

CHARGES AND ADDRESSES

to the Diocese of Liverpool,

by

the Right Reverend Bishop of Liverpool,

John Charles Ryle, D.D.,

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Our State and Prospects.*

My Reverend Brethren,

By the mercy of God, we are allowed to meet together once more at the Third Triennial Visitation of the new Diocese of Liverpool. When I came among you seven years ago, I little thought that I should live to address you three times.

The gaps and changes in our ranks during the three years which have elapsed since my last Visitation are rather numerous, considering that there are only 200 Incumbents altogether on our muster roll. Two have resigned and are still living—Mr. Brooke of St. Bride, Liverpool, and Mr. Banner of Roby. Four have resigned and died after resignation—Mr. Newenham of Knotty Ash; Mr. Wheeler of St. Ann's, Liverpool; Mr. Carson of St. Augustine, Liverpool; and Mr. Schonberg of Warrington. Ten have left the Diocese for other positions—Mr. Scott of Christ Church, Bootle; Mr. Cochrane of St. Saviour's, Everton; Mr. Pearson of Grassendale; Mr. Bower of Woolton; Mr. Lory of St. Mark's, Liverpool; Mr. Macnaghten of Prescott; Mr. Neale of St. Catherine's, Edge Hill; Mr. Dunkerley of St. Thomas's, Toxteth; and last, though not least of our losses, Archdeacon Bardsley of St. Saviour's, now Bishop of Sodor and Man. Twelve have been removed by death—Mr. Read of St. Paul's, Liverpool; Mr. Power of St. Alban's, Bevington; Canon Hume of All Souls, Liverpool; Mr. Boulton of Aughton; Mr. Bryan of Haigh; Mr.

* *The third triennial charge to the Diocese of Liverpool, October 27, 1887.*

Walmsley of Aspull; Mr. Crockett of Eccleston; Mr. Gardner of Stanley; Canon Carr of St. Helens; Mr. Hassall of St. John the Baptist, Toxteth Park; Mr. Quirk of Golborne; and Mr. Turnbull of St. Mary's, Edge Hill.

In short, no less than 27 names have disappeared from the roll of Incumbents which has been called over this day, and no less than 16 are dead who were with us three years ago. This alone is a startling fact, and one which ought to set us thinking. Sixteen deaths out of 200! Whose turn will it be to go next? Who among us all will be here when the names are called over again at the next Triennial Visitation? May we all so number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom! If called away, may we be found like good servants, with our loins girded and our lamps burning, and ready to meet our Master.

From grave facts like these, which I do not think should be passed over at a Visitation, I shall now turn to the two points which ought naturally to occupy a prominent position in a Bishop's Charge. In the first place, I will speak of our own Diocese in particular. In the second place, I will say something about the Church of England generally. On both subjects, a Diocese has a just right to expect a Bishop to be unreserved, to keep nothing back, and to speak out his mind.

I. Concerning the Diocese of Liverpool, I see *much cause for thankfulness and encouragement*. I say this deliberately, at the end of the first seven years of our separate existence. It is cheap and easy work for dwellers at a distance to point the finger of scorn and call our new Bishopric a failure. But not one in a hundred of our unfriendly critics seems to understand and realize the very peculiar difficulties under which the See of Liverpool has been launched. A brief review of these difficulties may be useful.

(1) First and foremost, few persons are aware that the whole framework of the Church of England in this district, is of comparatively modern origin. Two hundred years ago, I believe, there were not twenty-five churches in the West Derby Hundred, which forms the area of our present Diocese. So lately as fifty years ago, when our Gracious Sovereign, Queen Victoria, came to the throne, there were only 78 churches in the space of Lancashire now occupied by the Diocese. No less than 120 of our 200 churches have been built, and separate parochial districts formed, within the last half century! Now, to expect the Church of England to be as deeply rooted and as strong in such a territory, as it is in such counties as Cornwall, Notts, Yorkshire, and Northumberland, where scores of old rectories and ancient churches have been before the eyes of people for five hundred years, is unreasonable and unfair. New work can only be consolidated and thoroughly knit together by time. At

present we are more like a Colonial Diocese, or a collection of independent congregational chapels, than any Diocese in the land.

(2) In the next place, few people seem to be aware that a very large proportion of the population of our Diocese does not belong to the Church of England, and of course takes no interest in her advancement or prosperity. The county of Lancaster from the time of the Reformation has always been a stronghold of the adherents of the Romish Church. I need not tell you that we have not a few great families in our own district who have retained the faith of their pre-Reformation ancestors to this very day. Beside this, for many years there has been a constant immigration from the sister country in search of high wages and work, and we all know that in the northern parishes of Liverpool, near the docks, Irish Roman Catholics form the great majority of the population, and outnumber all other professing Christians in the proportion of at least three to one. Add to all this the broad fact that you have a very large body of Protestant Nonconformists of all denominations in every part of the Diocese, and not least from Scotland and Wales. Any man with his eyes open will see Dissenting chapels of every kind in every direction. The whole result is, that out of a population of about 1,200,000, within our borders, it admits of grave doubt whether more than a third can be justly classified as Churchmen. One thing at any rate is certain—they know very little who suppose that the formation of our new See was likely to be welcomed by the great bulk of the inhabitants. You cannot expect men to support and rally round a Church to which they do not belong.

(3) In the next place, few people in England seem to be aware that a very great portion of the wealth of Liverpool is not in the hands of Churchmen. That the second city in the empire, and the first seaport in the world, should be regarded as a rich place is natural enough. But we who live in Lancashire know well that a very large number of the merchants and leading inhabitants of the Diocese belong to Churches outside the Church of England, and cannot reasonably be expected to assist our own Church objects and Church work. The floating idea in many minds that our great city is a vast magazine and storehouse of Church wealth is not justified by facts. Our upper ten thousand are an exceedingly variegated body in the matter of religion, and money is not concentrated in any one set of hands any more than at New York. Even when the new Bishopric was first founded, the sum required by the Act of Parliament was principally made up by a few very large contributions from a limited number of persons. That there is noble liberality in Liverpool for objects in which all can co-operate, the subscription lists of the University and the Royal Infirmary supply abundant proof. But if any dweller in distant

parts of England imagines that it is easy to get money for strictly Church purposes in Liverpool, he is mistaken.

(4) In the next place, few people at a distance seem to realize how fearfully undermanned this Diocese is in the matter of clergy. Our population in 1881 was 1,085,000. At the present moment, I believe, it is little less than 1,200,000. And what spiritual provision does the Church of England make for this huge multitude? We have only 200 Incumbents, besides curates, or, upon an average, one Incumbent to each 6000 souls! Nor is this all. We have not a few parishes with populations of 21,000, 20,000, 18,000, 15,000, 12,000, and 10,000. It is absurd to suppose that the Established Church is properly represented in such districts, or can keep touch with the people. Real pastoral work in these parishes is impossible, and thousands live and die like sheep without a shepherd, and might almost as well be in a heathen land. And, worst of all, these vast, overgrown parishes are often inhabited by the poorest of the labouring classes, who can hardly earn enough to keep themselves from downright poverty, and are utterly unable to give substantial help to the clergy. Truly the contrast between my old Diocese of Norwich, with 1050 incumbents and only 700,000 people, and the Diocese of Liverpool, with 1,200,000 people and only 200 incumbents, is terribly painful. Both are Dioceses within the pale of the Established Church of England; but there is a startling difference between their conditions.

