

The BEREAN.

THEY RECEIVED THE WORD WITH ALL READINESS OF MIND, AND SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES DAILY, WHETHER THOSE THINGS WERE SO.—Acts xvii. 11.

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[Vol. I.]

Poetry.

A MOTHER'S GRIEF.

To mark the suffering of the babe
That cannot speak its woe;
To see the infant tears gush forth,
Yet know not why they flow;
To meet the meek uplifted eye,
That faint would ask relief,
Yet can but tell of agony,—
This is a mother's grief.

Through dreary days and darker nights
To trace the march of death;
To hear the faint and frequent sigh,
The quick and shortened breath:
To watch the last dread strife draw near,
And pray that struggle brief,
Though all is ended with its close,—
This is a mother's grief.

To see in one short hour decayed
The hope of future years;
To feel how vain a father's prayers
How vain a mother's tears:
To think the cold grave now must close
O'er what was once the chief
Of all the treasured joys of earth,—
This is a mother's grief.

Yet when the first wild throbs are past,
Of anguish and despair,
To lift the eye of faith to heaven,
And think—my child is there;
This best can dry the gushing tear,
This yields the heart relief,
Until the Christian's pious hope
O'ercomes a mother's grief!

DALE.

THE CONVOCATION, AND DIVISION OF DIOCESES.

It is admitted on all hands, that as the Church is extended among our population, the number of bishops as well as of the clergy should be increased. If dioceses cannot conveniently be divided, the order of suffragan bishops might be revived with great advantage to the Church. By the law of the land the bishop of any diocese may recommend two persons to the Crown, and the Crown may make the selection of one to act as his coadjutor. But as the order has long since fallen into disuse, it would be desirable that the whole matter should be submitted to convocation, with a view to the revival of the practice. As the question is one of considerable interest, and must necessarily, under our present circumstances, come under the consideration of convocation, if the Crown should see fit to authorize it to act, I may touch upon a few topics connected with its history.

In ancient times there was an order of bishops called *chorepiscopi*, who acted as assistants or coadjutors to the bishops of dioceses. They were, generally, placed in the largest villages. Originally they were intended to supply the place of aged and infirm bishops, in conferring orders and in administering confirmation; but they had no jurisdiction, and could only act by a commission from the bishop of the diocese. They existed from the first Nicene Council to the middle of the ninth century, when the order was gradually abolished by the influence of the popes, who did not find the *chorepiscopi* disposed to promote their views of aggrandizement. Other persons were, therefore, invested with the same powers, though under the name of suffragans; who, in most cases, were appointed by the pope himself. Their duty was the same as that of the *chorepiscopi*, or bishops of the country, namely, to assist the diocesan, in consecrating churches, in ordaining priests and deacons, and in supplying the place of the bishop on all occasions, when, from various causes, he might be unable to be present. A commission from the diocesan, however, was necessary to authorize them to act, since, by the laws of the Church, no bishop can perform any episcopal act in the see of another without permission. In England, it appears, that the order of suffragan bishops was instituted in the time of William the Conqueror; and, until the reign of Henry VIII., they were usually appointed by the pope. Originally they took their titles from places "in partibus infidelium," that is, places where the bishops could not remain with safety, though there were fixed sees in them. They were bishops at large, or titular bishops, but their office was identical with that of the *chorepiscopi*, though some of the duties of the latter were performed at a subsequent period by the bishop's chancellor. No change occurred until the 26th of Henry VIII., when an act was passed, by which suffragan bishops were permitted, under certain restrictions. The names of certain towns and villages were also specified, from which the suffragans were to derive their titles; so that they were now constituted *chorepiscopi* as formerly. On Queen Mary's accession the statute was repealed: but it was revived in the reign of Elizabeth.

The following extracts from the act of parliament will show the intention of those by whom it was framed. After specifying the places, the act declares that they "shall be taken and accepted for sees of bishops suffragans to be made in this realm, and the bishops of such sees shall be called suffragans of this realm. And that every archbishop and bishop, being disposed to have any suffragans,

shall and may at their liberties name and elect, every one of them for their peculiar diocese, two honest and discreet spiritual persons, and those two persons, so by them to be named, shall present to the king's highness, making humble request to his Majesty, to give to one such of the said two persons as shall please his Majesty, such title, name, style, and dignity of bishop of such of the sees above specified, as the king's highness shall think most convenient for the same." It is added, "and that every such person shall be called bishop suffragan of the same see whereunto he shall be named." The act further provides for his consecration by the archbishop of the province in the ordinary way. In order that no inconvenience might arise in the exercise of episcopal authority, and to prevent strife or jealousy, it was ordered, that the suffragan should not exercise any jurisdiction, except with the consent and by the appointment of the diocesan. Nor was the authority to be exercised longer than was permitted by the bishop.

