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## THE WORLD POSITION OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION.

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FEW things can be more illuminating than statistics, and fewer still, more deceptive. The clever use of figures can prove anything, and the reason is that in other departments of discussion words have in themselves some concrete meaning, whereas figures are adjectives, that derive their character from the nouns with which they are associated. In the comparatively few figures I shall give in the course of this paper I shall try, to the best of my ability, to avoid fallacies, and to set forth figures in relation to facts in a manner that will be in accordance with things as they are.

We who live in England, where it is assumed that seven-tenths of our people would return themselves as Church of England, whereas only about one in four communicate on Easter Day, naturally think that in other English-speaking lands—particularly our own Colonies—the same proportion is observed between population and attachment to the mother Church. When we read of the hundreds of Dioceses of the Anglican Communion, we unconsciously, but inevitably, have before our minds Dioceses that compare in size and influence with those that are most familiar to us. And when we look round at our Parochial organization and contrast it with the scattered and congregational efforts of our Non-Episcopal brethren, we are apt to be confirmed in our idea that throughout the English-speaking world—at any rate, throughout the Dominions—the Church of England, as represented by its sister Churches, is the greatest of religious forces.

And we are not alone in this belief. A distinguished ex-President of the Free Church Council, during the war, went to the United States of America in company with one of our most prominent Bishops to lay England's case before the American people. He felt that he was merely an appendage to the Bishop, for the fame of the Bishop in England was very great; whereas, outside Free Church circles, the Nonconformist Minister had no reputation. On his arrival he soon found that he had made a mistake, as far as religious leaders were concerned, for his host pointed out to him that the Protestant Episcopal Church in the States was a comparatively small religious influence, and owed its importance to its communion with the Church of England and the wealth of its representatives in the Eastern States. His "inferiority complex" disappeared and he felt that he represented far more than the Bishop, as far as the forces he knew to be sympathetic with his denominational point of view were concerned. This anecdote represents the disillusion shared by many visitors to the English-

speaking world and Mission Field, where they expect to find our Church occupying the position it does at home. Roughly, we represent one-eighth to one-ninth the strength of Protestant missionary effort, and are in about the same proportion to the adherents of the Protestant forces throughout the world.

This at once raises the question: Is the Anglican Communion Protestant? In the eyes of the Roman Church it is—in the eyes of the Orthodox it is, or was until chameleon-like it now seems to take in the eyes of many who support Reunion with the Orthodox Church, a non-Protestant complexion—in the eyes of the Non-Episcopal Missionaries in most parts of the field it is Protestant, and in its own eyes, in some Dioceses, it is avowedly non-Protestant, in others Catholic-Protestant, and in the minds of the vast majority of its adherents and Communicants it is definitely Protestant. And here let me remark that the Church of Rome and the Anglican and other Protestant Churches are the only Missionary Churches. Even before the Russian *débâcle* Orthodox Missions to the heathen and Mohammedan world were so small as to be negligible. Whatever the Eastern Churches may be, they certainly were not in the days of their strength, since the eleventh century—Missionary Churches. I have already implied that, on grounds of history, on grounds of witness, and in the eyes of the vast majority of the Christian world as well as in its own eyes, the Anglican Communion must be reckoned a Protestant Communion.

As regards the distribution of the Christian world, Whittaker informs us that it consists of 331,500,000 Roman Catholics, 144,000,000 Orthodox, and 206,900,000 Protestants. These are rough figures, which are based on the assumption that all who live in a country profess and hold the religion of the country, unless the minorities represent a fair percentage of the inhabitants. All who know the proportion of non-practising Roman Catholics in Roman Catholic lands are aware that, as an index of religious convictions, the figures must be discounted. In connexion with the Orthodox, Professor Zankov says that the total of all Orthodox is between 146 and 150 millions, of whom 132 are Slavs—120 live in Russia—twelve are Rumanians, and Greek six. It is surprising to learn that the historic Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem have only 630,000 souls attached to them, of whom 300,000 live in the Constantinople Patriarchate. It is important to bear this in mind, for a Church with a long and distinguished pedigree is not of necessity a Church that speaks with authority due to its capacity for producing leaders able to speak with learning and the prestige that comes from a large constituency. In America, where Anglicans and Orthodox come most in contact with one another, the number of the Orthodox is variously estimated as between half a million and 800,000.

One of the great difficulties in dealing with any comparative estimate of the relative strength of religious denominations arises from the fact that in some countries a religious census is taken and in others only Church membership is returned. And when we

come to Church membership we are faced by the different methods the Churches have of registering their membership. Omitting the personal equation of the compilers dependent on their accuracy, the revision of their rolls, and the line drawn between adherents and members, we have to face the different bases. For example, some Churches return members plus those on the Baptismal Registers, and those others known to be in active membership—all adults. I shall not attempt to dissect the returns for two reasons : (1) I have not a full table which will enable the differentiation to be made on a scientific basis ; and (2) it is better to let the official figures speak for themselves. In England and Wales the number of Communicants of the Church of England and Wales in the 1929 *Year Book* numbered 2,715,571 ; and the returns of the membership of the Baptist, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches amounted to 2,087,000. In Scotland there were 50,206 Communicants of the Scottish Church as against 1,338,000 Non-Episcopalian Church members. In Ireland at the last census there were 502,939 members of the Church of Ireland as against 476,000 of Non-Episcopalians. These figures broadly mean that in the two islands there are 2,786,000 Communicants of the Anglican Churches as against 3,425,000 enrolled members of the Non-Episcopal Churches, and a census return of 503,000 Church folk as against 476,000 Non-Episcopalians.