(5) In the next place, few people appear to realize the extremely disadvantageous position in which our Diocese is placed by the miserably low endowment of many of its largest parishes. Out of our 200 Incumbents, at least 98, or nearly one half, receive an income of not more than £300 a year, and not a few receive even less. Yet many of these parishes are exactly the most densely populated and the poorest in the whole Diocese. The difficulties of a vicar with the nominal charge of ten or twelve or fifteen thousand souls, and an income of £300 a year, are more easily imagined than described. It is a painful, pitiable, heart-breaking, depressing state of things; and I often wonder that men can be found to fill such posts. So long as such a condition of clerical incomes exists, it is useless to expect first-rate Oxford and Cambridge men to come to our Diocese, whatever anonymous newspaper writers may please to say, or to stay when they come. At best, a title for orders in the north end of Liverpool, or in Wigan, Warrington, Widnes, or St. Helens, is not very attractive. But when you add to this the slender chance of promotion to anything worth calling a *living* which stares a curate in the face, you cannot wonder that wranglers and first-class men hesitate to come to Liverpool Diocese! Such men naturally prefer a post in East London, where they are within reach of College contemporaries who are in business

or reading the law, or they embark in some Diocese where the Bishop has patronage with which to reward deserving men, such as, by an unhappy oversight of Parliament, the Bishop of the new See of Liverpool has not got. The whole subject of endowments and clerical incomes deserves more attention than it has hitherto received. It has been too much forgotten that to endow new churches is quite as important as to build them. Clergymen cannot live on air any more than other people, and nothing degrades a minister so much as a constant sense of pecuniary difficulties. If the laity of this Diocese want to get first-rate men into our churches, they may depend upon it they must offer more inducements to first-rate men to come.

(6) In the last place, our Diocese is placed in considerable difficulty by the want of a proper Cathedral, and a body of endowed clergy connected with it. In this respect our new See is worse off than any See in England. The modern Dioceses of Manchester, Ripon, and Southwell found Cathedrals ready for them. The parish churches of Newcastle and Wakefield are large and handsome enough to be made Cathedrals with ease. In Truro, the energetic Bishop, having hardly any new churches to build, has been able to devote himself to the erection of the new Cathedral, which is soon to be opened. In Liverpool, on the contrary, we have not a single church in the whole city which could justly be called a suitable Cathedral. I frankly admit that I cannot make an idol of a Cathedral, as some people seem to do. I do not think it a primary object in such a Diocese as ours, where more churches and living agents are the first thing wanted. But I should be blind indeed if I did not see that a large Cathedral enables many things to be done which cannot be done without it. For large Diocesan gatherings of any kind, for services and functions connected with Congresses and Conferences, for assemblies of choirs, voluntary lay-helpers, Sunday-school teachers, Societies of young men or young women, and, above all, for popular nave services like those held in St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey—for all these purposes a stately ecclesiastical building, capable of accommodating 2000 or 3000 people, would be most useful in Liverpool. At present we have nothing of the kind; and whether we ever shall have seems doubtful. It is certain that, to build and endow a magnificent Minster, such as Emerson, Bodley, and Brooks designed, would cost half a million of money; and at present I do not see where this immense sum is likely to be raised. But that the want of a proper Cathedral is in many ways a serious disadvantage to our Diocese, I have no doubt at all.

I wind up the list of our difficulties here, and I make no apology for dwelling on them at such length. They are difficulties which are neither known nor realized by Churchmen who are not acquainted with Liverpool. They are difficulties which ought to be looked at and weighed, if people want

to form a just estimate of the condition and progress of our new Diocese at the end of the seventh year of its existence. About that condition I will now supply a few plain facts, and give a brief account of our agencies, machinery, and organization in a summarized form.

(1) When the See of Liverpool was created in 1880, the official staff of the area of the district consisted of one Archdeacon and six Rural Deans. We have now two Archdeacons, and nine Rural Deans, and by the division of the Deanery of North Meols, which is sanctioned and will shortly be gazetted, we shall soon have ten.

(2) We have twenty-four Honorary Canons of our Cathedral, all unendowed, by whom the Cathedral pulpit is supplied every Sunday afternoon.

(3) We have a regular Cathedral service at five o'clock every day; a choir, of which we have no cause to be ashamed; and an afternoon service and sermon at three every Sunday. More than this we cannot manage at present, because St. Peter's Cathedral is the parish church of Liverpool, and parochial demands for marriages and baptisms have to be satisfied. For this Cathedral service we have not at present a single penny of endowment. It is entirely kept up on the voluntary system.

(4) We have 200 Incumbents in the Diocese—a painfully small number for the large population. In 1880 there were 182. We have 194 stipendiary Curates; in 1880 there were only 120. This is an increase of 74 Curates in seven years.

(5) We have an organized Church of England Scripture Readers' Society in Liverpool, supplying 45 Readers, who are doing excellent work in our large parishes.

(6) We have a Mission of 31 Bible-women in Liverpool, in order to hold mothers' meetings, and do work which can be better done by women than men.

(7) We have two Church societies for promoting the spiritual welfare of seamen in this the first seaport in the world—the Mersey Mission to Seamen and the St. Andrew's Waterside Mission.

(8) We have four Diocesan Institutions—one for Church building, one for Church aid by the provision of missionary curates in large parishes, one for Augmenting and helping small livings, and one for Educational purposes, including a paid inspector of religious instruction in the Diocese.

(9) We have an enrolled and registered Diocesan Finance Association, for the reception and management of all moneys contributed to the Diocesan Institutions, and to any other Religious Societies.

(10) We have a powerful Church of England Temperance Society, with branches and ramifications in every part of the Diocese, which is doing great good.

(11) During the last seven years I have consecrated twenty entirely new churches, and opened by licence two others, which only need an endowment. Three others are being built, and will be completed before long. This makes twenty-five in all. Restoration, or the addition of chancels, at Halsall, Upholland, Ormskirk, Haigh, and St. Paul's, Prince's Park, have in each case cost very large sums of money. It is worthy of notice that no less than forty new churches have been built and consecrated in the little corner of Lancashire forming this Diocese within the last fourteen years.

(12) There are fifty licensed Mission-rooms in the Diocese. In Walton two districts, and in Bootle one, have been regularly assigned to missionary curates, and services are carried on in temporary buildings till churches can be erected.

(13) In the seven years that I have been Bishop of Liverpool I have ordained no less than 217 Deacons. In the seven years before the See was created the number ordained for the same district was only 133.

(14) The number of young persons Confirmed in the first year that I began confirming was 4700. The annual number is now between 6000 and 7000, and these are supplied by only 200 congregations. During the last six years I have held 291 Confirmations, and confirmed 35,458 young persons.

(15) We have a Diocesan Conference, which has met regularly every year since 1881. It differs from all others, I believe, in one remarkable point. It is open to every licensed clergyman in the Diocese, and is only elective for two lay representatives from every parish.

(16) We have in every Rural Deanery a Ruri-decanal Chapter of clergy only, and a Ruri-decanal Conference of clergy and laity combined, each meeting twice annually.

(17) We have a powerful Sunday-school Institute, which is increasingly useful every year, and there are 69,776 scholars in our Church Sunday schools.

(18) We have a Society of voluntary Lay helpers, with 500 enrolled members. Of these, forty-four have been formally admitted as Readers with a special religious service, and have received stamped letters of approval from my hands.

