

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_churchman\\_os.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

tunity should be lost of circulating throughout the length and breadth of this land that Holy Bible to which our Church fearlessly appeals as witnessing the purity of her faith, and which she believes is able to make wise unto salvation all those who are only willing to receive its message into their hearts!

In taking leave of this vigorous and timely Charge, which we earnestly commend to the consideration of all who, like ourselves, are keenly interested in the welfare of the Church of Ireland, the true Church of St. Patrick, we venture to assure the most reverend Prelate that his words will be read on this side the Channel with sincere sympathy and the heartiest good wishes. In the midst of discouragements and difficulties, the Churchmen of Ireland have done, these last twelve years, right noble work. According to Lord Plunket's watchword—"*Hold the Fort!*"—may they still hopefully labour, in the love of Christ, "for their Country and their Church."



#### ART VI.—CATHEDRAL STATUTES.

THE lamented death of the Archbishop of Canterbury has not only removed from the Church of England a ruler of rare judgment and ability, who long ago gained the confidence and the affections of the vast majority of Churchmen in this country, but it has also deprived the Cathedral Commission of a Chairman whose well-balanced and judicial mind was greatly needed among a body already materially weakened by the death of Sir Henry Jackson and by the resignation of Lord Coleridge.

We cannot conceal from ourselves that it is no easy matter for the Prime Minister to select, from the Episcopal Bench, a successor to Archbishop Tait, who has been incomparably the ablest and the most trusted Primate within the memory of the present generation.

An inquiry into the state of the cathedral churches in England and Wales is no novelty. In November, 1852, a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the subject, and the Commissioners reported at great length in 1854 and 1855. Some of the recommendations contained in their three Reports have been embodied in legislation; but much more remains to be done before we can clear away the dust and the cobwebs of ages, which now obscure and impede the utility of those grand foundations that form so prominent a feature in our ecclesiastical system.

The first Commission to inquire into the state of the Esta-

lished Church, with reference to ecclesiastical duties and revenues, was appointed by letters patent during the ministry of Sir Robert Peel, on February 4th, 1835, with special reference to the state of the several dioceses in England and Wales; to the amount of their revenues and the more equal distribution of Episcopal duties; to the abolition of commendams and to the state of the cathedrals and collegiate churches, with a view to the suggestion of such measures as might render them most conducive to the efficiency of the Established Church, and make better provision for the cure of souls with reference to the residence of the clergy on their respective benefices. The Royal Commissioners set to work in good earnest upon the first branch of the inquiry, and applied themselves so zealously to its investigation that, on March 17th, 1835, they presented to his Majesty King William the Fourth a full and ably-drawn report on the territory, revenue and patronage attached to the several dioceses in England and Wales. This first report, containing their suggestions and recommendations, was laid before Parliament and was ordered to be printed by the House of Commons on March 19th, 1835. The Commission was renewed in the same terms on June 6th, 1835, after a change of government consequent upon the accession of Lord Melbourne to office, and three several reports were made to his Majesty on March 4th, May 20th, and June 24th, 1836.

The second report deals more especially with cathedrals and collegiate churches, with the residence of the clergy, and with pluralities. The third report contains important proposals for the appointment of Commissioners by Parliament, who should prepare and lay before the King in Council schemes for carrying into effect the recommendations of the Royal Commissioners, and for empowering the King in Council to make orders ratifying such schemes and having the full force of law. The final report contains some further propositions and modifications of the former reports, and deals with the remaining parts of the inquiry. The nature and extent of those recommendations are so well known as to render it superfluous to advert further to them than to remind our readers that the greater portion will be found embodied in the Act of 6 & 7 Will. IV. c. 77, passed August 13th, 1836, under which the new Bishoptics of Manchester and Ripon were founded; and the existing dioceses were completely remodelled by a new adjustment of the revenues and patronage of each see, and by extending or curtailing the parishes and counties theretofore subject to their spiritual jurisdiction; and the "Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England and Wales" were created as a body politic and corporate with perpetual succession and a common seal, and with power to prepare and lay before the King in

Council schemes for carrying into effect their recommendations.

We have dwelt somewhat at length upon the labours and industry of the Royal Commissioners of 1835, before directing the attention of our readers to the first report of the Commissioners appointed in 1879 and 1880, for inquiring into the condition of the cathedral churches in England and Wales, which now lies before us, in consequence of the deep feeling of disappointment with which we have received the result of their labours so far as her Majesty's Commissioners have been pleased to communicate them to the public. In their brief report of little more than two pages, the Commissioners announce with remarkable complacency, that they have held sixty-two meetings in a space of thirty-one months, while they hold out a promise that the more important communications that have been made to them will be appended to a future report.