From the above extracts it is clear, that the king was at liberty to give the suffragan any one of the titles mentioned in the act, without being confined to places within the diocese, in which he was to exercise authority. Thus the Bishop of London had a suffragan, at that time, with the title of Suffragan of Bedford. Still the more general practice was to grant a title from a place in the diocese.

It is obvious, that the order might be revived with great advantage to the Church: and it is clear from the act by which suffragans are authorized, that no possible inconvenience or discomfort could arise to the diocesan, seeing that all the authority is vested in himself. The subject, therefore, is one which might be submitted to convocation: for though the act of parliament authorizes the appointment, yet as more than three centuries have elapsed since it was enacted, and more than two since any suffragan was appointed, there are necessarily many matters which it might be desirable to review. If only one were appointed in each diocese, what incalculable good might result to the Church! The suffragan might also perform those duties which are now discharged by the chancellor of the diocese. The office is fully recognised by the canons of 1604, for it is appointed, that "every bishop or his suffragan do in his own person carefully perform the office of confirmation;" and Charles II., in his declaration in 1660, says, "Because the dioceses be thought to be of too large extent, we will appoint such a number of suffragan bishops in every diocese as shall be sufficient for the due performance of their work." It would be easy to constitute suffragans wherever they might be required: and as the individuals selected for the office would not be expected to live in a style beyond that of ordinary clergymen, the additional expenses incurred by travelling would be comparatively small. At all events the suffragan might be permitted to hold a second living, with a view to the defraying of the necessary expense: or a stall, or some preferment in each cathedral, might be devoted to that purpose. These and similar points might be considered in convocation, who would devote to them that attention, which their importance and the circumstances of the Church require.

In a work already alluded to, the following remarks occur on the same subject. Speaking of the extent of our dioceses, the author says, "Now suffragans would go a great way towards a redress of the grievance: each of the present bishops would then be a sort of archbishop: and our two archbishops would then be patriarchs. The large extent of our dioceses could no longer be then complained of: nor the incapacity, which the bishop thence lies under, of acquainting himself much, either with his clergy or his people.

It may be mentioned, that according to Mr. Wharton, twenty eight suffragan bishops were appointed between the year 1312 and the period of the passing of the Act of King Henry VIII. In the reign of Elizabeth, we meet with several: and one of that of James I., since which time the office has fallen into disuse. To revive it, would be perfectly easy: and to enable the convocation to make the necessary alterations in the machinery, by which suffragans are appointed, requires only the permission of the Crown.

A distinction, it will be seen, must be made between the order of suffragan bishops, of which we have been speaking, and the suffragans of the two archbishops: for all the bishops of a province are the suffragans of the metropolitan. In ancient times, the bishops met in council at the command of the archbishop, whose suffragans they were called, because they met by his appointment, to give their vote or suffrage.

In some cases, too, it may be desirable that dioceses should be divided. Not a few of them are of very large extent,—so large, or so populous, that no single bishop can possibly superintend them as they should be superintended. Visitations and confirmations must be held frequently, if the intercourse between the bishop and his flock is to be kept up: and in the latter case, it would be well if the youth of every parish could be confirmed in their own church. This is impracticable, under the present system: yet nothing would tend more to advance the interests of the Church, than the presence of the bishop, every year, or every second year, according to the amount of population, in every parish. The object may be attained either by the appointment of suffragans, or by the division of dioceses. Were a diocese to be divided under present circumstances, the arrangements would be carried into effect by the ecclesiastical commissioners: but without implying any reflection on that body, I must contend, that all such matters should be arranged in convocation: This plan could be adopted with the permission of the Crown.

