









A LETTER

TO

HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

ON

THE PRESENT WANTS OF THE CHURCH.

BY HENRY KINGSCOTE, ESQ.

“Not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the
LORD.”—Amos viii. 11.

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A LETTER,

&c.

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

IN January of last year, a memorial was addressed to your Grace, most numerous and respectably signed, calling upon you to adopt the prayer of that petition, or to devise some other means whereby the crying and growing evil of a Church inadequate to the wants of a rapidly increasing population might be met. You rejected the address,—you have brought forward no other measure of a similar kind. Nothing has been proposed by the collective wisdom of the Bench of Bishops, to satisfy the wishes of vast numbers of thoughtful and devoted Churchmen; nor have you individually given any sanction to two associated bodies closely connected with the Church, and established with the express object of strengthening the Parochial system.

The Church Pastoral Aid Society, as you know, is prepared to send either Curates, or Lay Agents, to districts in which the Clergyman requires help; and the Scripture Readers' Association supplies to the Incumbents of populous parishes pious and carefully selected

assistants, who act under the licence of the Bishop, and are placed under the superintendence of the Clergyman. Both are in active operation, helping to convey spiritual instruction to tens of thousands, whom the Church cannot reach without them; and neither of them has received any countenance from your Grace. Thus far then, you repudiate extraneous assistance, when it is offered you. The responsibility of doing so is a serious one; and with the most entire respect for your person and office, yet with all freedom and explicitness, I would ask you to reconsider this decision.

I know how high you stand in the estimation of your countrymen for many private virtues. But by place and office you are set as a "watchman" in the Church of God. "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul." Ezek. xxxiii. 7, 8, 9. In calling upon you therefore to adopt every safe and practicable measure for making this people of England a Christian people, I do but ask you, solemnly and earnestly to "deliver your own soul." The Laity are up, and anxious to do what they can. They feel they are part and parcel of the Church, and will cheerfully

contribute their endeavours to gather her outcasts into her fold. They feel deeply the responsibility which attaches to all of us alike, in relation to the masses of our untaught fellow-countrymen ; and looking at the temper of the Clergy, and the just influence of the Rulers of the Church with the Community at large, they know how important it is to carry with them, in any measures which shall be attempted, the sanction and approval of the Episcopal Bench. With this feeling, the enlargement of the order of Deacons was proposed, and the late address presented. Your answer was courteous,—coming from your Grace, it could not be otherwise ; but anything less encouraging to the hopes of the Petitioners—anything less indicative of a desire on your part to act with boldness and decision, such as the times demand, it would be difficult to imagine.

Under these circumstances, I feel that I should be acting with insincerity, if I approached you with the language of compliment. The business is too serious and urgent for any thing but plain-speaking. I look around me and see a scene too nearly resembling that described by the prophet in such affecting language :—“ Ye feed not the flock, the diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost ; and they were scattered because there is no Shepherd, and they became meat to all the beasts of the field ; when they were scattered, none did search or seek after them.” Ezek. xxxiv. 2, &c. The responsibility of such a state of things must rest

somewhere. It rests, in a measure, on all who can do something. It presses heavily on those who can do most. My Lord, I do but give utterance to the thoughts of ten thousand bosoms when I tell you, looking at the place you fill, the resources within your reach, and the present temper of our public men, that immensely more might be done in this direction by the Heads of the Church, if they had the heart to do it.

Let us look the evil in the face. We cannot conceal it, if we would. Enemies to the Church, for the sake of exposing its defects,—friends, to enlist the public sympathies in favour of their several schemes of improvement,—economists, for the sake of building up some favourite theory with an array of figures and calculations,—have exhibited the principal facts till they have become familiar to us all. Let me give a few as a specimen of a hundred more, showing how completely inadequate is our existing machinery for the spiritual education of the people.

The population gathered within eight miles of St. Paul's, is computed at 2,250,000. For the instruction of this vast multitude there are about 500 Clergymen, or one for 4500 souls. But the instances are not few in which 10,000 and more are allotted to a single man as his flock.

It has lately been ascertained that in Lambeth, and the five adjoining parishes, there are no less than 20,000 children without the means of education; and as this is no new evil, the parents, in a vast number of cases, are as untaught as the children. The population of the metropolis, and the suburban parishes, increases at the rate

of 30,000 a year. To keep pace with this growth, fifteen Churches should be built annually, and two ministers appointed to each. I need not say with all the efforts of the last ten years, since the Bishop of London's scheme was made public, how short the supply falls of this demand. Probably not half the increase has been provided for, and the other half is added to the previously existing mass of some million and a half who are living without any public acknowledgment of the Almighty.

Deplorable as this case is, when the whole metropolitan population come to be divided amongst the metropolitan Churches and Clergy, it is far worse when particular instances are selected. Many of the City parishes are abundantly supplied. Some of the most populous districts, thanks to the recent zeal for Church-building among the laity, and to the unwearied labours of many admirable Incumbents and Curates, who ply their daily task in courts and alleys, are thoroughly explored and faithfully overlooked. But there are others near them absolutely waste and desert as regards spiritual cultivation, where the people are so many, and the teachers so few, that the spiritual provision made from public resources becomes a perfect mockery.