(19) We have a most valuable Pension Fund for the benefit of aged and invalid clergy, for which we are indebted to the noble gift of £20,000 from a well-known lady in Liverpool. At present the income of this fund, which is more than £700 a year, seems likely to meet the wants of the whole Diocese.

(20) We have a large Girls' Friendly Society, which, under the untiring superintendence of Lady Lathom and other zealous ladies, is doing good service to young women.

(21) We have three distinct religious services in the Welsh language in Liverpool—one at the old St. David's Church behind the Adelphi, and two in licensed rooms—one at Kirkdale, at the north end of the city, and one at the south end, in St. Nathaniel's. This is a matter which has been rather overlooked in past days. We have a large Welsh population in our city, and if we do not provide Church services we have no right to wonder if our Welsh brethren go to chapels.

(22) Last, but not least, I must testify that the 200 churches of the Diocese, on the whole, as buildings, are in remarkably good order and condition. I may be allowed to speak with authority on this point. I have preached 650 times for my clergy in the last seven years, and have either preached or held Confirmations in no less than 180 churches out of the 200 in the Diocese; and I do not hesitate to say that it is an exception to see a consecrated building in this district which is not clean, well kept, and in good repair. We certainly cannot point to grand ecclesiastical structures, such as you will find in East Anglia. But in point of *condition* I believe our churches are second to none. For this I think we are much indebted to active churchwardens and sidesmen.

I close my account of Diocesan agencies, machinery, and Institutions at this point. Not a few of them I found already existing and in operation when I became Bishop of Liverpool. I claim no credit for them, but have gladly adopted them as part of our organization. The large annual contributions of the Diocese to the Home and Foreign Missions of the Church of England might have been added; and the whole list might easily be lengthened if time permitted. Much of my long statement no doubt applies exclusively to Liverpool proper. But this is natural when it is recollected that one-half the population of the Diocese dwells in our great city. I do not forget that a large amount of good Church work is continually done in Wigan, Warrington, St. Helens, and Southport, of which I cannot speak particularly; and perhaps it is more parochial than diocesan. I am also thankful to add that a very large quantity of religious and philanthropic work is continually done in Liverpool by Churchmen and Nonconformists combined. But you will readily understand that in a Visitation Charge I naturally confine myself to the work of the Church of England. And on the whole I think we have no cause to be ashamed of our new Diocese. In short, I am bold to assert that, considering our many difficulties we have much ground for thankfulness. Whatever our enemies may please to say, we are not standing still, but moving. We are not asleep, but awake. We are not dead, but alive.

Of course we are far from perfection. Standing on the watchtower which a Bishop occupies, and looking over the whole area of our Diocese, I see many things wanting which I long to see supplied.

(1) We want some of our large overgrown parishes wisely broken up and subdivided, and new churches built, and legal districts constituted, with a resident incumbent and his staff in each. The position of such parishes as St. John the Baptist, Toxteth Park; St. Mary, Kirkdale; St. Paul, North Shore; St. Mary, Bootle; and the Rectory Parish at Warrington is utterly unsatisfactory. It is absurd to suppose that the Church of England can be properly represented, or her pastoral work kept up, in such enormous districts. No one can wonder that Dissent abounds in them, and that the Church is neither known, nor felt, nor respected by many of the inhabitants.

(2) We want more mission-rooms in many of our large parishes, if we cannot get churches. Good, solid, plain buildings of this kind, accommodating 400 or 500 people, and costing little compared to a church, are of unspeakable value to an active clergyman, and pave the way by elementary services for churches to be built at some future time. Such rooms as I have seen at Biowick, Southport; All Saints', Hindley; and St. Nathaniel's, Liverpool, are examples of what I mean. I commend such rooms as these to the special attention of my clergy. I am sorry to say that the days of £200 a year endowments from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for every new church with 4000 people in its district, seem coming to an end, in consequence of agricultural depression. We must no longer reckon on this help, and future churches must be self-supporting. Let us not despair. If we cannot build churches, let us build rooms.

(3) We want far more liberal subscriptions to our Diocesan Institutions. At present their income is disgracefully small, and their usefulness is thereby crippled. No doubt times have been very bad for the last seven years, and there is a great shrinkage in the profits of business. But there is too much reason to believe that myriads of Churchmen both here and all over England never see the positive duty of giving regularly for the promotion of Christ's cause. They appear to think that going to Church on Sunday is the whole of religion. The late Canon Hume used to tell me that he could not find the names of 3000 persons in all the subscription lists of Liverpool. I do not hesitate to say that this is the weakest point in the character of English Churchmen. They do not seem to understand the duty and privilege of giving money in order to do good. It is a point in which we are far behind English Nonconformists and Scotch Presbyterians. When I find that one-third of the churches in this Diocese have no collection at all for Diocesan Institutions, I am grieved. It is only one among many proofs that the corporate action of

the Church of England—a great body with many members—is at present very imperfectly understood in South-West Lancashire. Congregations are too much disposed to think only of themselves, and to forget their neighbours.

I know well that Diocesan Institutions are everywhere unpopular, and are badly supported. But I fail to see how any Diocese can be worked without them. In every Diocese there ought to be a central fund, to which all clergymen wanting help for Church work ought to be able to apply, and through which the richer parishes may help the poorer. The management of such funds cannot, of course, be left in the hands of one school of thought, and all parties ought to be represented on the Committees. My own observation of the annual grants of our wretchedly supported Diocesan Institutions for some years, leads me to the conclusion that they are impartially and fairly administered, and I heartily wish they had larger funds to dispense.

My Reverend Brethren, this matter is a very serious business, and I trust it will not be forgotten and thrown behind your backs. It is gradually becoming a grave question, if our Diocesan Institutions are not better supported, whether they must not be given up altogether and wound up. For the honour of the Diocese, I hope such a discreditable consummation may be avoided. But we really must have more annual subscriptions and Church collections. I hope you will not oblige me to say, when I am asked to occupy your pulpits for some parochial object, ‘I cannot give you a sermon if you do not have an annual collection for Diocesan purposes, for one or other of our four great Institutions.’

(4) Finally, we want to see more of the laity coming forward to take part in all the affairs of the Church in our Diocese. It pains me to see how few find time to attend our Committees, to come to the meetings of our Religious Societies, and to take part in our Diocesan Conferences. The demands of business seem to absorb all their days. Yet there never was an era in the history of our Church when she needed the strong sense and the well-balanced minds of her lay sons more than she does now. The affairs of the New Testament Churches were quite as much cared for by the laity as the clergy, and it ought to be the same in the Church of England. It is not a healthy symptom of our condition when it is not so. I say all this with a sorrowful recollection of our recent losses. Men like Mr. Bushell, Mr. Groves, and Mr. Bailey make gaps, when they are removed, which are not easily filled up. It is a constant prayer of mine that God would incline some of the younger lay Churchmen in Liverpool to come forward and help us more than they do.

However, after all I have now said, I must repeat what I said at the beginning, that on a retrospect of the last seven years, and a calm survey of our

progress and condition, the feeling which predominates in my mind is one of deep thankfulness. In the face of many difficulties, and with an uphill battle to fight, much has been done, and much is doing, in our new See. We have as large a proportion of hard-working, diligent clergy, I believe, as any Diocese in England. There is a vast amount of quiet, solid work going on of which the outside world knows nothing, and which is never blazoned and trumpeted in Church newspapers. The mere presence of a Bishop will not work miracles, or convert inefficient clergymen, who have mistaken their calling, into apostles and prophets. But considering what human nature is, and what we have a reasonable right to expect from it, and what obstacles we have to contend with, I believe the new Diocese of Liverpool has abundant reason to thank God and take courage.

