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# THE CHURCHMAN

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SEPTEMBER, 1881.

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## ART. I.—CHURCH DEFENCE INSTITUTION AND ITS WORK.

**M**OST people find it pleasanter to work, if not quite alone, yet independently, rather than as members of an organization. For organization demands a certain subordination in its component parts. Individuality must, to a certain extent, conform itself to system. When, however, the results of combination are made manifest, then, almost against their will, people admit that individual activity, however able, however zealous, is no match for the continuous and systematic operations of a society. The Church of England favours independence of action, as well as liberty of thought. In no other Church, and certainly in no lay profession, are the officers allowed so large a degree of responsibility as is entrusted to the incumbent of a parish. The beneficed clergyman is a freeholder *jure officii*, and cannot be removed at the discretion of the Diocesan. The deans and chapters form almost an *imperium in imperio*. The subordination of the bishops to the archbishops is personal rather than authoritative. The clergy and the laity are very jealous of any infringement of this independence. The parochial system commends itself to the love of freedom, which is characteristic of Englishmen. They judge the system by its results. They find that the indifferentism, which has affected other Churches, has not chilled the spiritual life of England, and that their branch of the Church has been saved from the narrowness which appears in other Churches to accompany a strict dependence of the ministry either upon an individual head or upon committees of management and appointment.

Yet this system is not without drawbacks, which it is imprudent to ignore. The complete discipline of the Church of Rome

enables her to direct the movement of all under her command, as though they were a single person, with a single will. Her whole force is brought into action at once with the regularity of machinery, and extraordinary results have often followed a display of her energy. But absolutism has a tendency to alienate the best men; so in the course of centuries the power of the Church of Rome has been materially weakened. Still, what remains of that power is used with the same precision as of old. Again, we must admit that the system of the Nonconformist Churches, and of the Scotch Churches, where a large lay element controls the clerical element, tends from opposite causes towards the same results. The sympathies of the poorest classes, and the intelligence of the educated classes, are repelled. But still, for the purposes of political organization, such Churches seem well adapted, and are able to bring a direct and united influence to bear on the Legislature in matters which concern them. We must, therefore, confess that for the mere purpose of influencing legislation the spiritual hierarchy of Rome, and the mixed spiritual and lay management of Nonconformity, is more effective than the independence which is cherished within the Church of England. Yet the power of growth and the blessing of increase accompany the Church which adheres most to the principle of liberty. The diversities of the human mind are well expressed in the diversities which are admitted within the Church. The liberal-mindedness of the Church is preserved by the independence of her ministers. Thus, her methods of teaching are kept in harmony with the mental developments which grow up with the growth of every generation. And thus we seem to have attained, in some degree, within her pale to a practical union of authority with liberty, in harmony with the axiom of individual responsibility, which she has always supported. We could wish that she might be permitted to do her work undisturbed; that her clergy might be allowed to devote themselves to their laborious duties among the people without being called upon to defend their own right to existence. But this is not to be their lot in our generation at all events. The assault upon the Church is made on one side by Nonconformists, on the other by those who hold atheistic opinions.

We need not waste our time in deploring a state of things which it is our duty to endeavour to improve. We must recognize the fact that in our days no institution, whether spiritual or lay, will be allowed to work out its mission without being placed upon its trial; and we should endeavour to make certain that the verdict shall be given in favour of what we hold to be an exceedingly precious inheritance of the English people.

Now the doctrines of all Churches are always the subject of

dispute. A great part of the training which is required of the ministry must always consist in a preparation which will enable its members to defend the doctrinal truth of the Church which they serve. It may be prudent for Churchmen, specially trained, from time to time to draw together in close organization for the maintenance and defence of purity of doctrine. We do not wish to appear to overlook that supreme obligation, when we call attention to other and humbler work. There are many departments of Church work. We have the National Society, which turns its attention to religious education. We have the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. We have the Useful Knowledge Society, the Curates' Aid Society; we have a number of special societies devoting themselves to special business. So we have the Church Defence Institution, with a special work marked for it by the special necessities of the present time. Fifty years ago there would, perhaps, have been no reason for its existence; fifty years hence there may be reasons why it should no longer exist. But the part of wise men is to find out the work which their own generation demands of them, and to do it according to their intelligence; we may be certain that the work of each generation will vary. We propose then to consider what the Church Defence Institution has done, is doing, and ought to do.