I here beg to refer you to the annexed table which I believe to be correct, and the following facts taken from the reports of two Societies.

Parish	Population	No. of Clergy with cure of souls	Proportion.
St. George's, Southwark	50,000	5	1 in 10,000
St. George's East	42,000	4	1 — 10,500
Poplar	21,000	2	1 — 10,500
Limehouse	22,000	2	1 — 11,000

Parish	Population	No. of Clergy with cure of souls.	Proportion.
Shadwell - -	10,000	1	1 — 10,000
Spitalfields - -	21,000	2	1 — 10,500
Shoreditch, St. Leonard	35,000	3	1 — 11,666
„ Hoxton -	24,000	2	1 — 12,000
„ Haggerstone	19,000	2	1 — 9,500
Clerkenwell, St. James	30,000	2	1 — 15,000
„ St. John	8,500	1	1 — 8,500
St. Luke, Old Street	15,000	2	1 — 7,500
„ St. Barnabas	14,000	1	1 — 14,000
Newington, Surrey -	60,000	7	1 — 8,570
Christ Church, „ -	15,000	2	1 — 7,500
St. Anne, Soho -	17,000	2	1 — 8,500
Stepney, St. Dunstan's	25,000	3	1 — 8,300

Beneath the shade of Westminster Abbey, there is a district which every man ought to explore for himself, who wishes to know what the worst parts of London are, and to understand the kind of work which is before us, if we propose to pour the light of Christian truth into all its dwellings. To one of the two parishes which comprise it, a Scripture Reader has lately been sent at the request of the Incumbent—One of the regulations of the Society which employs him, requires a weekly return to be made to the Clergyman, of the houses visited. To distinguish the religious profession of the several families who inhabit them, the Reader is furnished with a paper divided into four columns. These are headed with the letters C, D, R and N.—C standing for Churchman, D for Dissenter, R—for Roman Catholic, and N for a person who owns no brotherhood with any Christian community. “ Now, in the the visits made by the Reader, in five successive days, the result is as follows :—On the first day, he visited

families containing one hundred and fifty individuals : and of these, *one hundred* had no home in the Christian Church, no preference for any mode of Christian worship. On the second day, the proportion of these persons was yet larger, *seventy* being their compliment to nineteen who owned a relation to one body of Christians or another. On the third day,—by far the best, it is just half-and-half. On the fourth, for thirteen Church-people and fourteen Dissenters, we have *sixty-two* with the black letter N, annexed : and the numbers on the fifth day are almost exactly the same. So in the metropolis of Christian England, out of five hundred and fifty persons visited and talked with in succession, *three hundred and sixty*, or two-thirds very nearly, had no such connexion with the Church as to be assignable to any one religious body.” *

The Incumbent of the adjoining parish, in making application to the same Society for a Scripture Reader, gives the following account of his flock :—

“ The district for which I require his services is inhabited by a class of persons, which, in respect of ignorance, poverty, vice, and wretchedness, can hardly be surpassed in any other part of the metropolis.— Street alone contains sixty five houses, in which it is calculated that more than 1,000 persons find shelter : Two thirds of these houses are lodging-houses of the lowest description, containing, not families, but herds of human beings, open at all hours, night and day, for the reception of trampers, mendicants, thieves, &c. The

* Second Report of the Scripture Readers' Association. p. 3.

remainder are occupied by poor labourers, of whom many are Irish. These latter constitute the only part of the population that can be said to be stationary.

“ This street as well as the whole adjacent neighbourhood, on Sunday afternoons in fine weather, presents one of the most awful spectacles that a Christian can be called upon to witness. The ungodly condition of these poor people is then most strikingly exhibited ; the street being thronged with persons, male and female, young and old, occupied in rude sports and games, drinking gambling, and fighting. The whole scene, as a pious poor man residing on the spot once observed to the Clergyman of the district, is more fit for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for any place which professes to belong to a Christian Country.” *

I have spoken hitherto of the Metropolis ; but from uncounted multitudes in a hundred other places is the cry going up month by month, “ No man hath cared for my soul.”—The following statement came lately under my eye respecting a newly-formed parochial district comprising a manufacturing population of five thousand souls.—Amidst such overwhelming difficulties, with an army of opposers, and a little handful probably of Christians, the Incumbent would have to labour single-handed, but for the aid afforded him in a Curate by that admirable Society to which your Grace and the majority of your Episcopal brethren afford no countenance, the
CHURCH PASTORAL-AID SOCIETY.