II. I must now turn away from our own Diocese, and take up a far wider and more difficult subject. That subject is, the general condition of the great Established Church of England, of which our Diocese forms a part, and with which, for weal or woe, we are bound up. I approach it with a deep sense of its difficulty and importance. We are all apt to think there never were such times as those we now live in; and this is natural. They are the only times with which we are quite familiar. But I am bold to say there never was a period in which there were so many critical and burning questions demanding attention as the present. Our ecclesiastical horizon has very dark clouds in some quarters, and much depends on the activity, wisdom, and moderation of Churchmen in the next five years.

I shall surprise some of you when I begin by saying that, in many points of view, I regard the condition of the Established Church of England as remarkably *cheering, encouraging, and satisfactory*. It is impossible to deny that there is an amount of life, and energy, and activity and zeal, and stir, and 'go,' if I may use a modern term, among Churchmen in the present day, which was utterly unknown fifty years ago. I do not admit for a moment that this change has arisen from the so-called High-Church revival, as some are fond of saying. The large and growing income of the Church Missionary Society this very year shows clearly that there is no decay in the zeal and influence of the Evangelical body. The fact is, that the change is to be seen in every school, and party, and department, and section of Churchmen. All over the land things are utterly unlike what they were half a century ago. The Church of England is no longer asleep, but awake. The energies of her children in some cases may be sadly misdirected, and do much mischief. But her worst enemies must admit that she is moving. She is not quite dead, but very

much alive. I will mention a few facts in order to prove the truth of what I say.

(1) First and foremost, I point to the immense amount of money which Churchmen have voluntarily expended in building new churches and restoring old ones during the last fifty years, and notably to the sums expended on our grand old Cathedrals. The total of this money is not less than thirty millions of pounds! Of course it is easy to say that bricks and stones and mortar do not make up religion. No doubt that is true. But it is also true that our grandfathers coolly saw the population growing round them and built no churches at all, while the Dissenters built many chapels. I have read that Bishop Porteus* only saw one new church built in the Diocese of London during the whole period of his episcopate. In temporal matters, when merchants and tradesmen begin to enlarge their premises, it does not look like failure and decay.

(2) In the next place, I point to the great and undeniable change in the general character and conduct of the clergy. No doubt there may be false shepherds, and wolves in sheep's clothing, and black sheep in our ranks, just as there are rotten members in every profession; and as long as human nature is what it is, we must expect this to the end of the world. But I confidently assert that the general standard of the clergy as a body is to a certainty better than it was at the early part of this century. Scandalous lives, gross neglect of pastoral duty, perfunctory and slovenly discharge of Church services, sacred buildings closed from Sunday to Sunday, dirty and untidy pews and benches, the Lord's Supper only administered once a quarter, no weekly services, children not gathered into schools, the masses left to the Methodists and Nonconformists without any compunction—all these things were the rule in many English parishes at the beginning of this century. Now, I am bold to say, they are the exception. Will any one deny that this is an immense improvement?

(3) In the next place, I point to the enormous change for the better in the sermons of the clergy of this day, when compared with the sermons which our ancestors were compelled to hear. It is vain to deny that the sermon of the old times was too often nothing better than a moral essay, and from beginning to end of it there was a conspicuous absence of the chief distinctive doctrines of Christianity. The atonement, the work of the Holy Spirit, justification, conversion, repentance, faith, were seldom, if ever, enforced or explained. It is not so now. Most of these mighty verities, even though sometimes stated with questionable clearness, are rarely quite ignored. Nor are

* Beilby Porteus, Bishop of London, 1787-1808.

they the monopoly of any one school in the Church. You may often hear them in pulpit after pulpit from men who in many points differ widely. Surely we ought candidly to admit that this is an immense improvement.

(4) In the next place, I point to the great increase of parochial work which is regularly done by many clergymen, compared to what was done in days gone by. Week-day services, Bible classes, meetings of Sunday-school teachers, organized gatherings of young men and young women, temperance meetings, and many other agencies for good, have sprung into existence, and are kept up in every part of the land. I sometimes feel amazed in Liverpool churches, when I hear the long list of engagements for the coming week, which is read out to the congregation, and marvel that so many irons can be found to put in the fire, and all kept hot. But the fact is undeniable, that far more is done in 1887 than in 1800, and I am thankful.

(5) In the next place, I point to the constantly growing desire of the clergy to get together, confer, discuss, take counsel, and pray. As evidences of what I mean, I ask you to remember that Congresses, Conferences, Ruri-decanal gatherings, Retreats, Quiet Days, and the like, are all comparatively modern inventions, and were utterly unknown to our grandfathers, who were content with an occasional quiet clerical meeting. No doubt the gatherings I have mentioned are not always very useful, and sometimes are very dull. But they certainly evidence a state of feeling in the clerical body very different from that of the 'good old times,' when many an Incumbent never stirred out of his parish from January to December, or only met his clerical brethren in order to eat, drink, and play at cards.

(6) In the next place, I point to the increased usefulness of our venerable Cathedrals. I remember the time when they were generally regarded as matchless specimens of architecture, and hardly anything more. People went to see them as they went to see the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum, and admired the wonders in stone and wood and glass which they contained. But what did the Cathedrals do for the cause of Christ and true religion? Little, very little indeed! A few stray sheep in the cold wilderness of the choir on week-days, two or three hundred on Sunday afternoons to hear a good anthem, this was the Cathedral's contribution to the cause of religion in old times! I thank God there is an end to all this. Select picked preachers, lively nave services, accompanied by a popular service of song, have obtained a new lease of life for the grand old Minsters and Abbey Churches of the land. The man who attends St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey on a Sunday afternoon, can no longer say that the Cathedrals are weighed in the balances and found wanting.

(7) In the next place, I point to the astonishing increase of the Colonial Episcopate during the last fifty years. In the midst of vast exertions to promote missions to the heathen and missions at home, the Church of England has found time and money to found new Dioceses in every part of the Colonial Empire, and to plant her Prayer-book and her form of government in every land where the British flag flies, and her children are forming new homes. In the year 1840 there were only ten Colonial Bishops. In the year 1887 there are 73. It goes without saying that Bishops alone do not make a Church, any more than officers make an army, without rank and file. But there is abundant proof that, as soon as a Bishop is sent out to a colony, and a diocese formed, the almost invariable result is a large increase of clergy, means of grace, and congregations. When a great tree begins to decay, one of the first symptoms is the withering and death of the extreme branches. This is precisely what is *not* the case with the Church of England. The colonies supply abundant proof that she is not dead but alive in every part of the globe.

(8) In the last place, I point to the astonishing growth of aggressive evangelistic operations which is to be seen all over the land in the present day. It is only thirty years ago that I had the high honour of taking part in the first mission service, which, I believe, was ever held. It was held for six evenings successively in St. Martin's Church, Birmingham, and Dr. M'Neile,* Dr. Miller,† and myself were the preachers. That week's effort was regarded as a very dubious experiment, and many predicted failure. But now, at the end of thirty years, Special Missions have become an organized institution of the Church of England. They are approved, patronized, and supported by every school of thought. In some Dioceses a mission clergyman is a recognized officer of the Diocese. There are hardly any large towns in which missions have not been held. In short, a determination to carry the Gospel to every class, and to go down to those who will not come up to us, is an unmistakable sign of the times. If Wesley, and Whitefield, and Berridge, and Grimshaw, had been told a hundred and twenty years ago that the whole Church of England would ever take up aggressive evangelization like our present Special Missions, I can hardly think they would have believed it. But the fact is before our eyes.

