partaking of the Lord's Supper together—the members would nominate a fit and proper man to fill the vacant post, and then recommend him to the patron. The person recommended need not be a resident in the deanery. If this were done in every deanery throughout the diocese, the patron would have as many selected candidates for the vacant post as there are deaneries in the diocese, unless it should happen that more than one deanery should select the same candidate. I can see no difficulty in carrying out this plan. To some it may appear complicated, to others an invasion of the rights of patrons. I protest against the doctrine that the disposal of the cure of souls is a right; on the contrary, I hold it to be a solemn trust to be exercised for the benefit of the parishioners, and if I point out a way in which he can be helped in the discharge of this important trust, I believe I shall help in preserving from decay the fabric of our good old Church Constitution, and hand it down to posterity as the richest inheritance we can give to them. In former and happier days the Church in Wales has been a blessing to many: may we not indulge in the hope that she will be a blessing to generations yet unborn.

Colonel CORBETT, M.P., was much pleased with the paper to which he had listened, and could endorse all its leading statements. The speaker adverted to a recent article in the *Quarterly Review* on the Church in Wales. A statement therein made concerning the diocese of Bangor had struck him much: statistics showed that in 30 years the diocese in question has made up all its arrears. The pending attacks on the Church he thought due not to the inefficiency

of the Church, but had been called forth by its growing power and popularity. The Church was gaining on Dissent and that made Dissenters alarmed. The speaker paid a compliment to Mr. Gladstone as a sincere defender of the Church in Wales, but he had no great faith in the permanency of the Premier's views (cheers,) and this should make Churchmen vigilant. Mr. Gladstone's assistance was not to be relied on for long, and preparations of a defensive sort should not be neglected. Mr. W. Williams's resumé of the history of the Church in Wales was possibly true as far as it went, but it was out of date; he took no account of present progress.

The Rev. Joseph BARDSLEY took up that part of Mr. Williams's paper which dealt with "chapel" building. He showed that Dissenting statistics relating to this matter were not reliable, because chapels travelled about; they followed the migrations of their frequenters. Having gone into Wales in 1868 to lecture on behalf of the Irish Church, he was much struck with the amount of Church feeling that seemed to prevail there.

Archdeacon FFOULKES was glad that Mr. Williams had not put in an *ad misericordiam* appeal on behalf of the Church in Wales. He thought Church prospects in Wales were much more hopeful than Church prospects in London. He adduced illustrations to show that the alienation of the Welsh speaking population from the Church was due to the mismanagement of the clergy in giving more facilities for English services than for Welsh services. His experience was that the Welsh dissenters were really well affected towards the Church, although no doubt the Liberation Political dissenters had stirred up much ill-will. A necessary item of Church Reform would be some improved machinery for depriving clergymen of depraved habits; but this was a lay matter, and laymen as a rule seemed unwilling to come forward and facilitate convictions. When and where the Church in Wales shows signs of work, it is found that the people display a desire to return to the Church.

Archdeacon EMERY rose at the call of the chairman. He wished the laity were more forward to assert their rights and become public speakers on Church questions. He had been much struck with a remark of Mr. Williams's, that there were reasons to expect that conferences of clergy and laity would soon become established institutions in Wales; he was glad to hear

it; the great way of promoting Church work was to encourage lay co-operation. Addressing himself to the question of Church work in Bangor, he had no doubt that the prosperous condition of the Church in that diocese was largely due to the interest in Church work created by the Bishop of Bangor's diocesan conferences. He passed on to explain how the Bishop of Ely was working the conference plan; the Ely conferences had been going on for six years, and had been attended with a wonderful measure of success. The Archdeacon adverted to Mr. Gladstone's declaration that the question of the Church in Wales could not be dissociated from the Church in England and regarded this as a reason for English Churchmen doing all they could to promote the welfare and development of the Church in Wales. As more frequent services were a want of the Church of England, so it was in Wales. The clergy in both countries were too few and too overworked, and "lay readers" must be resorted to on a large and general scale. Improved Church discipline was also a needed point of Church Reform—cheap and inexpensive discipline. The administration of ecclesiastical law was fearfully costly, outrageously costly; he cited a simple case, but simple as it was, it involved £2000. Finally he said a word in favour of Convocation as a practical and deserving body.

Mr. PULMAN said a few words on the question of less costly administration of Church law. He considered that even as things now stood, it was not obligatory to go to the Court Christian; under the Act of Uniformity churchmen were entitled to go to the Common Law Courts for Church purposes.

Mr. RAIKES, M.P., as a resident in Wales, had listened with peculiar pleasure to Canon Williams's paper. The tone of the evening's discussion had been cheering. The position of the Church in Wales was anything but hopeless; with patience and tact the breach between the Church and Dissent might be healed. The fundamental remedy for this would be the institution on a more general scale of Welsh services, but there must not be coincidentally with this a discontinuance of English services; there is need for a multiplication of men, and if clergymen are not forthcoming lay-helpers must be employed. He had not unbounded confidence in the real value of diocesan conferences on the Ely model. There should be a religious census; until that was obtained, Churchmen would do much of their work in the dark, as the

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 Wales. The disestablishment of 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.