On the question of the division of dioceses, and the appointment of suffragans, I feel great pleasure in quoting the following admirable remarks, from an eminent writer of the last century. Alluding to some topics discussed in convocation, in the early part of the last century, relative to excommunication and the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, he remarks, "It is evident, at first sight, how greatly the establishment of these two points would improve and invigorate the discipline of the Church: but it is as evident, that we must not hope to see, either the discipline or the government of our Church in a complete and perfect state, as long as the several districts to be inspected and visited, remain, in many instances, so unreasonably large. A just sense of which evil has made it the wish of wise and good men, that a further division of dioceses, in places where it shall be found necessary, were seriously attempted and entered upon: and if this remedy, however the most natural and most effectual, is not to be obtained, that the evil might be at least mitigated by the appointment of suffragan bishops, according to the statute of King Henry VIII., which still remains in its full force and authority."

All these questions, and many others, which cannot be specified in this work, would be proper subjects for consideration with a convocation: and I conceive, too, that the only appropriate place for their consideration would be a convocation. It would be easy for the Crown to dictate to that body the subjects for discussion and settlement: and as the law stands, no question could be entertained without its concurrence. In short, the minister of the Crown, who would of course consult the heads of the Church, would recommend such measures as the circumstances of the Church might require. The enemies of the Church not seldom reproach her as the creature of the state. Surely she ought to be permitted by the state to exercise that authority, which of right belongs to her, and which was always, in all ages, recognised as her just privilege.

Under our present circumstances, I would, therefore, earnestly implore the government, to restore to the Church those synodical rights which have not been exercised for more than a century. The convocation, however opposed to the views of any particular government, could not thwart its measures, since the Crown has always the power in its own hands, to adjourn or prorogue them,—in fact to stop their proceedings altogether. In recommending this step to the responsible advisers of the Crown, I do not mean to imply, that the convocation should be permitted to transact business every session of parliament, but only when the circumstances of the Church demand it. Within the last twenty years, many ecclesiastical measures have been carried into effect, which were proper subjects for the convocation. Whenever, therefore, any other ecclesiastical arrangements are necessary, I would suggest that the minister of the Crown should recommend a royal license to authorize the convocation to act. When settled in that assembly, they would be submitted to the Crown: and in case the government deemed it necessary to suggest alterations or additions, the matter could be reconsidered in the ecclesiastical synod. Of course I allude only to such questions as would fall appropriately under the cognizance of that body.

Let it be remembered, also, that all questions affecting the welfare of the Church would receive the fullest consideration. No proposal could be carried into effect, until it had been sanctioned by the two houses of convocation, and confirmed by the Crown. It is most unlikely, therefore, that any measure would be carried which did not commend itself to the judgment of unprejudiced men, as well amongst the laity as amongst the clergy. At all events, let the experiment be tried. Let the convocation be assembled; and let some subject be proposed for deliberation. The machinery is complete. Each diocese would send its proctors, who would be elected by the incumbents; so that the clergy of the land would be fairly represented. That they should have a voice in framing laws for the Church, is only reasonable.

Were her Majesty's government to permit the convocation to transact business, it would tend to the strengthening of our Church, and to the promotion of her usefulness among the people. Many plans would be recommended; much information would be procured; various schemes would be devised; and, through the mutual intercourse between the bishops and clergy assembled in their convocation, the state of the Church in every parish might be fully ascertained. The minister who should undertake to advise the Crown to grant the necessary license, would confer a boon upon the Church and the country, which would never be forgotten, and which would cause his name to be remembered with gratitude by posterity. My object, in this chapter, has been merely to throw out a few hints for consideration, and through my opinion, in such a matter, may be of no value whatever, yet I cannot but indulge the hope, that the question will be taken up by others. Were the archbishops, bishops, and clergy, to express themselves in favour of a restoration of the powers of the convocation, I am convinced that their representation would be calmly and fully considered by her Majesty's government. Unless, indeed, the bishops themselves call upon the government to act, it is not to be expected that any minister, of his own impulse, should venture to advise the Crown on the subject; but let his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the bishops of the kingdom, concur in an address to the throne on the subject, and it is certain that the boon would not be denied. I speak thus positively, because I am convinced that no sufficient reason could

be adduced against the revival of the powers of the convocation. Even should the experiment fail, the remedy is with the Crown; for, in the event of a collision between the two houses, which is most unlikely, or an attempt to carry measures which, in the estimation of the government, might be inadvisable, their labours might be suspended by a prorogation. With respect to my own views, I will only say, that they are advanced after much careful investigation of the subject; and though objections may easily be raised against any plan, by whomsoever proposed, yet I will venture to assert, that no member of our Anglican Church, who fully understands her constitution and is acquainted with her history, can deny that our position without a convocation, in which alone the Church can authoritatively speak, is most anomalous.—Lathbury, *History of the Convocation*.