I ask your best attention to the list of facts which I have now laid before you. I challenge any one to deny their correctness. They form the ground on which I confidently build the assertion, that there is much that is cheering, hopeful, and encouraging in the present condition of the Church of England.

* Hugh M'Neile, Canon of Chester, 1845-68.

† John Cole Miller; became Incumbent of St. Martin's Birmingham in 1846.

If we are to be disestablished and destroyed, as some think we shall be, at any rate we shall not die sleeping. ‘Oportet imperatorem stantem mori.’* Like the gallant sentinel of Pompeii, we are awake, and shall die at our post.

Let me add to all this, that one of the healthiest symptoms in the Church of England is the general growing desire to reform abuses, and to ‘set in order things that are wanting.’ Measures have been brought forward, both in Parliament and out of it, for the improvement and strengthening of the Church, most of which deserve the support of all loyal Churchmen, and I think it my duty to make a few remarks about them.

(1) The Bill about Tithes, transferring their payment from occupiers to landlords, appears to me a most important and valuable measure, and one which ought to be thankfully received. I have always held that this arrangement ought to have been made originally, when the Tithe Commutation Act was first passed. It seems impossible to make some farmers understand that the payment of tithes lowers their rent, and is a part of the conditions on which they hold their farms. So long as they themselves have to pay the money they think that they are injured and aggrieved. I trust that this measure may soon become the law of the land.

(2) The Church Patronage Bill contains some most excellent provisions, for which most thinking Churchmen have long sighed in vain. The sale of presentations is to my mind a scandal. The sale of advowsons ought only to be allowed under special circumstances, and should be fenced by safeguards. Power ought to be given to a Bishop to refuse the institution of any clergyman nominated to a living who, from age or bodily or mental infirmity, is clearly unfit for his office. Liberty and opportunity ought to be granted to parishioners to show reasons, if they can, why a clergyman nominated should not be instituted, provided always that, if their objections are frivolous and vexatious, they must pay the costs of objection. In my opinion, the weakest and worst point, in the original Bill was the proposed Diocesan Patronage Board in every Diocese. I am confident that such a cumbrous Board would not have worked well. In one Diocese, it would have fallen into the hands of some one strong mind. In a second, it would have produced nothing but colourless milk-and-water appointments. In a third, it would have been a scene of perpetual compromise or controversy. I trust we shall never hear of it again. Only let the most patent and glaring abuses of the present system be removed, and then the more patronage is divided and scattered the better. Nothing, I believe, would be a greater misfortune to our Church than to concentrate and accumulate patronage in one set of hands. I would leave it

* ‘In standing at our post of duty it behoves us to be prepared to die.’

between the Crown, the Chancellor, the Bishops, the Colleges, private patrons, and accredited bodies of trustees. It is the only way to keep up the comprehensive character of the Church of England.

(3) The Bill for permitting the sale of glebe-lands is one which I must honestly say I regard with some doubtful feelings. I hope it might work well, but I am not very enthusiastic about it. I can quite understand that incumbents of livings endowed with land, and not with tithes, are often placed in a most painful position during the present agricultural depression. They are liable to have their glebe thrown on their hands by the failure of their tenants. They are too often in such cases utterly unable to farm the land, partly from want of capital and partly from want of skill. We cannot wonder that in such livings an Incumbent would like to have the power to sell the glebe, and turn it into hard cash, to be invested in some good and safe security. No doubt there are occasional instances in which the sale might be advantageously effected, and some wealthy landowner might occasionally be ready to give a good price for an addition to his wide domains. But I fear there are very many parishes in which it would be impossible to sell the glebe-land except at an immense sacrifice and a permanent loss of more than half the value of the living, which, if better days come, would be regretted too late. However, it may perhaps be expedient to have a permissive Act. I only maintain that the sale of glebe-lands should always be approached with very great caution, and that a full report of its desirability should be made by competent commissioners residing in the Diocese and close by the parish. To all this let me add my own private impression, that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, from their long acquaintance with Church property, are the persons to whom the whole transaction should be entrusted.

Turning from the inside of Parliament to outside movements, schemes, and matters which have come into being during the last three years, and are now pressed on the attention of Churchmen, there are four points about which I have something to say, and points about which you have a just right to expect some expression of opinion from your Bishop.

(1) First and foremost comes the newly-created House of Laymen in the Province of Canterbury. I regard that House with great satisfaction, and read the reports of its proceedings with close attention. It is a valuable experiment, and a move in the right direction. Nevertheless, I cannot expect so much from it as some do. So long as it has no legal status whatsoever, and is not recognized by Queen, Lords, and Commons; so long as it is a mere consultative body, without power to originate anything, or to do anything beside talking and passing resolutions, and this under some little restraint; so long as it is elected in the present fashion; so long I do not think it will gather into its

ranks the chief laymen of light and leading in the Province of Canterbury, or excite lasting interest in its proceedings. I repeat, however, that it is essentially a move in the right direction. It is the admission of a great principle, far too long most foolishly ignored, that the laity of a church have a right to be consulted, and ought to have a voice in all its proceedings.* The thin edge of the wedge has got in, and a beginning of wise counsels has been made. Whether we shall have a House of Laymen in the Northern Province remains yet to be seen.

(2) Next in importance comes the much-talked of union of the Northern and Southern Convocations. To this, under the present state of things, I am thoroughly opposed, and I trust I shall never live to see it. If the Church of England were ever disestablished like the Church of Ireland, and a brand-new constitution had to be framed, there might be something in the idea. Again, if the Lower House of Canterbury was completely reformed and recast on the model of the Lower House of York, with two clerical representatives from each Archdeaconry, there might be something in the idea. Whether there is much chance of this I venture to doubt. At present the two Lower Convocations are not homogeneous, and till they are, fusion and amalgamation seem to me out of the question. After all, it is a very doubtful matter whether the proposed union would ever work well. The votes of the North would be so entirely swamped and outnumbered by those of the South, that I suspect the huge populations of the North would be dissatisfied. Moreover, if one great Synod was held in London for the whole Church, I predict that the attendance of members from the North of England would be very scanty. The Metropolis is the natural centre of the South of England, and for many reasons members of Convocation gravitate towards it. It is not so with the North. The inhabitants of Lancashire and Yorkshire have their own great centres in Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Sheffield, and do not see the need of continually going to London. It is my impression that one great Synod would fall very much into the hands of a few busy Churchmen in and around London, and the North would be practically left out in the cold. In short, I have a decided opinion that the two Convocations must be content at present to co-operate by delegations, and that any attempt to amalgamate and unite them would be a mistake.