“ The state of things here is really appalling. At my first coming I was met with most discouraging salu-

* Second Report of the Scripture Readers' Association. p. 6.

tations on every side. I was, however, disposed to hope that matters were exaggerated, and that the fears of my neighbours had led them to express themselves more strongly than they ought. A Clergyman said, 'You have a tremendous task before you. I know not how you will get on in such a spot. It is a heathenish place.' A respectable tradesman's first words were, 'You have come to a dreadfully dark place. There are more infidels and Chartists here than any where else.' I am just now beginning to find that my neighbours did not overstate the facts. In every part of the parish, the most dreadful indifference to the outward forms of religion prevails. Family after family stand in our books of remembrance with a blank against their names. Under the head 'Place of worship,' *none, none, none*, is the most frequent entry. And I regret to add that many who call themselves Church people are in the habit of frequently attending the Popish Chapel. Still this lamentable condition is not to be wondered at when I tell you that the thresholds of scores of the houses which I and my Curate have visited, have never before been crossed by a Clergyman; and while thus neglected by our Church, Rome has been lying in wait,—alas! most successfully too,—to deceive. In that part of the district which we are now visiting from house to house, there are very few families in which I have not Popish or infidel error to combat. Constantly do I return to my home, after a day's work, thoroughly exhausted, and almost in despair. Still it is God's work, and "greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world." *

* Eleventh Report of the Church Pastoral Aid Society. pp. 30, 31.

As I have the last Report of this Society before me, I must make my case more complete by quoting a few lines from it which probably have not come under your eye.

The 279 Incumbents, to whom its grants for Curates or Lay-assistants are made, have an aggregate population of more than *two million* souls, being an average of 7200 for each Incumbent. How many of these could afford to employ Curates, if left to their own resources, may be inferred from the fact that their average income is just £200 a year, and half of them are without parsonage houses.

Of course, when we talk of an average of 7200, the real need is much greater than these numbers describe. It is the multitude of places yet *worse-supplied* which makes the emergency we have to deal with; and as I cast my eye over the list of grants, I find *nine* out of the *thirteen* parishes helped in Liverpool alone, described as containing *ten thousand* souls or more.

Years go on; fresh grants are made; the largest amount of population is considered as the standing claim, when new Parishes have to be selected. Yet so imperfectly are the most destitute supplied at present, that the rate in cases recently considered is hardly lowered, 6700 being the average numbers of the 29 last Districts to which grants were voted.

Now leaving out of account, for the present, the rest of the country,—taking the two million of souls, helped by this Institution, fairly to represent that portion of our fellow-countrymen who most urgently need faithful, constant, persevering, domestic instruction,—it is not at

all too much to say that one layman, at the least, is wanted for every two thousand, *besides* a vast augmentation of Clergy. A thousand labourers, therefore, would find ample employment in the places of extremest need alone ; and to me our deliberations about new Ecclesiastical arrangements, and all our efforts for Church extension, and other good things seem to be miserably below the mark, while this grand desideratum is kept out of sight, namely living men to speak, where living men will hear them, of God and Christ, of judgment and salvation, of repentance and holiness.

You must excuse me, My Lord, if I speak strongly ; but I am indeed grieved to find, that responsible persons, occupying the watch-towers of our city, and having great influence with rulers and with people remain satisfied, while nothing is being attempted on any large scale to redress evils like these. It may be that they will baffle us when we rise up to meet them ; for our sins the Almighty Ruler may have let this host of untaught citizens grow and grow, till we can cope with it no longer, and Christianity possibly must now surrender to the powers of evil the ground which they have held so long. But who would dare to come to such a conclusion till remedies were exhausted ? New methods should be tried, if old ones have failed. A searching investigating spirit should be at work. Devotion to precedents should not pass for the highest wisdom, nor enterprize in a high and holy cause be regarded as wickedness and folly. If need be, *something should be ventured for God and souls.*

For the Church to stand still, while all the world is

astir and busily adapting its institutions to its wants, is, I make bold to say, at least as dangerous as the experiments of the rashest ecclesiastical innovators, and much more full of hazard than anything which I shall venture to suggest in the following pages.

And let it be remembered that, in this matter of supplying spiritual instruction, through the Established Church, to the masses of our countrymen, we are left to our own resources. Your Grace doubtless remembers Sir Robert Peel's declaration, when at the height of ministerial power, in 1842. No hope was held out, while those who were considered the special friends of the Church were the dominant party in the State, that any grant for purposes of Church Extension would be voted by Parliament. We are cast upon the energies and zeal of individual Churchmen, or must trust to the wisdom of the Episcopal Bench to propound some general measures, and devise some new expedient for the expansion of our ecclesiastical system. From the latter quarter, since your Grace's views have been made known, even sanguine men are ceasing to hope for much. Consultations at Lambeth, we fear, do not embrace questions like these on which I am touching. No rumour reaches our ears of anything intended, or even canvassed, beyond the favourite expedient of late years, begging hard in all possible quarters for sufficient funds to build churches, with a given proportion of free sittings, which the bulk of the neglected population in our large towns never occupy. We would not have one Church less—we should like to have a thousand more. But with reference to the men for whom I plead, those to whom