ASSISTANT BISHOPS.

CANON VI. OF PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

When a Bishop of a Diocese is unable, by reason of old age, or other permanent cause of infirmity, to discharge his Episcopal duties, one Assistant Bishop may be elected by and for the said Diocese, who shall in all cases succeed the Bishop in case of surviving him. The Assistant Bishop shall perform such Episcopal duties, and exercise such Episcopal authority in the Diocese, as the Bishop shall assign to him; and in case of the Bishop's inability to assign such duties, declared by the Convention of the Diocese, the Assistant Bishop shall, during such inability, perform all the duties, and exercise all the authorities which appertain to the office of Bishop. No person shall be Elected or Consecrated a Suffragan Bishop, nor shall there be more than one Assistant Bishop in a Diocese at the same time.

PRESBYTERS IN CONVOCATION.

The power of the crown with regard to convocation is very great. It is its undisputed prerogative, not only to assemble convocation, but to prevent its deliberations, prorogue, and dissolve at its pleasure. The assembly of the Gallican clergy was subject to the same influence as ours. The King of France convoked it, prescribed the subjects of debate, and terminated it when he pleased. With regard to the constitution of convocation in England, I may perhaps be allowed to observe, that were it desirable that so large a body should be permitted to deliberate on the affairs of the church generally, and that the principle of a formal representation of the clergy of the second order should be adhered to, it would be necessary as a preliminary, to determine the respective privileges of the two houses of convocation; nor does it seem that under the constitution of that assembly at present, the parochial clergy are so fully represented, as the numbers, the learning, the orthodoxy, and the high principle of that admirable body of men so amply entitle them to be.—Palmer's *Treatise on the Church*.

AGAINST PREVAILING ERRORS.

THE RIGHT REV. THE BISHOP OF MASSACHUSETTS, (MANTON EASTBURN, D. D.)

My brethren of the Clergy,—Among the promises uttered by me at my consecration, was the declaration of my readiness, "with all faithful diligence, to banish and drive away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word; and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same." Under a solemn remembrance of this vow, I feel it to be my duty to bear, on this occasion of our ecclesiastical council, my public testimony against certain views, which, having made their appearance at various periods since the Reformation, and passed away, have been again brought forward with great zeal in our own day. Originating with a few distinguished men in England, and thence passing over to this country, they have not been without their deleterious influence upon the minds of many of our clergy. The principal characteristic features of this system are the following:—exaggerated views of the efficacy of the Sacraments: unscriptural statements respecting the presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper, and the description of this festival as a sacrifice instead of a commemoration of that sacrifice which was offered by the Redeemer once for all; the doctrine of sacerdotal absolution, as a power delegated to the ministry; the joining together of Scripture and Tradition, as co-ordinate authorities in matters of faith; a disposition to under-value the privileges of the glorious Reformation, and to depreciate even those English Reformers whose claims to our gratitude are written in their blood; the merging of the individuality of each man, as a subject of the Holy Spirit's influences, in the Church collectively; and, chiefest and most pernicious of all, confused views of the fundamental doctrine of justification,—making it to depend, not wholly upon that intrinsic righteousness which flows to us from the merits of Christ without, but in part upon an inherent righteousness, existing within.

My brethren, it ought to be sufficient to keep us from the least taint of these views, to know that they are utterly at variance with the doctrines of our own formularies. But in another view they assume an equally grave importance—for it will not be difficult to show, that should such sentiments ever pervade the preaching of our Clergy generally, our Church would be reduced, under their influence, to the condition of an inert carcass, destitute of the life and power of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. If, for example, congregations of baptized persons should be addressed as those who, in baptism, have without distinction had spiritual life imparted to them, instead of the momentous fact being