When we turn to the great Dominions of Canada and Australia we find that the census return of Canada gives us 1,408,000 Church folk as against 3,020,000 Non-Anglicans ; and in Australia we have 2,373,000 Church folk as against 1,444,000 Non-Episcopalians ; and in New Zealand there are 515,000 Episcopalians as against 444,000 Non-Episcopalians. From this it is clear that the Antipodean Churches are stronger in proportion to the Non-Episcopal population than is the case in Canada. The rough totals for the chief constituent English-speaking parts of our Empire are :

Church membership as disclosed by Easter Communicants and Non-Episcopal Rolls—

Communicants . . . . .	2,786,000
Non-Episcopal Members . . . . .	3,425,740
Census Returns—	
Churchmen . . . . .	4,883,000
Non-Episcopalians . . . . .	5,456,000

The greatest of English-speaking countries is the United States of America, and here we find a medley of religions which show how fissiparous Protestantism has become. I believe that in the States there are no fewer than 212 registered religious denominations. This growth of Churches is by some regarded as a proof of life, for one good man has said : " What you call ' schism,' I call ' salvation ' " ; but it is in reality a testimony to the extreme individualism of the people and the fruit of a population expanding rapidly without any definite plan of meeting the religious needs of the community. I find that there are 1,200,000 Communicants

of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States as against more than 29,000,000 registered members of the organized Protestant Churches.

Leaving the English-speaking world, in South Africa the non-Anglican Churches outnumber the Anglican by nearly four to one ; but the returns are incomplete, and whites and coloured are classed together. Omitting South Africa, an estimate, made as carefully as the figures available warrant, shows that the Anglican Communion has a membership in the English-speaking lands of 3,966,000 and an adherent census of 4,883,000 ; and the Non-Episcopal Churches in English-speaking lands a membership of 32,000,000 and a census return of 5,456,000.

On the continent the Episcopal Church of Sweden has a census membership of about six millions—it is practically coterminous with the population ; and the other continental Protestant Churches have a census membership of about fifty millions.

These figures prove that the Anglican Communion is by no means the predominant religious factor in the English-speaking lands and that, when we look at it through English eyes, we are led to exaggerate its importance as a world religious force. Broadly speaking, a survey of the Mission Field shows that the proportion of missionary work under the care of the Anglican Communion represents between one-eighth and one-ninth of the whole foreign work that is being done by the Protestant Churches of the world. At the best we can say that, roughly speaking, the Anglican Communion to-day is responsible for one-eighth of the work of God in Protestant Christendom.

It would be wearisome to give in detail the estimates of the relative strength of the various Churches. The Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, as world organizations, outnumber the membership of the Anglican Communion. The Lutheran Church is also a larger Church than the Anglican Communion. We come really about fifth in the list of World Protestant Churches, and our main strength is centralized in England. A careful analysis of all the facts and figures available proves clearly that more than half of the Communicants of the Anglican Communion reside in England and Wales, which have only about one-seventh to one-eighth of the total number of the members of the other Churches of the Reformation in English-speaking lands.

A rapid survey of the growth of the Churches during the past century proves that the Non-Episcopal Communion have extended far more rapidly than the Church of England, and that the multiplication of Dioceses bears no proportion to the spread of our Communion. The Lambeth Bishops were convinced of this, for they placed the greatest weight on the opinions and leadership of the English Bishops, who won their respect by their learning, ability, and the greatness of the Dioceses they represented. They knew that in the lands from which they came they did not represent more than a minority of the Protestant Christians in these countries.

The survey also shows that the growth of Non-Episcopal Christ-

ianity has been accompanied by the spread of Anglo-Catholic teaching in our Home Church. Whatever may be said of the proportional decline of Nonconformity in England with the falling off in Church attendance, it is undoubtedly true that in the last century the growth of Nonconformity has been rapid in England and Wales, and has far outpaced that of the National Church. Most of this has taken place since the propagation of the Tractarian teaching in our Churches.

We claim to be a Bridge Church in Christendom—a claim also put forward by other Churches. To-day our Bishops seem to be more anxious to draw close to the Orthodox and Old Catholic Churches than to be in communion with the great progressive Churches of the Reformation, with which our people throughout the world live side by side, and who know us and we know them. Others will deal with the doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues at stake. But no one who has striven to see clearly the position of the Anglican Communion in World Christendom can fail to observe that there is a very great danger of falling into the error of taking *omne ignotum pro magnifico* and thinking that because we, in this country, are happily the Church of England representing historic continuity, noble traditions, and the majority of the Church-going people, we hold as members of the Anglican Communion an equally important place in the minds of our fellow-Protestants of other lands.

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THE TASK OF HAPPINESS. By C. A. Alington, D.D., Headmaster of Eton College, Chaplain to H.M. the King. London: *Student Christian Movement Press*, 58, *Bloomsbury Street*, W.C.1. 3s. 6d. net.

Dr. Alington admits that this little book contains allusions to the circumstances in which it has been written and believes that whatever is good in it, is due to the beauty which has surrounded its composition. The fact that it was written at Ravello led to an absence from books of reference which might perchance have given it a more learned tone. But the learned author has no need to apologize for any supposed defects in his book which is brimful of sound, sanctified common sense. The last section—almost half the book—is worth more than reading, it should be *studied* carefully as the work of one who understands children—their education in matters of sense—their amusements—their family life and their choice of a profession—all of them considerations of the first importance. Questions that are in everyone's mind are dealt with in a very human and understanding way. S. R. C.