(3) The next public subject about which I shall say a few words is the proposed 'Church House' in London. I feel it my duty not to leave it

* 'Till it be proved that some special law of Christ hath for ever secured unto the clergy alone the power of making ecclesiastical laws, we are to hold it a thing most consonant with equity and reason, that no ecclesiastical laws be made in a Christian commonwealth without consent or will of the laity as well as of the clergy'. Hooker. *Eccles. Polity*, Book viii. chap. vi.

unnoticed, and I want my attitude towards the scheme not to be misunderstood. The Church House is undoubtedly a brilliant idea, and if carried out would be a graceful memorial of the Jubilee year of Her Majesty Queen Victoria's reign. The building would be most useful to the Convocation of Canterbury, which at present has no suitable dwelling-place. If any Churchman in my Diocese likes to send aid to the proposed Church House, by all means let him do so. I would not lift a finger to prevent him; though I should have thought that London with its four millions might easily have done the work without asking the help of Lancashire. But I must say plainly, that I cannot see what benefit the Northern Province of York would receive from the Church House in London, so long as the two Convocations are separated, and not united. For business purposes we have the offices of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Queen Anne's Bounty Board. The great Religious Societies have their own offices, and are not likely to give them up. For meetings of Bishops, Lambeth Palace is sufficiently large. For what other remaining purposes a northern Churchman can need a London Church House I do not at present see. Beside all this, we want a large sum of money for a Cathedral in Liverpool, and money to build at least a dozen more proposed churches in the Diocese, of which the promoters are brought to a dead standstill for want of funds. Last, but not least, we sorely want a Church House of our own in Liverpool, and I am sure we do not want it quite as much as a Cathedral. A suitable building in a central position in this great city containing the Registry, the Consistory Court, business rooms for my own interviews, offices for the Diocesan Finance Association and all our other Church Societies, a moderately-sized room for Committee meetings, a Church club and reading-room, and the depot of the Christian Knowledge Society—such a building, I believe, would be of incalculable value to our Diocese, and I heartily wish it might be built. At present the business of the Diocese is carried on in cribbed, cabined, confined, and highly-rented offices in a most inconvenient way. In the face of such facts as these, I think you cannot be surprised that I have not seen my way to call upon our Diocese to support the London Church House.

(4) The last public subject which I think it right to touch upon may seem a small one at first sight. But small as it is I dare not pass it over, because it seems to me to contain the germ of much mischief. The subject I refer to is the proposed addition to the Church Catechism which has been lately discussed seriously in the Lower House of Canterbury Convocation. Far be it from me to say that our venerable Catechism is perfect; and I daresay we all think we could improve it. But what I strongly object to is the slightest attempt to pull about anything in the Prayer-book, and to introduce the thin

edge of addition, subtraction, mutilation, or alteration. A more fertile source of strife, debate, controversy, and division than the very additions which have been recently launched I cannot conceive. Where are we going to stop? What next, and what next? Happily the Prayer-book can never be legally altered or added to without permission from the Government and a 'letter of business.' I doubt extremely whether such permission will ever be granted. In the meantime I earnestly hope that the clergy of my Diocese will lend no support to the proposed addition to the Catechism. Let every man explain it loyally and honestly to his parishioners according to his own light. But for the sake of peace, let us not add to the old document, but leave it alone.

I shall now conclude this Charge by calling your attention to two heavy black clouds which appear to me to loom large on our ecclesiastical horizon. I have swept a tolerably large field in my survey of our Church's progress and condition, both inside and outside of our own Diocese. I have brought prominently forward many causes for deep thankfulness, and no one I think can fairly say that I am a pessimist today. But it is useless to ignore dangers, and especially in a great institution like the Church of England. To my eyes there are two very formidable dangers ahead which imperatively require the attention and the prayers of all loyal Churchmen. To be always crying 'Peace, peace, when there is no peace,' and to refuse to touch unpleasant topics, is neither honesty nor charity. It is the conduct of a flatterer and not of a friend. Let me then point out what these two dangers are.

(1) The first danger I see is the *utter paralysis of discipline* in the Church of England.

We all know, and know to our sorrow, that disputes about the ritual of the Lord's Supper have been the plague and trouble of the Church of England for more than twenty years. Differences of opinion about many points there always have been within the Established Church, and no man of common sense expects a rigid cast-iron uniformity of thought and practice among Churchmen. If we cannot be liberal and comprehensive, if we cannot 'think and let think,' we are not in our right place in the Anglican Communion. There will always be High, Low, and Broad schools of thought within our pale. But it is evident that liberty and comprehensiveness must have *some* limits, and the Lord's Supper is a subject about which Churchmen are reasonably jealous, when they remember that our martyred Reformers were burned because they would not receive the Romish doctrine about that blessed sacrament. We know also that novelties in the celebration of the Lord's Supper have been made the subject of several law-suits in the Ecclesiastical Courts of this country, and have several times been distinctly condemned and declared illegal. Finally, we know that many clergymen regard

the judgments of these Courts as null and void, refuse to pay the slightest attention to them, continue to do the very things which they condemn, deny their authority as ecclesiastical tribunals, and decline to obey the admonitions of their Bishop if he supports the Courts, notwithstanding their oath of obedience.*

Now this is precisely the state of things which I call *dangerous in the highest degree*, and I think it my duty to direct your attention to it. You will observe that I do not touch the question of right or wrong in these unhappy disputes. I do not say whether the judgments have been good or bad. But I do say that a Church in which the clergy refuse to obey the Church's Courts, Courts which are duly recognized by Queen, Lords, and Commons; Courts which are the only representatives of the royal supremacy—that such a Church is in a most unsatisfactory condition. It is a Church without order and discipline. It is a Church which is in a state of lawlessness, anarchy, chaos, and confusion, and, unless some remedy is applied, must make shipwreck. In short, in matters of discipline we are at present drifting like a ship without a rudder. Unless we mind what we are about, we shall find, by painful experience, that tolerated lawlessness is just as dangerous to a Church as it is to a State.

The evils of this position of things are simply incalculable. Their name is legion. Party spirit increases in every Diocese. Diocesan Institutions are starved and neglected. One man will not support them because he thinks them too High, and another because he thinks them too Low! Strife, controversy, and theological squabbles about trifles absorb time and attention. Divisions weaken our whole body, and prevent us showing a united front to our enemies. Sceptics and infidels make capital out of our differences, and tell us it is time enough to become believers when we are agreed among ourselves. The advocates of Disestablishment rejoice to see us playing their game so well, and biting and devouring one another. The gulf between clergyman and clergyman becomes wider and wider every year, and ministers of the same Church keep aloof and separate from one another, as if they did not belong to the same communion. At the rate things are going it will soon be impossible for a Bishop to ask candidates for orders any questions about the Lord's Supper! If all this does not constitute danger, I know not what can.

* 'We hold it to be most desirable that the National Establishment should continue to comprise members who are attached to the different schools of thought, so long as every minister whom the Church appoints shall be willing to conform to her standard of doctrine and ritual. But this large comprehension seems to us to render it most desirable, and indeed essential, that in the Church's ministration the officiating minister should not introduce innovations, which are welcome to one party, but are wholly offensive to another'. A. C. Ewald: *Life of Sir Joseph Napier*, p. 334.