Christianity has become a strange thing, such an addition, as things are, would be just as worthless as schools of philosophy to the grossest and most ignorant boor. The experiment has been tried, and the failure is complete. Not one working-man in *ten*, anywhere, speaking of our large towns, and in many districts, not one in *fifty* goes near a Church once in a month. This is the fact which your Lordship and the heads of the Church have to deal with. May I ask, what are your remedies? Have you any in hand? Are you satisfied to let ten more years pass, or another generation go to their graves, without some manly, energetic effort to arrest the spreading evil? If they, who should be leaders, will not take their rightful place—if men, whom God has called to be rulers in the Church, produce nothing before the country from which it can be inferred that their eyes are open to see what thoughtful, earnest men are deploring as a national calamity,—at least, we might expect that they would thankfully accept what is offered them by others,—that the weight of their official character should not, all of it, be thrown into the adverse scale,—that something more might be heard from them, in times like these, than civil acknowledgments of well-intentioned zeal, and damaging censures of every enterprise that has the look of novelty.

For instance, a large infusion of Lay Agency, as subsidiary to the public ministrations and pastoral instructions of the clergy, is absolutely necessary, if the people are to be reached and taught.

Some propose, as you know, to make the distinction between Presbyters and Deacons a reality, and greatly

to increase the number of deacons, occupying them principally with the less public of the minister's duties. They might be visitors of the sick, instructors of the ignorant and careless, teachers in schools, and, generally helpers for all spiritual purposes to the parochial clergymen. They need not be highly-educated men. God has given gifts for teaching, and a heart full of love and zeal to thousands of our countrymen, who cannot, by any possibility, scrape together what is wanted for a three years' residence at the University. Some might continue in the lower grade, and be usefully employed as domestic teachers among men not far removed from their own rank in life, whom they would understand much better, in some respects, than the higher-born minister. Others, after being practised and approved in the subordinate departments, might rise to be Presbyters, and, assuredly, would be as well fitted to preach usefully to the poor, and to visit acceptably by the bedside of the sick and dying, as the very moderately-furnished gentlemen who often pass now from our Halls and Colleges to some country rectory. The Church would then be better fitted for her work of teaching the whole body of the people, having recognized officers who should touch society at every point; and the men, who will not seek instruction at Church, will have it much more surely supplied at their homes, when a body of Evangelists shall be provided, whose express business it is to carry the word of life to every house within their district.

Dr. Arnold and others have suggested that, if any plan of this sort were adopted, it would be wise to allow

the deacon to unite some worldly calling with his spiritual duties. To this course I can see no reasonable objection, and the financial gain would be immense of having some portion of time and labour for the Church as a free-will offering from men, not dependent on her resources for bread.

Besides, in how many town parishes would the incumbent rejoice to have for his helper one permanently connected with the place, connected with it by ties of birth and affection, who will live and die among his own people. The frequent emigration of Curates from parish to parish,—the real or supposed necessity of bettering themselves, as years go on, or a family increases,—the periodical disruption of the tie which binds minister and people together, just when confidence has sprung up, and his labours have begun to tell with more effect,—these are among the complaints and burdens of our hard-working town-incumbents. Every one who has had intercourse with them, knows how much of anxiety and labour is involved in their hunting after Curates, and how many a sore parting they have to experience, in a long course of years, with some who have been helpers to themselves in every good work. The evil would be greatly lessened if there was an unbroken continuity in some departments of parochial labour, if some of the charities were permanently overlooked and administered by the same well-known and thoroughly-trusted individual, and if some portion of that which the Incumbent has to teach to each Curate in succession was learnt, once for all, by some competent and right-minded resident on the spot.

Upon this point I cannot forbear inserting the following letter from Mr. Dale. There could not be a more decisive testimony, or a more competent witness :—

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ Being on duty this month at St. Paul’s, I regret that I cannot attend your proposed Meeting on Tuesday next. And I regret this the more, as I could have wished to draw the attention of the gentlemen convened to one particular ground on which the proposed diaconate would seem especially needful and desirable—and on which I could have spoken from experience.

Our large metropolitan parishes suffer great inconvenience from the frequent change of Curates. If we are so much favoured as to find active coadjutors in our work, it frequently happens that they are compelled to leave prematurely through failure of health, or are drafted away to posts of superior emolument, and sometimes diminished usefulness. I could name two or three parishes, in which there is a new curate, on the average, once a year, or at most twice in three years. Gentlemen thus circumstanced have scarcely had time to become acquainted with the parishioners, and of course their usefulness is greatly impaired. I have had a gentleman, a layman, whose duties involve the *practical* part of the diaconate, at work in my parish *for seven years*. In the same period I have had *five* Curates. The first became minister of a new Church—the second left from ill health—the third, a singularly-efficient man both in the pulpit and in the parish, was removed to one of the most important chapels near London before he was

in priest's orders—the fourth obtained a chaplaincy in the East India Bengal Establishment—the fifth is now leaving on account of impaired health. By means of the unintermitted labours of my practical deacon (if you will allow me to call him) I have avoided much of the inconvenience which these changes would otherwise have caused, and a new curate is made acquainted with the state of his district at a far less cost of time and trouble than must otherwise have been incurred, and the parish is not neglected, even while the curacy is vacant, or during the absence of the curate.

