

LONDON, MARCH 10.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSION.

Viscount Melbourne said he had in command from his Majesty, to lay on their lordships' table, the second report of the commissioners appointed to consider the state of the Established Church in England and Wales, with reference to its claims, its duties, and its revenues. His lordship began by expressing his satisfaction at finding that the report had been unanimously agreed to, and that it bore the signatures of all the commissioners. This was the second report which had been presented; and there were some slight differences between it and the former, in reference to the territorial arrangement of the sees. According to this report, it was recommended that a portion of the bishoprick of Bristol should be added to that of Bath and Wells, and the remaining part to that of Gloucester. It also recommended the union of the bishoprick of Sodor and Man with that of Carlisle. Such were the principal suggestions as to territory. The second head of inquiry was the revenues of the sees. The third, as to patronage, had been expressly reserved. In regard to the question of revenue, the principle adopted was reduction, not equality; for equality was inconsistent with the form of our government and the state of society in which we are placed. His lordship then proceeded to state the extent of the reductions proposed to be made. The estimated annual revenue of Canterbury amounted to 17,000*l.* per annum—it was proposed to reduce it to 15,000*l.* per annum. The bishoprick of London was estimated at 12,400*l.* per annum—it was proposed to reduce to 10,000*l.* The see of Dorham was estimated to possess an annual revenue of 17,800*l.*—the proposed reduction was to 8,000*l.* That of Winchester was estimated at 10,700*l.*—it was proposed to be reduced to 7,000*l.* Worcester was estimated at 6,500*l.*—it was proposed to reduce it to 5,000*l.* St. Asaph and Bangor (one being 5,200*l.* and the other 3,800*l.*) were to have a revenue of 5,000*l.* each. The reductions thus effected would form a fund about 28,500*l.* per annum, to which was to be added the saving in the transfer of the see of Bristol, (2,300*l.* a-year)—thus making altogether a fund of 30,800*l.* per annum. For the other less considerable alterations, he referred their lordships to the report itself. It was intended that the fund created by the above reductions should be applied to increase the revenues of the smaller sees. With respect to prebends and canons, and to ecclesiastical benefices, it was proposed that, where residence was not required, the offices should be suppressed. One dean and four canons to be preserved for service, and one canonry to be added to the archdeaconry of the diocese. These, together with other minor alterations, would constitute a fund of about 130,000*l.* per annum, applicable to the purpose of reducing the great inequalities by which the interests of the church were compromised. The last topics alluded to by the noble lord, were non-residences and pluralities. The report recommended the enforcement of these desirable objects, proposing that pluralities should only be allowed in cases where the distance was not more than ten miles, and where the income did not exceed 500*l.* a-year. His lordship concluded by expressing his cordial concurrence in the recommendations of the commissioners, which he described as being founded upon conservative principles, and calculated to secure the purposes for which the church was established.

The Archbishop of Canterbury expressed his great satisfaction at the subject having been introduced by his Majesty's ministers, because it was impossible that such a measure as that which was contemplated could be carried through the house without the full approbation and effective and hearty support of his Majesty's government—[hear, hear.] He had long been aware of the necessity which existed for taking some strong and vigorous measures for the correction of the abuses which had crept into the church, and for the removal of anomalies that had existed for a long period of years—[hear, hear.] Being fully convinced, however, that nothing could be done without the concurrence of government, he had consulted with the noble duke (Wellington) who was then at the head of the administration, as to what was best to be done. That noble duke entirely concurred in his view of the subject, and agreed with him as to the necessity