But unhappily this is not all. Throughout England, whenever any clergyman refuses to obey the Courts or listen to his Bishop, the local press is at once inundated with a flood of crude, wild opinions from anonymous correspondents, which reflect little credit on the wisdom of the writers, but do infinite harm to ignorant readers. One man tells the public that every zealous and earnest clergyman ought to be let alone, and to be allowed to preach and practise in his church exactly what he likes. Another man maintains the astounding position that every congregation should be allowed to have any kind of ceremonial it pleases, ignoring the fact that our Church is not an assembly of independent congregations, but a corporate body, requiring a reasonable measure of uniformity in all its members. A third asserts that the famous ‘Ornaments rubric’ is flatly contrary to the decisions of the Law Courts on ritual matters, but forgets or omits to tell the public that the two greatest lawyers of our time maintained, in a closely reasoned judgment, that this is a complete mistake; that the ‘Ornaments rubric’ must be interpreted by the light of the ‘advertisements’ of Queen Elizabeth’s day, and that the authority of these ‘advertisements’ is admitted by the Archbishops of that reign, by Hooker, and by the 24th Canon of our own Church, and endorsed by the findings of three centuries. A fourth protests against the Courts condemning sacrificial vestments and the like, unless they require copes to be worn. But he does not tell the public that copes have no doctrinal significance like chasubles, that they have been disused by common consent for three hundred years, and that the same canons which recommend copes forbid the clergy to wear white stockings. A fifth coolly proclaims that a Bishop’s power of ‘veto’ was never intended to give a Bishop any *discretion* at all, and that it is a Bishop’s bounden duty to prohibit any prosecution of a clergyman, however illegal the clergyman’s conduct may seem to be. Crude and wild statements such as these are doing great harm so long as our present paralysis of discipline continues, because they gradually crystallize and solidify until they look like truth. The sooner they are dispersed by the reign of law and order, the better for the Church of England.

Now, if you ask me, as your Bishop, what is the remedy for the present deplorable state of things, I answer the question without hesitation. I see no remedy except legislation. There is a deadlock, and to Caesar we must go. If things have come to such a pass that clergymen will neither obey the Ecclesiastical Courts nor the admonitions of their Bishop, something must be done by Parliament. The distinction between the supremacy of the Crown and the supremacy of Parliament, which some attempt to draw, I fail entirely to see. The Crown must exercise its supremacy through Parliament under the British constitution, and cannot act independently. The Clergy Discipline and Public

Worship Acts must either be amended and improved, or else entirely new tribunals must be created by Parliamentary legislation. Courts which no Churchman can appeal to without bringing down on himself furious persecution, Courts whose judgments cannot be enforced without calling out a display of violence, second only to what takes place at an Irish eviction—such Courts are evidently useless. We cannot go on many years longer as we do now. The policy of drifting, doing nothing, waiting, and letting alone, must be given up. It is not in reality the policy of peace. The end of such a policy will be secession or separation.

I am quite aware that the difficulties of Parliamentary legislation about ecclesiastical matters are extremely great. Many shiver and tremble at the very thought of it, and Tear to launch away.* The surgical operation has been deferred so long, that there is some doubt whether the patient will survive it. But I believe it ought to be attempted. There are seasons when boldness is the highest wisdom. The old saying is strictly true, ‘Periculum sine periculo rard vincitur.’[†] No doubt the danger of legislation is very great. But in my opinion the danger of doing nothing at all is greater still.

I purposely say nothing about the notable remedy for the present distress which finds favour with some people. I refer to the proposal to have all disputes settled by exertion of the Bishop’s paternal authority. I say nothing, because it seems waste of time. Throughout the country the advocates of ceremonial novelties exhibit very little disposition to attend to Episcopal admonitions, however insignificant or non-essential the practices may be which they are requested to discontinue. One of our ablest Bishops has said with truth, ‘There is something very one-sided in this cry for fatherliness from the Bishop, when they meet with no filialness from the clergy.’

What the constitution of the new Ecclesiastical Courts may be, in the event of legislation being attempted, of course I do not know. We have had lines laid down by the Royal Commission which may be useful. But the proposed measure will have to pass through the crucible of Parliament, and whether it will emerge in the same state that it goes in is very doubtful. On two points alone I venture a confident prediction. No Parliament, I believe, will ever allow such ritual questions as have been litigated during the last twenty-five years to be finally decided by clerical judges alone, without the aid of laymen. The common objection that lay judges have no right to touch questions of faith or doctrine appears to me unreal and imaginary.† The lay

* Danger is seldom overcome without (encountering) danger.

† The late Sir Joseph Napier, a man distinguished both as a lawyer and a Christian, declared at Norwich Congress, that the Committee of Privy Council of which he was a prominent member, ‘had no jurisdiction to declare doctrine nor to establish it by law. Its province was *jus dicere, non jus dare* (to expound, not to make, the law)’.

judges of the present Court of Final Appeal have repeatedly declared they do not pretend to settle what is religious truth and the doctrine of Scripture. They simply undertake to ascertain the real meaning of certain formularies and rubrics, and to show the sense of the words in which they were drawn up by those who compiled them. My own conviction is, that legally-trained minds are just as competent to do this as clerical minds, and even more so, and I cannot believe for a moment that Parliament will ever sanction ecclesiastical tribunals in which lay judges have not a prominent place. The other prediction I venture to make is that, in any new Church Courts legislation, Parliament will not sanction the Episcopal veto. About that unhappy provision, you all know, I have always held a very decided opinion. A more mischievous arrangement, a more ingenious device for setting a Bishop at variance with one party in his Diocese whenever a complaint of illegality is made, and for creating divided counsels among Bishops—one Bishop allowing suits and another forbidding them—I cannot conceive. I cannot think the veto will survive the ordeal of the House of Commons.

What the result of creating new ecclesiastical tribunals will be, I will not attempt to conjecture. Of course there would be new suits, new arguments, and new decisions. It is not the least likely that those who consider the law of the Church broken by modern novelties in the ritual of the Lord's Supper, will retire from the field, fold their arms and sit still. No! they will appeal to the new Courts for *justice*. And then what will the judgments be? He that will answer that question is bolder than I am. It is just possible that all the old decisions may be confirmed, and the whole body of ritual novelties completely condemned. It is just possible that the old decisions may be reversed, and the whole mass of disputed ceremonial formally sanctioned, and declared to be the binding rule of the Church of England. It is quite possible that a principle of general compromise and toleration will run through all future decisions, and that it will be decreed that every clergyman shall do exactly what is right in his own eyes, and that everybody is right and nobody wrong. Rather formidable possibilities all these! Not one of them that will satisfy everybody! Not one of them that will not endanger the life of the Church of England ! But we have reached a point when something must be risked. And I repeat that the present paralysis of discipline, law, and order, is one of the greatest dangers of the Established Church, and a bold attempt ought to be made to remedy it.

(2) The other danger of our Church in the present day is one of a very different kind, but not less serious than the one I have been discussing. It is one which may not strike a careless observer. But for all that I believe it to be real and true.

The danger I refer to is the growing tendency of most preachers in this age to be content with a *low, meagre, defective, and imperfect statement of Bible truth in the pulpit*. I do not for a moment retract what I said at an earlier part of this Charge. I frankly admit that, compared to the sermons of former times, the sermons of this day are greatly improved. But for all that, I am obliged to say that much of the preaching of this generation strikes me as very unsatisfying and unsatisfactory. It is rarely, perhaps, that there is reason to complain of downright false doctrine in a modern sermon. But, somehow or other, there is too often short measure, short weight, and something wanting. Too often, if not a mere firework, it is a leaden sword, without edge or point, as impotent to wound as it is to heal.