On turning to the recommendations themselves, we find that the Commissioners consider that the only satisfactory way of expressing those recommendations, is to embody the same in the form of suggested statutes, which either have been, or are to be, prepared and drafted by the Dean and representative Canon of each cathedral in accordance with the resolutions at which the Commissioners may in each particular case have arrived. The suggested statutes of twenty-nine cathedrals are announced to be in course of preparation; but, although the report is dated February 8th 1882, none of them had seen the light at the time when Parliament was prorogued; though in reply to a question addressed to the Government in the House of Commons on November 20th, Mr. Courtney, Secretary to the Treasury, stated that "Eight of these reports are nearly completed, and are expected to be presented before the end of the year, and there will be no avoidable delay in the completion of the remainder."

One of the objects aimed at by the Commissioners of 1835, was to introduce order and uniformity in the cathedral foundations; but we entertain grave doubts whether the Royal Commissioners are treading closely in the steps of their distinguished predecessors, as they intimate that while following certain general principles, which in their judgment ought to characterize all cathedral foundations, they have striven to avoid everything that might savour of a forced and unnatural uniformity. These are vague words, which require further elucidation than is afforded by the first report presented to her Majesty. The main, we might almost say the sole, object of this report is to recommend a novel mode of legislation in

respect to Cathedral Statutes, of so startling a nature that we must quote the words of the report itself :

We recommend that your Majesty be empowered by legislation to appoint a Committee of Privy Council for Cathedral Purposes, such Committee to have the duty of approving Cathedral Statutes, and of sanctioning amendments when required, and to consist of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Bishop of London, and the following persons, being members of the Church of England : the Lord President, the Lord Chancellor, and two other members of the Privy Council.

In the case of new statutes, suggested by your Majesty's Commissioners, we recommend that the Committee of Privy Council for Cathedral Purposes be authorized to examine and approve, or, if they see fit, amend them, and that such statutes having obtained your Majesty's sanction, have the force of law.

We recommend further, that the Dean and Chapter of any cathedral should have the power of submitting at any time a new or amended statute to the visitor for his approval, and of submitting a statute so approved to your Majesty in Council ; the statute when sanctioned by your Majesty, on the advice of the Cathedral Committee, to become a statute of the cathedral.

We humbly recommend that for the establishment of the proposed Committee of the Privy Council for Cathedral Purposes with the powers indicated, application should be made to Parliament as soon as conveniently may be.

The report was speedily followed by the introduction of the Cathedral Statutes Amendment Bill into the House of Lords, on May 19th, by the Archbishop of Canterbury as Chairman of the Commission. The Bill embodied the above-mentioned recommendations of the Commissioners, increasing, however, the number of Privy Councillors other than those specifically mentioned from two to four, and provided a scheme whereby the Cathedral Statutes might be varied and modified from time to time by the hybrid committee recommended in the report itself.

It was scarcely to be expected that so startling and, as we venture to think, so unnecessary an innovation in the mode of procedure should pass through the House of Lords without challenge and without protest. The Bishop of Exeter in moving the rejection of the Bill characterized it as mischievous and unnecessary, while he considered that to pass a bill of such a nature would be to "legislate in the dark." Neither the Bill itself, nor the report—probably the most meagre that ever issued from a Royal Commission after sitting for two years and a half—gave any adequate idea of the suggested schemes. Yet in the absence of all the information that had been laid before the Commission, the Legislature was asked to hand over the cathedrals to these two irresponsible bodies ; one being the Royal Commissioners, and the other a Committee of

the Privy Council, to be specially appointed for the purpose of giving the force of law to the statutes submitted to them by the Commissioners in the first instance, and after the expiration of the Commission by the Deans and Chapters with the approval of the Bishop. Lord Cranworth, as one of the Commissioners, defended the Bill, and intimated that opportunities would be given for the fullest discussion, while the machinery of the Bill would bring everything to light.

The mode of procedure proposed in the Bill does not commend itself to our judgment, and, we venture to think, is not calculated to give satisfaction to Churchmen generally. It savours too much of hole-and-corner legislation. The appointment of the four unnamed members of the Privy Council rests entirely, as does the appointment of the Commissioners, with the Prime Minister, while no safeguard is provided that the Cathedral Committee of Privy Council shall be fairly representative of the Established Church, beyond the provision that its members shall belong to the Church of England. But we hold that such a Committee is wholly unnecessary, and is calculated to lead to disunion and to engender uneasiness rather than to remove them. Is it reasonable that Parliament should be asked to hand over our cathedrals and everything connected with them to Commissioners who have taken the extraordinary course of withholding from Parliament the important information, which they admit that they have received on the subject, until the controlling and enacting power has been finally transferred to a body one half of whom are not even named in the Bill? If legislation be required, it should take place in the light with the fullest information and the most thorough discussion after the separate reports have been presented to Parliament.