We have said that attacks upon the doctrines of every Church have been made and will be made. But attacks upon the systems of Churches, as they are ordered for their labour and duties among men, are exceptional, and ought to be met from time to time according to their exceptional character. The system of the Church of England, quite apart from her doctrines, is now the subject of an organized assault. To repel the assault is the reason and justification for the existence of the Society. Work must be specialized to be well done. The artisan whose whole time is employed in making pins' heads need not consider his labours undignified; he does more towards the creation of a perfect pin than if he devoted his attention to the point as well.

The object of the Institution is to combine Churchmen of different political opinions in the promotion of legislative measures conducive to the welfare of the Church. It recognizes the fact that while Church questions cannot be kept out of Parliament, they ought to be removed from the sphere of party politics. Moreover, it entertains no question touching doctrine. The Bishops and Convocations are the authorities who should entertain such questions. A voluntary association, however, may fairly claim the support of Churchmen, though it does not profess to cover the whole field. Individual Churchmen are invited to become members by subscribing, and Church associa-

tions, collegiate chapters, ruridecanal chapters, and other Church organizations which desire to co-operate, may become members in their collective capacity by subscription, and appoint a representative at the Council.

Of late years a body of men have enrolled themselves into a Society for the definite purpose of procuring changes in the law of the land, which will destroy the system of the Church of England. Their Society we all know is called the Liberation Society. The Church Defence Institution imposes on itself the counter-obligation of maintaining or of altering the laws of the land, so as to preserve the efficiency of the Church of England. So vast a system as that of the Church, so old, so interwoven with the habits of the people, so rich in the aggregate, so poor in individual cases, offers at once to an assailant many points of attack, and requires from its sentinels continual watchfulness in order that an alarm may be sounded in due time; that notice may be taken whenever a buttress requires repair, or a weak point requires strengthening, in order that the garrison may know when they should abandon a useless position, and when they should make a sortie and take new ground. To make the best of the machinery which belongs to the National Church, and to enable her clergy to carry on their work without disturbance, is the business of the Association. Here we notice the supreme value of the methodical labour of a society, as compared with the spasmodic action of individuals.

The activity of the Institution naturally divides itself into two departments. First the duty of watching Parliamentary movements; Bills are introduced every Session which require criticism, amendment, opposition, or support from the Church. Individual members of Parliament are scarcely equal to the continual vigilance which is required. Then there are a number of Legislative Reforms demanded by the Church. Here the Institution would be willing to take the initiative; but the initiative cannot be taken until the general opinion of the Church has been expressed. Churchmen in both Houses of Parliament are often placed at a disadvantage. The general unanimity amongst Churchmen which exists is not sufficiently expressed. Some service has already been rendered to the Church in Parliament by the Institution. More will be rendered as Churchmen become more determined that their Parliamentary interests shall not be neglected.

But the operations of the Society have another development, which may be called educational. It has undertaken the duty of repelling attacks from without which are made upon the Church through the Press, and by means of public lectures. We are governed in these days by popular opinion. Knowledge, some people say, is strength; but do not let us deceive

ourselves—ignorance is strength too. As long as untruths are believed, their virtue in the minds of men is the same as if they were truths.

When a man's character is blackened it is not always wise for him to remain silent, for it is possible that silence may be misunderstood. Some abuse, no doubt, is of such a character that it may be passed over in silence, but not all. For instance, when a lecturer calls the clergyman "The parish tiger," perhaps the clergyman may rest satisfied in the knowledge that the lecturer has answered himself. But even in such a case we would advise him not to be too certain; for when into uninstructed ears a clever argument, appealing to class prejudices, is poured, very violent language is sometimes taken for an accurate statement of the case. When we hear of inflammatory addresses being delivered in parish after parish on the text that "the parson has robbed the poor;" when Mr. Joseph Arch describes the clergy to assemblies of agricultural audiences as "the unmitigated evils of the country," we may be very certain that such a form of agitation would not be used unless it were useful. We know as a fact that startling prejudices against the Church are aroused by such language in the hearts of whole classes of our fellow-countrymen, while many excellent Churchmen remain quite unsuspecting of their existence. Men are astonished sometimes at what appears to them a sudden outburst of fanatical hatred towards the Church. If they had observed the slow process and patient care by which the fire was kindled they would forego their astonishment. They would understand that the passions of men have not been suddenly aroused; but that they are influenced by impressions which have been carefully instilled into their minds. Sentimental grievances are as potent to move men to action as real impressions. Uncontradicted courses of lectures, founded on the idea that "the parson has robbed the poor," or that "the clergy are the unmitigated evils of the country," will in the course of time induce a majority of the people to believe that such statements are correct.