“ You will excuse this hasty outline, but it embodies one of my chief reasons for considering an order of deacons, who might be able to labour five or seven years, in the same sphere of duty, highly desirable for the Church, and the reason applies to many of our overpeopled manufacturing towns as well as to London.

“ Faithfully yours,

“ THOMAS DALE.”

“ *Residentiary House, St. Paul's,*
Oct. 10, 1844.

I believe that, if the duties of this class of labourers were distinctly defined, and the object was clearly perceived to be the spiritual well-being of the working classes, to be accomplished by household visitations and pains-taking individual instruction, there would be no impediments to their employment, which might not be easily overcome. Let the Bishops *will* that the thing should be tried, and, unless I am much mistaken, it is as good as done. Parliament will have no objection to pass

any law that may be necessary, if public money be not applied for ; liberal Churchmen, I doubt not, would contribute largely to any general or local fund for remunerating those whose whole time would be at the service of the Church ; and, what is more important still, living men would be found who would love the work for its own sake, and give themselves to it, “ not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.” Still if a step of this sort be too adventurous for our modern race of Ecclesiastics, if it is a settled thing in their minds that the safety of the Church depends upon a Deacon continuing to be what he has been, neither less nor more—that is, a well-dressed, ordained gentleman, who has taken a B.A. degree, and who must not read the absolution, or administer the cup,—then we have another plan to propose, making no innovation on established institutions, but simply calling new labourers into the field, and entrusting to them that portion of the Clergyman’s duties to which he is confessedly unequal. If we may not have Lay Deacons, we propose to substitute Lay Scripture Readers, plain men who know and love their Bibles, who can speak, not learnedly, but feelingly, respecting the things of our common salvation, and who can enter, as men born to a higher station cannot do, into the poor man’s reasonings, difficulties and temptations.

You know, my Lord, that a Society was formed two years ago for the purpose of seeking out, and employing men of this class. Your Grace’s sanction was solicited by its founders, but you did not see fit to afford them any active countenance or co-operation. Other Bishops saw their way more clearly. They felt that, where such

an auxiliary force was offered to the Clergy, labouring, as it were, in vain, to carry the Gospel to the doors of their countless parishioners, they must not turn it away, but receive it thankfully. The Bishop of London and the Bishop of Winchester placed themselves at the head of it,—the metropolitan parishes, on both sides of the water, being the sphere to which its labours were, in the first instance, directed; and under their sanction and approval of every step which has been taken, the Society sent out some fifty men, with the Bible in their hands, and the love of the Saviour in their hearts, to rouse the slumbering masses of our fellow-townsmen to some thought and care about their soul's salvation. If your Grace has taken any pains to inform yourself of the working of this new and important institution, you will find that the success of the experiment has been most decisive and complete. Due regard has been paid to Church order, because every Reader is sanctioned and licensed by the Bishop, and placed entirely under the direction of the Incumbent; and in no single instance has there been any complaint of the Reader wandering beyond his province, or seeking to occupy a position of rivalry with the Parochial Clergyman. The Bishop of London, at the *first* annual meeting, announced that, without one exception, every Incumbent to whom he had spoken expressed himself perfectly satisfied with the result; and the Bishop of Winchester, at the *second*, said that he could not sufficiently thank the Committee who had sent to the help of himself and his Clergy a body of faithful men who had discharged their unpretending but important duties so blamelessly and so effectually.

The following reports from clergymen will satisfy any man who is open to conviction. Many will say, "The thing is new, and our fathers did without it. It is rash for Churchmen to turn innovators, and when the work of reformation is once begun, it may go on to changes, which every wise man will deprecate." Some argue that the privilege of teaching men to serve God, and of making plain the way of life to the ignorant and careless, by reading and conversation, belongs, by a special grant from heaven, to persons known by certain ecclesiastical titles; and for a layman to try to do good to a brother by communicating to him the best things, seems to them a presumption bordering on impiety. Others, more moderate and more rational, but still with very exalted notions of clerical supremacy, do not condemn this practice altogether, but think it will be so infinitely better to multiply the clergy, than to call in the help of the laity, that they will rather wait half a century in the hope of obtaining the thing they like best, and in the meantime let two or three millions of immortal men go to the judgment-seat without preparation, than accept so imperfect and unsatisfactory a remedy. With these different classes of persons, I do not stop to argue. We have no common ground to stand upon. We do not weigh good and evil in the same scales. The tremendous calamity of finding myself surrounded by hundreds of thousands of fellow-creatures who are not pretending to live by the Christian rule, or to worship my God and Saviour, and for whom, practically, there is no Church and no pastor,—this, in my judgment, makes all other evils small and insignificant, and completely shuts out

from my view matters of ecclesiastical precedent and clerical prerogative. I waste no words upon those who do not sigh and mourn for the godless population of this nominally Christian metropolis; but for men of another sort, who will listen, and listen candidly, who desire to be convinced that new measures may be safely tried to meet this peculiar emergency,—I quote gladly such letters as the following from incumbents who have employed Scripture Readers in their own parishes with great comfort to themselves, and with immense advantage to thousands among their flock.