The so-called safeguards provided in the Bill of last session for ensuring an opportunity of discussing the suggested schemes have hitherto proved, so far as the House of Commons is concerned, to be no safeguards at all. For, although it is provided that the draft statutes shall lie on the table in both Houses of Parliament for twelve weeks, before they are submitted to her Majesty for approval, it is well known that a private member has little chance of being able to bring on a subject of that nature in the House of Commons at an hour when discussion is possible.

It is to be hoped that before another Bill is introduced the reports on most of the cathedrals will have been published, and that something more than the vague statement of general principles, which the Commissioners enunciate in their first report, will have been submitted to her Majesty, so as to enable the outside world to form a judgment upon the result

of the labours of a Commission which came into existence in 1879. To illustrate the full force of the Bishop of Exeter's remark, that to pass such a Bill would be to legislate in the dark, we would call attention to the proposal of the Commissioners to permit due flexibility in the ordering of the cathedral services, to suggest arrangements for ensuring, as far as possible, that the cathedral pulpit shall be occupied by the most able preachers that can be found in the diocese or out of the diocese, and to lay down rules which shall reserve to the Bishop suitable rights and privileges in relation to the cathedral. Excellent and desirable as all these objects are in themselves, they are capable of being treated in such a way that not only the ruling body of the cathedral, but the whole diocese, might be laid by the ears, and irreparable mischief ensue to the Church.

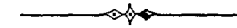
One recommendation of the Commissioners commends itself to our judgment, as we venture to think it will to that of most Churchmen. It seems to us highly desirable that members of capitular bodies should identify themselves more closely with the diocese, and that their term of residence should, as far as possible, be extended to eight or nine months, and that they should not hold preferment that would be inconsistent with the regular performance of diocesan duties. We hope the time is fast approaching when a truer perception of the duties of capitular bodies will be forced by public opinion upon our rulers, when high appointments in the Church will cease to bear a political aspect, and when Deans and Canons will be found, as, thank God, many have been found, devoting themselves heart and soul to the great central work, which it behoves the Established Church to carry on in every large town and city throughout the kingdom. This is indeed a reform which would give renewed strength and vitality to our cathedral bodies: but unless a happy change comes over some of the easy-going members of those bodies, and unless by their own inception or by the recommendations of the Commissioners they hasten to reform themselves, their days will be numbered.

One change of a somewhat startling nature we should not regret to see accomplished, namely, that the office of Dean should be merged in that of the Bishop, and that the latter should become the Dean of his cathedral church, while the emoluments arising from an office which in too many instances is regarded almost as a sinecure, might be transferred partly to a fund for the creation of new sees where such are still needed, and partly to the common fund of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for making better provision for the cure of souls in populous districts.

The fate of the Cathedral Statutes Bill in the House of Commons was never in doubt. It reached that House on the 10th of July, and was entrusted to the charge of Mr. Beresford Hope, who is also a member of the Royal Commission. The second reading was moved by him on the 15th of August, immediately before the adjournment for the holidays, in a brief and half-hearted speech, delivered in more solemn tones than the right honourable gentleman is wont to use in that august assembly, where his quaint eloquence and "Batavian grace" have been immortalized by the late Mr. Disraeli. Nothing in the nature of a debate took place; the supporters of the Bill fled; and before half-past twelve o'clock the House was counted out, and the Bill became a dropped order.

In conclusion, we would respectfully urge the Commissioners to take the public as well as the two Houses of the Legislature a little more into their confidence, for, notwithstanding the assurance given by them that publicity will eventually be given to their schemes, we think we have a right to complain that nothing more than the very faintest glimmering of light is vouchsafed in their report as to the suggested schemes. Nor can they be surprised that the fullest information is desired at a time when the Legislature is asked to create a new machinery for manufacturing cathedral statutes by the aid of two co-existent but distinct bodies with correlative duties, who, by their joint action, are to give them vitality and eventually the force of law.

C. J. MONK.



## Short Notices.

*The Teacher's Prayer Book.* Being the Book of Common Prayer, with introduction, analyses, and notes. By ALFRED BARRY, D.D., D.C.L., Principal of King's College, Canon of Westminster, and Chaplain in Ordinary to the Queen. Eyre & Spottiswoode.

**T**HIS work consists of the Prayer Book interleaved. The design is excellent, and the plan most convenient. The reader at once finds the notes and comments in *juxtaposition* with the portions of the Prayer Book to which they refer.

The author sets forth his object in the preface: it is "to supply to Churchmen, and especially to those who have to give religious teaching, some knowledge of the origin, the principles, and the substance of the Prayer Book which they are continually using, and which perhaps through that familiarity is apt to be imperfectly understood." He has "not therefore thought it necessary to encumber its pages and embarrass its readers with quotations from authorities," although, as he says, he has made use of the many excellent works, ancient and modern, on the Prayer Book itself and on Christian antiquities, which are now within the reach of the student,