recognised, that large numbers notwithstanding their baptism, are still dead in trespasses and sins,—it must be seen at once that the effect of such teaching would be, to turn men's thoughts away from the scriptural doctrine of the necessity of conversion, and to lull them into an entire spiritual slumber. If, again, there is a tendency to the exaltation of the Holy Communion above its proper position, as a commemorative institution, and means of grace to the faithful recipient, and to present it in the awful mysteriousness in which it was enveloped in an age of darkness, it is plain that the result of this will be, not to increase the penitence and love of our congregations, but to foster superstition. If, further, the ministry established by Christ, instead of being represented as ambassadors to proclaim the mercies of God in his dear Son, should hold themselves up as an order of persons, through whom, as channels, remission is conveyed, the manifest effect of this must be, to place a human being between the eyes of the people and the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; and to make the forgiveness of sins, instead of being a transaction between a man's own soul and God alone, a matter of ministerial intervention. If, again, a pretended oral teaching of the apostles, handed down from father to son, through the course of eighteen centuries, is to be held forth to the people as filling up that wherein the Scriptures are deficient, and as having the same claims to deference which are possessed by God's own written and authentic revelation of his will to man, it is obvious that the precious Bible will no longer be the book of books in common esteem; and the authority of the word of God will be rendered of none effect by the traditions of men. If, further, the Reformation should be spoken of with qualified gratitude, there must, of necessity, be engendered a proportionate regret for the loss of that condition, from which this event procured our emancipation. If, yet again, the idea should be conveyed, that the position of man as an individual is swallowed up by his condition as connected with the sacramental host of the Church, the consequence of this would plainly be, to destroy his responsibility; to quench his desires after private communion with God; and to reduce to a nullity that personal union with Christ, by a true repentance and a living faith, which is the very essence of religion. And then, lastly, should the Clergy fail to teach clearly from the pulpit, that man's justification takes place only through the righteousness of Christ, counted to him on the exercise of faith,—and that our inward righteousness is nothing more than the fruits of this faith, produced by the sanctifying Spirit of God,—it is evident that the people would be furnished with another gospel than that of the Scriptures; and would be taught to build their hopes not upon a rock, but on the sand. In a word,—I cannot but view this system as tending to change our ground of acceptance: to make the necessity of sacraments greater than the necessity for preaching Christ crucified: to put divine authority aside for human: to make the Church more prominent than Christ who is the light of the Church: to magnify ordinances unduly: to make us yearn after a supposed better state of things, than the martyrs of the Church of England have left us as our inheritance: and to place in the room of a living and experimental religion of the heart, a system of formal observances.

Of the very general prevalence, in our Church, of tenets so foreign from the evangelical spirit and the moderate tone of our Prayer Book, I cannot feel any serious apprehension. Between the errors of Popery on the one side, and of those systems around us, on the other, which confessedly attach too little importance to the Sacraments, as seals and pledges of covenanted spiritual blessings,—and which deny its proper value to primitive antiquity, as a witness to facts,—our standards present a middle way, so excellent, and so clearly defined, that it must, one would hope, commend itself to the great body of those who minister at our altars. There is one class of our Clergy, however, in reference to whom the voice of affectionate caution and admonition seems to be strongly needed; those namely, who have received ordination in our own Church, after having previously been in the ministry of other religious bodies. These persons, dissatisfied with certain deficiencies in the system to which they once belonged,—having sought a refuge from these within the pale of our own communion,—and yet not having had sufficient time and experience to understand her true character,—have a very natural tendency to get beyond that wise moderation, which is her peculiarly distinguishing feature; and are carried, in their ardent zeal, to extremes unknown by those, who have been nourished from early years at her fountains of sound doctrine. My reverend and dear brethren, the ardent desire of my soul is, that from every pulpit in this Diocese may go forth the clear and unadulterated gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. I need not surely say, that I would have you love, and honor, and commend the Sacraments, as instituted means of grace to those who rightly receive them. I need not say, that I would have you inculcate, as you have opportunity, reverence for the ministers of God, and reverence for the temple of God; and an enlightened regard for that august ritual, which has come down to us as a blessed legacy from the primitive ages of the Church. This you will of course do, if you are true to your responsibilities. But that which is the most important of all, and which therefore I am most of all anxious for is, that you should faithfully and distinctly exhibit Christ, and that salvation by His blood which is alone effectual to meet the wants of ruined man. For without this there can be no blessing on our ministry. With it, there will certainly come the signs of the divine presence. And our Church will be, what her institutions and her doctrines so eminently fit her to be, a