“ My Scripture Reader is just the sort of person I wished for; kind in his manners to the poor, judicious, pains-taking, and regular. His piety seems sober, his religious opinions sound, his churchmanship consistent. I continually follow in his track, and find that his visits are most acceptable; whilst the objects of our solicitude speak kindly and gratefully of him without a single exception.”*

“ As for my good and worthy Mr. ——, my reader, he is my right-hand in the parish; and now I know him so well, and have found his judgment so correct in his estimation of the different characters, that I feel the utmost confidence in him, and our people (I do not think there are ten exceptions) really esteem him, and very many absolutely long for the approach of their turn to be visited. †

* Occasional Paper, No. III. of Scripture Readers' Association, p. 5.

† Do.

“ I am happy to be able to furnish a very satisfactory report. My Scripture Reader is a truly devoted man, and labours most earnestly among the poor, with deep affection and anxious desire for their spiritual good. He is much valued and loved among the poor, from the sympathy he evinces for their sufferings, and the very tender and gentle way in which he reads to, counsels, warns, and exhorts them. In no case have I found him manifest any disposition to assume the pastoral office, or or supersede the ministration of the clergyman.” *

“ It is with very unfeigned gratification that I am enabled to bear unequivocal testimony to the value and usefulness of the Scripture Reader in my destitute parish. The Lord has borne testimony to his work here, and the fruit of his labour I have daily evidence and experience of. The aisles of my church are now quite filled by the poor of my district, who till lately never entered a place of worship; and of above one hundred recipients who regularly attend my monthly communion, a quarter part is composed of this humble class. By the unwearied exertions, too, of your Scripture Reader, the open desecration of the Sabbath (one of our most general and fearful sins here) begins to be felt a reproach by the small shopkeepers, and in two or three instances this abomination has been altogether done away.” †

“ During the time that Mr. —— has been with me,

* Occasional Paper, p. 6.

† Do.

from May up to the last month, he has visited 5000 persons and 1182 families. The influence that he has commanded by most admirable tact and management, by never intruding at improper periods, or urging matters at a wrong time,—the great devotedness and energy he has displayed, combined with great suavity of manner and benignant feeling,—have convinced the most prejudiced parties of the necessity and utility of such an appointment. In fact, the clergy cannot without superhuman exertions visit from the kitchen to the garret, as he has done.”*

I know that with a certain class of minds all this practical good weighs but little against theoretical objections, “Your Readers will not rest,” we are told, “till they become preachers; you give them influence in parishes, and when they have gained a certain footing among the people, who knows that they will not turn round against the Church, set up for themselves, and preach against the Clergyman whom they have served in his own Parish?” Who knows any thing respecting changeable men, and an uncertain future; but why should we make a conjecture, so evidently improbable, on purpose to scare ourselves from something so evidently useful? The Society employs persons who are certified to be well-affected Churchmen; what should turn them presently into violent Dissenters? As a Churchman, I should be sorry to think there was any natural or necessary connexion between Scripture reading and nonconformity. If I

* Occasional Paper, p. 6.

were a nonconformist myself, I could hardly wish for a more telling argument against the Church than an admission from Churchmen that, in proportion as men are actively employed for God, their zeal for the established form of worship will cool, and that admonitions to the ignorant and impenitent will surely engender a wish to stray from the Church's fold. The fact, however, we may assure the objector, is the other way. Men are much more likely to cling closer to the Church in which their zeal has found vent and occupation. There are numbers born in our communion, and growing up in it, who have warm hearts, and a ready tongue, who long to be made useful to their fellowmen, but who have no chance to become Clergymen. Is it wise to tell them,—“ If you ever become teachers of babes, and instructors of the foolish, you must first cross the parting-line between Churchmen and Dissenters ; we have no room or place for you, go over to the other side, and preach as actively as you please ? ” This is what the men *do* say, practically, who object to schemes like ours. By persisting obstinately in their ill-judged career for a long course of years, they have driven forth crowds of men, whose talents might have strengthened the Church in many ways ; and now when others, alive to the evil, propose to employ them, under judicious guidance, in the wide field which wants every Christian agency that can be brought to bear upon it, the timid, precedent-loving, *eighteenth century* Churchmen denounce the plan as tending to train up preachers for the sectaries !