I look at the mighty cloud of verities which I read in the Epistles of the New Testament. I am struck with the clearness, distinctness, decision, sharpness, depth, fulness and boldness with which these verities are placed before the reader. I then turn to the many volumes of modern sermons which are continually flowing from the press, or the sermons reported in religious newspapers. And as I read I am often painfully struck with the timid, faltering, hesitating utterances of modern preachers about such mighty subjects as the inspiration of Scripture, original sin, the Trinity, the Divinity of Christ, the atonement, the personality and work of the Holy Spirit, justification, conversion, sanctification, the reality of the devil, the judgment day, the state beyond the grave, and the enormous difference between spiritual death and spiritual life. Too frequently your modern preacher seems to approach such subjects in a cautious, shaky, trembling, apologetic, uncertain tone, as if he was afraid of offending you, and had not quite made up his own mind, and dared not speak more strongly. I know not whether I make my meaning plain. But after carefully watching the English pulpit for forty years, I am sure there is reason in what I say, and I invite your best attention to the subject. With occasional rare exceptions, I am afraid the sermons of the clergy are too often below the doctrinal standard of the Bible, and intellectually behind the times.

The *causes* of this defectiveness in modern preaching are many and various. Some men are so entirely absorbed in the care of huge parishes, multiplied parochial machinery, and constant little congregational meetings, that they leave themselves no time for deep pulpit preparation, and their sermons are always elementary, thin, and shallow. Others are so thoroughly and conscientiously convinced that music and singing (things hardly mentioned in the Epistles), and the Lord's Supper (only mentioned in one Epistle), are the principal parts of divine service and religion, that they give very little time to their pulpit work. Others are morbidly afraid of the intellectual part of their hearers, the philosophers, so-called, and men of science. They dread being

censured and pulled up if they are positive and dogmatical, and they cannot get rid of the fear of man. Others, and they perhaps the greatest number, are eaten up with the mischievous idea that a minister's chief object should be to please people; that he should avoid saying things that might give offence, strong language, strong doctrine, strong reproof, strong exhortation, and should try to make everything as smooth and pleasant as possible. Yet an Apostle said, 'If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ' (Gal. i. 10).

The *consequences* of this defectiveness of modern preaching are to my mind very plain and unmistakable. There is no proportionate result of *Christian* victories and conversion-work, considering the immense amount of restless, busy, bustling *Church* work that is annually done. I suppose there never was an age when there were so many religious services and Christian agencies and preachings every week throughout the land. There never were so many special missions both in town and country. But what is the fruit of it all? What quantity of conversions is there? What large additions are being annually made to the number of our communicants? What harvest of souls turned from darkness to light is being reaped? What increase is there of men and women really born again and made new creatures? Alas, I fear there is very little to show. And I have a very strong and growing conviction that the fault is to be found in our pulpits. The Holy Ghost is grieved, and the Holy Ghost withholds His blessing. The Holy Ghost will bless nothing but the truth and the whole truth.

My Reverend Brethren, I leave this branch of my Charge with an earnest request that you will weigh well what I have been saying, and realize that I have good reason for calling your attention to the work of the pulpit. Few, I suspect, are aware that this is probably one of the weakest points in our Church's present condition. There is great room for improvement. There is real want of reform. In every age, during the last eighteen centuries, God has always honoured those ministers most who have most honoured His written Word.

In bringing this Charge to a conclusion, I am aware that I have detained you at an unusual length. But I felt that I could not well pass over any subject that I have touched. The field over which I have travelled is wide. The signs of our own times are peculiar. The position of the Church of England is an anxious one. The first seven years of a new Diocese like ours form a very interesting period, and demand special investigation. Last, but not least, my own advancing years remind me that I ought to leave nothing unsaid that I want to say. When a Bishop has passed the stage of threescore and ten, he is bound to remember that each Triennial Visitation may be his last.

In looking back over the seven years of my Episcopate, I find abundant reasons for deep thankfulness. I came among you, clearly seeing that the position I was called to occupy was one of great and peculiar difficulties. I have not found these difficulties greater than I expected. I came, knowing well that every English Bishop in this day must make up his mind to be severely criticized, and that in all his actions, words, and appointments he will always displease somebody. But after living in this city and moving continually under the public eye, I do not feel that I have much cause to complain. So long as human nature is what it is, people will talk, and write, and misunderstand, and misrepresent; and our wisest course is to take it patiently, and hold on our way, turning neither to the right hand nor to the left. There is deep wisdom in the old Scottish proverb about gossip and tittle-tattle: ‘They have said. What have they said? Let them say.’

My course since I came to Liverpool has been greatly smoothed by the almost uniform kindness and courtesy with which I have been received by the clergy, as well as the laity, of my Diocese. I came among you a man of very decided theological opinions; and I think it likely that many of you would have preferred a Bishop of a different school of thought. But you have treated me kindly and fairly, and with rare exceptions I have found no difficulty in working with all. I am very sensible that I have said and done things that might better have been left unsaid and undone; and that all I have said and done might have been said and done more perfectly. But I have tried to do my duty, and if I have paved the way for a younger, abler, and more active Bishop, I shall have done something.

My Reverend Brethren, accept the hearty good wishes of your Bishop at the close of his Triennial Charge. ‘Be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord’ (1 Cor. xv. 58). That is a grand text, and one which a clergyman should never forget. There are better days in store for our new Diocese, though my eyes may not see them. There is a great and effectual door before you, and a grand field of usefulness, though there are many adversaries. Work on, and work together as much as you can, and try to think less of the points in which you differ than of those in which you agree. I am firmly convinced, at the end of a long life, that loyal, honest, true-hearted Churchmen of all schools can co-operate in many ways far more than they do, and have much more common ground than they think.

It is my own deliberate opinion that there is a great future before the Established Church of England, if her children know the time of their visitation, continue faithful to the principles of her Articles and Prayer-book, and co-operate heartily on those principles. If the clergy, as a body, will only be

satisfied with the ritual which satisfied Hooker and Andrews and Hall and Herbert and Usher and Ken and Beveridge and Pearson and Butler; if the zealous advocates of ceremonial novelties, not essential to the validity of the Lord's Supper, will only abstain from irritating people and creating suspicion until their favourite novelties are formally legalized by some competent tribunal—if all this might be, I believe the old Church of England might 'turn the world upside down,' and gather into her fold a large portion of the Christianity of the land.

Let us, however, distinctly understand that we must cooperate on real Church principles, and that we must not be expected to sacrifice truth for the sake of peace. I believe there are few, if any, clergymen in the Diocese of Liverpool who really wish for re-union with the Church of Rome, and I trust for the honour of Lancashire it will ever be so. With such men, in any part of England, I find it impossible to co-operate, and I charge you with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength never to be drawn into their net, and never to assist them. Unity and re-union, no doubt, are fine, high-sounding words. But you may buy gold too dear; and unity bought at the expense of Christ's truth is utterly worthless. Re-union with Rome means the abolition of our Thirty-nine Articles, the complete mutilation of our Communion service, the reception of the Mass and the Confessional, and the base surrender of all the countless blessings of the Protestant Reformation. From such a surrender, from re-union on such terms and conditions, good Lord, deliver us!

Yes, my brethren! when the Church of Rome returns to the pure scriptural doctrines embalmed in our Thirty-nine Articles, it will be time for the Church of England to seek re-union with her. But till that time, I maintain that the Established Church of England had better be disestablished, disendowed, and broken to pieces, than re-united with the Church of Rome. Till that time, let our sentence always be, '*Nolumus leges Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ mutari.*'*

* 'We are unwilling for the laws of the Church of England to be altered'.