But it is not only in the speeches of the travelling lecturer that we find the arguments of the opponents of the Church clothed in such language. In so respectable a review as the *British Quarterly* we read that the "Church is arrogant, contemptuous, militant, mournfully blind to all goodness and achievement save her own," that she is a "by-word in Christendom, a scandal to unsophisticated morality." Such words would not be employed unless, as a matter of business, it was thought advantageous to the cause to employ them. We are forced to the conclusion that the writer has gauged the ignorance of his audience, and their craving for strong expressions, and is trading upon the one and supplying the other.

Now let us consider the position of the clergyman of a parish visited by a lecturer of the Liberation Society. The public indictment is apparently levelled at the Church in general, but it is really pointed against the incumbent who represents the Church. For personalities are always agreeable to public assemblies. If the clergyman replies, he appears to be defending himself. If he vindicates the title of the Church to tithes, he appears to be looking after his own money-bags. If he defends the system of the Church of England on a platform, he appears to be defending his own place in the Establishment; and he is sometimes reminded that he had much better attend to his parochial duties, which he is paid to attend to, rather than employ himself in speaking at public meetings. It is obvious to us that such lecturers as those from whose vocabulary we have selected extracts, and that such an organization as supports them, are disposed of better through a central organization of Churchmen than by individual clergymen. It is hard to throw upon the clergy the burden of such a battle. Public meetings are best handled by practised platform orators. An itinerant lecturer of the Church Defence Institution, backed up by the Churchmen of the parish, would probably be able to deal with Mr. Joseph Arch on a public platform better than the most learned and most conscientious incumbent. But, it must be remembered, that when such lecturers are invited to a parish they ought to be supported and countenanced by all the most influential Churchmen of the neighbourhood. It must be remembered, too, that the gift of effective public speaking is a rare gift; and the organizing ability which such lecturers ought to possess is a rare gift also. It seems to us to be a very necessary, and, at the same time, a very expensive part of the business of the Church Defence Institution, to supply such men. A single parish or even a diocese could not undertake such a task. The efficiency of the plan depends, moreover, on the power of the lecturer to move rapidly from one part of the country to another, so that he may be placed at once in the exact locality where his services are most required.

We turn to another branch of the work of the Institution, which we believe might be usefully developed. The clergy, we need not be ashamed to admit, are not lawyers; but their duties bring them necessarily into contact with many knotty points of law. To whom can they apply for information unless they consult some ecclesiastical lawyer at an expense greater than they are prepared to undertake? Besides which, many points are matters of practice rather than law. We believe that a department of the Church Defence Institution might be very legitimately devoted to answering questions on such points of difficulty and doubt without disclosing the names of the corre-

spondents. The *National Church* newspaper, the organ of the Society, would be the vehicle by means of which the replies to such inquiries might be made public, for the information not only of the individual inquirers, but of the clergy in general. Some assistance of this character has already been given in a pamphlet, published by Dr. Lee, the secretary of the Society, which elucidates the technicalities of the last Burial Act, under the title of "What it does, and what it does not." The pamphlet has gone through sixteen editions. The technicalities of the rating laws, of the tithe rentcharge, ordinary and extraordinary, of the law of dilapidations, of the laws and practices with regard to parish charities, and similar subjects, are often perplexing to clergymen; and some assistance, we believe, might thus be given in an easy form.

We have often been told that the best defence of the Church is the conscientious discharge of their duties by clergymen. Of course we accept this statement as true, but not as the whole truth. The discharge of those duties may be made far easier by an association undertaking to relieve the clergy from the distasteful task of answering unwarranted statements. The Archbishop of Canterbury himself, a man certainly not likely to make an appeal unless there were good grounds for it, has appealed in his recent Pastoral on behalf of the Church Defence Institution to the Churchmen of England; he has proclaimed, with all the authority of such a man, in such an office, the necessity of spreading true information amongst the masses of the people, and of facing boldly the methods and the movements of an organization avowedly maintained in order to disestablish and to disendow the Church of England.

STANLEY LEIGHTON.

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## ART. II.—THE TEXT OF THE REVISED NEW TESTAMENT.

### SECOND ARTICLE.

**I**T is proposed, in this Paper, to consider more in detail a few important cases of disputed readings in the New Testament, and to discuss the manner in which they have been treated by the Revisers.

These may, for our purpose, be grouped under three heads. First: those which needed no special consideration, the result being accepted by all "competent critics." Secondly: those which fall naturally into smaller groups, so that a few typical