I throw out these facts and hints for your Grace's

consideration. I do not say that either of the plans I have suggested is the best possible plan. I am not wedded to any particular class of means, if I can get my end accomplished, that the way of salvation may be made known to all men. It is an age, we must remember, when every Institution, however ancient and sacred, will be tested by a reference to its acknowledged utility and practical efficiency. I know well what are the blessings bestowed by the Church of England upon this land, how many of her pastors are a light and a blessing to the communities among which they live, how faithfully and laboriously many a Curate and Incumbent is doing God's work in secluded villages and populous towns, where the minister is foremost in every good work, the rich man's counsellor, and the poor man's comforter. But her claims are being canvassed now by tens of thousands of eager, inquiring spirits, in districts where the pastor is seldom seen, and his influence is hardly felt. Lay Deacons, or Scripture Readers, exploring streets and alleys, climbing broken staircases, invading crowded garrets and cellars,—besides leaving that blessing behind them which the word of God and the voice of kindness cannot fail to impart to many,—would be an army of witnesses for the Church, proving that her stray children are not forgotten.

It is quite time that her work of Evangelizing the country was understood in a broader sense, and taken in hand with new energy and zeal. The good sense and the Christian feeling of the people require as much; and if her teachers and rulers are backward to meet this demand, depend upon it, her ancient privileges will be

no effectual safeguard, and her ample endowments will seem only the richer spoil.

Let us hope, my Lord, that better days are coming, that to keep things quiet will not be the chief aim of our Episcopal Rulers,—but to save men's souls alive. I am sure I consult for your good fame and lasting peace, when I put the case of spiritual need before you in all its nakedness, and entreat you, in the name of our common Lord, by all our national, and all our personal, mercies, to spend the “ten talents” of your mighty influence actively for God. I believe that, in a time like ours, boldness is the truest wisdom; yet it is the complaint of all the wise and good men I talk to, that, while statesmen and others have some understanding of this truth, many Churchmen seem to see countless horrors in every projected change:—and they, who should dare the most in a spirit of faith, seem palsied by their fears into utter helplessness. Many of the laity, I rejoice to say, feel that they must act like men who are accountable to God for their wealth and social standing; the gross darkness which broods over many a district near their homes and their Churches, they will try to penetrate with the light of the everlasting gospel; idly they dare not wait while time moves on, and souls are gathered so fast to their account; but they desire above all things to follow where you should lead; they feel that every measure they propose will be doubly efficacious if it shall have, from the Heads of the Church, something better than a cold approval.

We tender to you in this cause our active services, our worldly substance, the time of our busy citizens, the

name and far-reaching influence of our higher gentry. Let me entreat you to accept our offer, or to give us in return, what we will most thankfully accept at your hands, some more comprehensive scheme which shall aim at making the Church's teaching co-extensive with the people's wants. I pray from the heart, my Lord, and with a most solemn sense of the responsibility involved in your decision, when I entreat the Giver of every good and perfect gift to bestow on you "the spirit of wisdom, and of power, and of a sound mind."

I beg to subscribe myself

Your Grace's

Most obedient Servant,

HENRY KINGSCOTE.

10, *Upper Grosvenor Street*, Aug. 17, 1846.

[*The address presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the reply of his Grace thereto, having been frequently referred to in the foregoing Letter, these documents are added as an Appendix.*]

“My Lord Archbishop,—We have the honour herewith to transmit very respectfully the accompanying Address to your Grace, signed by many noble, influential, and respectable persons, who concur with us in the hope that your Grace and the other members of the Episcopal Bench will be pleased to take the whole subject of the same into your earnest and early consideration, with a view to the adoption, if not of the precise means therein suggested, at least of some means toward removing the crying and growing evil of a Church inadequate to the wants of a rapidly increasing population.

“We are, my Lord Archbishop,

“Your Grace’s very faithful and humble servants,

“SANDON.

ROBERT HARRY INGLIS.

HENRY KINGSCOTE.

“To the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.”

“May it please your Grace,—The period during which it has pleased Almighty God to continue to the Church of England the mild and paternal superintendence of your Grace, in the discharge of her highest ecclesiastical functions, has been marked by great and important changes in our social, moral, and political circumstances.

“A lengthened interval of peace, the advancement of literature, the arts, sciences, and civilization, and, above all, the rapid increase of our population, have produced an alteration in the relative position of the several orders in society, which demands the grave consideration of every one who desires to promote the well-being of the nation, but more especially of those who are the appointed guardians of her religious institutions and the pastors of her people.

“Under these circumstances, and impelled by a heartfelt attachment to the scriptural principles of our Established Church, and by an earnest desire that its efficiency should be increased, and the interests of true religion more effectually promoted through its agency, we, the undersigned, lay members of that Church, venture with all respect to bring under the consideration of your Grace, some means by which, we trust, under the Divine blessing, these great objects may be attained.

“Admirably as our parochial system seems calculated to meet the wants of the country, and to bring the ministrations of the clergy within the reach of all classes, still the increase of our population, and its unequal distribution, render it impossible that they should extend their pastoral care to the great majority of their flocks in large towns and populous districts. We do not forget the attempts made by the Legislature, by voluntary associations, and by individuals, to remedy this defect; but we are convinced that further measures are required to reach the full extent of the evil. We believe that the efficiency and usefulness of the National Church might be very greatly increased by arrangements, which, without introducing any organic changes, should bring into active operation the powers and capacities now lying dormant in her existing institutions.