of taking proper measures for the removal of abuses. In consequence of that declaration on the part of the noble duke, and after much consultation with his right reverend brethren the bishops, a commission was issued at the time the noble duke was minister.—Earl Grey soon afterwards became his Majesty's prime minister. He applied to his lordship with the same view, and the same result followed. It was agreed that measures should be taken for the reform of abuses in the church; and, for that purpose, he had several confidential communications with his lordship, who told him that he was anxious to carry into effect the general view which he (the Archbishop of Canterbury) took of the subject. The consequence was the issuing of a second commission. When Sir Robert Peel retired from office, the functions of the commissioners were suspended for a while; but the moment the noble viscount came into office, he stated that the business should be no longer delayed, and that he was ready and anxious to proceed with it. The noble viscount declared that it was his desire the commission should proceed on the same views and principles as those on which it had been originally formed, with the concurrence of the ministers of that day. They had so proceeded, and in the course of their labours, had received great assistance from his Majesty's ministers. He was happy to be able to confirm the statement of the noble viscount as to the unanimity which had prevailed. Whenever any material difference occurred, it had been settled, not by any unwilling compromise or unjust concession, but upon a fair consideration of the facts of the case, and the special reasons upon which the matter turned—[hear, hear.] He should freely confess, in justice to himself that had he not believed this commission to be founded on conservative principles, he never would have been a member of it—[hear.] When he said conservative principles, he meant that the established church should be preserved in all its integrity; and certainly he should not be doing his duty in his episcopal capacity, if he could for a moment give his assent to any measure that appeared to have a different tendency—[hear.] There were various reasons which induced him to undertake the responsible duties attached to this commission—one of which was, because he heard several persons, for whom he entertained a high respect, express an opinion opposed to the holding of livings in *commendam* by the prelates who filled the smaller sees. That the income of those bishops should be increased was, he conceived, just and proper; and he saw that there existed no other means (if *commendams* were set aside, for effecting an increase of the income of the smaller bishopricks, except those proposed in the report, for he feared they could not obtain any augmentation from the public—[hear.] With respect to the cathedral establishments, the deans and chapters, he was of opinion that they ought to be maintained—[hear.] These appointments were exceedingly useful to the church, as affording the means of rewarding clergymen of distinguished merit—[hear.] They might, he conceived, be retained, and still a very considerable surplus be forthcoming, which could be applied to the use of parishes in the metropolis, and in the northern and midland counties, where the population had greatly increased, but where, from the want of sufficient spiritual assistance, the Church of England had dwindled into a mere shadow. As to sinecure livings, he conceived they ought to be got rid of. It seemed to him that the very name of sinecure carried condemnation with it. As to the equalisation of bishopricks, that question had never come under the consideration of the commissioners. It was one of those wild projects that would have been immediately scouted by them. Upon the subject of residence there was a very little difference of opinion. The principle of the church ought to be, that a clergyman should reside on his benefice. It would, however, be perfectly impossible to carry the principle into effect in the present state of the church; but they ought to come as nearly as they could to the principle of having a resident clergyman wherever there was a sufficient congregation of the Church of England. The general feeling against pluralities was so strong, that he conceived some restriction to be necessary; and, in a bill which he had introduced some time ago, he proposed that two livings should not be held by the same person if they were thirty miles asunder. That bill was not successful, and the commissioners had agreed

to limit the holding of livings to a more confined distance. He now wished to say a few words upon the objects which the commissioners had in view when they made their report. He believed their great desire to be to encourage and facilitate the growth and increase of pure religion throughout the country. Neither he nor his fellow commissioners were actuated by any desire for popularity. They had looked to no temporary expediency—they had not sought to fix wavering friends. He trusted that what had been done would conciliate the friends of the Established Church. He had no hope that it would satisfy the enemies of the establishment, who he really believed were implacable—[hear.] It was his full persuasion, however, that if the recommendations of the commissioners were carried into execution, they would prove in the end most beneficial to the church, [hear]—and he was willing to sacrifice much in order to increase its strength and efficiency, [hear.] With respect to security, it was vain to talk of security in these times [hear, hear]—but he still felt, that if recommendations were zealously followed up, the church would be placed in a condition that would enable it to resist the attacks of its enemies [hear, hear.] The clergy would hereafter be enabled to proceed in their vocations without being annoyed by those anxieties which had, he might almost say, of late interfered with the discharge of their duties; but which had undoubtedly disturbed their minds [hear.] There were some other subjects which, though not embraced in this report, yet required immediate measures. Amongst these he thought that some efficient steps should be taken to improve the education of the clergy. When he said this, he must add, that the clergy of the present day, whether in learning or in attention to their pastoral duties, were not exceeded by any other age or country, [hear, hear.] But it would be impossible to say, under any circumstances, that there would not be room for improvement. It would be desirable that candidates for holy orders should be well grounded in divinity before they entered the church—that they should have a stock of theological knowledge to draw upon on entering the ministry, and not to have to acquire it afterwards. He has thought that some more efficient means should exist for correcting the scandals that arose from the improper conduct of some unworthy members in the ministry. It could not excite surprise, that in a body consisting of 18,000 persons, many of them young men, there should be found some whose conduct was a scandal to the ministry. And it was to be regretted that in the present state of the law the heads of the church had not sufficient power to remove those who were guilty of scandalous conduct. He threw this suggestion out for the consideration of their lordships, though he was aware that it was not directly connected with the report then before their lordships. He would close his remarks with the expression of a hope that even those who might differ from the view taken by the commissioners, and think that did not go far enough, would at least admit that what they proposed would be attended with great advantage to the Church.

The report was then ordered to be printed.

JOURNAL OF A TOUR BY ARCHDEACON WIX.

Concluded.

I now changed my plan, and determined on visiting the settlements along the shore on my way to St. George's Bay after performing 2 full services on Good Friday and Easter Sunday at Gualtois, to congregations of 150, on Easter Monday I started in a boat which Mr. Gallop kindly furnished, for Round Harbour, where I was detained 2 days, performing full service each day, in the house of a very worthy old planter, Mr. Lee.—I left him on the 22nd for Long Island Harbour, where I found that the Lord's day is well observed, and that the children are religiously taught, through the exertions of the brothers Strickland, relatives of the old man of that name, whom I have mentioned in my report of my visit to the Borgoe Islands in 1830. After full service and some baptisms, I went in a brisk gale to old Charles King's, whom I mentioned in the same letter, at Grand Jarvis. I baptised at this place 22 children, who had been born since my last visit. I found the people all along the shore very busy, fishing, which employment they commenced in this part of the island as early as Lady day, fishing in very deep wa-