" To effect this, we believe that two important objects must be accomplished—first, the clergy must be increased in number, and second, provision must be made for a more systematic employment of laymen, in the exercise of functions which do not belong exclusively to the clergy. For the attainment of these objects we would respectfully request your Grace and the other members of the Episcopal Bench to take into your consideration :—1. The expediency of increasing largely the numbers of the third order of our clergy—the deacons. And we venture to suggest that this may be effected by admitting on such conditions as will maintain the order and discipline of our Church, persons who have not the means or opportunity of proceeding to a University degree, but who are found competently trained for the service of the sanctuary — their advancement to the higher order of the ministry being made contingent upon a faithful discharge during a lengthened period of the office of a deacon : or upon such other circumstances as your Grace and the other members of the Episcopal Bench may think fit :—

" 2. The propriety of sanctioning and encouraging the employment of a class of laymen, who, without altogether abandoning their worldly callings, might be set apart, under Episcopal authority, to act as visitors of the sick, Scripture readers, catechists, and the like, in parishes where their introduction should be approved of by the parochial clergy.

" The system of district visiting, and the appointment of lay Scripture readers, under clerical superintendence, have already been adopted, we believe with much success in many populous parishes ; but the present state of society requires that both these means of usefulness should be greatly extended, and brought into more immediate connexion with our ecclesiastical arrangements, for we are fully persuaded, that the true strength of our Church can never be completely known until, by some such means, her lay members are enabled, under direct sanction and control, to take part in the discharge of all those offices which are not by her constitution restricted to the three orders of the ministry.

" To provide the necessary funds (which should be administered by a Board, made up by a well-considered union of the clergy and laity) contributions may, we have little doubt, be extensively called forth, in offerings and collections made for this specific object at such periods and under such regulations as may be found desirable ; and we venture to hope, that an object, so directly affecting the efficiency of the Church, would attract the sympathies and obtain the support of all classes within her communion.

" In venturing to urge upon your Grace the adoption of these measures, which would supply a link much needed between the parochial clergy and the community at large, we are far from desiring to make any innovation in our ecclesiastical polity ; we only seek to restore to full vigour and efficiency one of the orders in our Church, and to promote the appointment of officers already recognised by ecclesiastical authority, and for which, at no period since the Reformation, has the position of the Church more imperatively called.

" Name. Residence."

" Lamheth, 1845.

" My dear Lord,—I have submitted to the consideration of such bishops as could be conveniently assembled in town the Memorial which was presented to me in January last by your Lordship, Sir Robert Inglis, and Mr. Kingscote, suggesting the expediency of meeting the great and immediate wants of the Church—1st, by multiplying the number of deacons ; 2d, by sanctioning the systematic employment of a class of laymen, who, without altogether abandoning their worldly callings, might assist the clergy in the discharge of all such offices as are not restricted by the Church to the three orders of the ministry.

" It is, I trust, needless to say that these proposals have been considered by us with the attention which is due, as well to the vast importance of the subject, as to the opinions and wishes of the very numerous and highly respectable body of laymen, who, by affixing their signatures to this Memorial, have testified their attachment to the Church, and their concern for the spiritual welfare of multitudes, who are now in a great measure prevented by circumstances from benefiting by its teaching and

ordinances. In respect to the desirableness of adding to the number of the clergy, and adopting other safe and legitimate methods of increasing the efficiency of the Church in populous towns and districts, there is not, nor indeed could there be, any difference of opinion amongst us. As regards the mode of proceeding best calculated to promote the beneficial objects which the memorialists have in view, I have been requested to communicate to them the following observations, the result of our joint considerations :—

“ 1. No considerable addition can be made to the existing number of clergymen without additional funds for their support.

“ 2. The salary required for curates at present is not greater than must be paid to deacons under the proposed scheme.

“ The funds, therefore, which must be raised for the new class of deacons would suffice for the maintenance of an equal number of additional curates, and if the funds of the existing Societies for maintaining additional curates were so enlarged as to furnish the means of supporting a larger number than are now employed, it is not probable that the bishops would interpose any unnecessary obstacles to the admission into the ministry of a sufficient number of persons to supply the wants of their respective dioceses, although every bishop must be allowed to judge for himself of the measures proper to be taken for supplying the wants of his own diocese by the ordination of as many persons as may be required, in conformity with the canons of the Church; it does not appear to be expedient to lay down any general rule on the subject, which might control the bishops in the exercise of their discretion, or diminish the securities which now exist for the due preparation of candidates for the ministry.

“ With respect to the employment of lay Scripture readers, it is thought that the question may be most properly left to the bishop of each diocese to encourage or sanction such provision, if he should think fit, in those parishes the incumbents of which may be desirous of availing themselves of such assistance.

“ I remain, your Lordship's faithful servant,

“ W. CANTAUR.

“ To Viscount Sandon.”

