

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

THE CHURCHMAN

A Monthly Magazine

*CONDUCTED BY CLERGYMEN AND LAYMEN
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND*

VOL. XII.

LONDON
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW
1885

THE MONTH.

THE Marquis of Salisbury is spoken of as Prime Minister.¹ Mr. Gladstone's resignation has been accepted. At present, the 17th, the composition of the Cabinet is not certain; but Lord Randolph Churchill has been offered, it is said, an important post.² For a few days it has been doubtful whether Lord Salisbury would accept office in the present condition of affairs. To what extent the new Government—if the Conservatives take office—can count upon the forbearance of the Majority in the House of Commons will probably have been ascertained.

It was rumoured that the resignations of Sir Charles Dilke and Mr. Chamberlain had been sent in, and would have been accepted on the Tuesday. The *Guardian* says:

A Government which does not take all the pains it can to bring its supporters together, and yet insists on dividing before there has been time to make good the omission, is naturally suspected of preferring defeat to victory.

In this case, seemingly, Ministers had very good reason for such a preference. It is better to be beaten by an Opposition than to go to pieces from internal dissensions, and had they escaped shipwreck from the first cause on the Monday, it would in all probability have overtaken them from the second cause on the Tuesday. The smooth things that were said from time to time as to the readiness shown by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke to waive their objection to any renewal of the Crimes Act rather concealed than expressed the actual truth.

In the *National Church* for June we read:

It has been usual to keep the National Church Sunday on the first Sunday in November, which this year falls upon All Saints Day. In deference to suggestions from several friends, it has been decided to fix upon Sunday, October 25th, for the National Church Sunday for 1885.

¹ An adverse vote on the Budget on Monday the 8th was followed by the resignation of the Ministry on the 9th. The numbers were: for the Government, 252; against, 264. The speech with which Mr. Gladstone closed the debate seemed designed to leave Ministers no choice but resignation.

² The *Times* remarks that the new Conservative movement must be welcomed. "Nothing could well be worse than the stagnation into which the Conservative party has of late been sinking, or than the suspension of the functions of an Opposition to which we owe so much that is deplorable in the events of the last four or five years. The Radical party, though energetic enough on their own lines, and profoundly convinced that they are the people and that wisdom will die with them, are too narrow, too doctrinaire, and too contemptuous of experience fully to represent the instincts of an ancient people, or single-handed to guard the interests of a vast empire. There is ample room and urgent need for a new and living Conservatism, and we are willing to make large allowances for its inception and to look with hope upon its development."

At the seventy-fourth Annual Meeting of the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, the Bishop of London occupied the chair. Lord George Hamilton moved the first resolution :

That the National Society thankfully recognises the self-denial and zeal of those managers of Church schools throughout the country who, in some cases by preserving their schools in the face of considerable difficulties, and in others by the erection of new and the enlargement of existing buildings, have done much to promote distinctive religious education in their several neighbourhoods.

The noble lord said that they met under exceptionally favourable auspices :

Last year there was a falling off in subscriptions and in the grants earned by elementary schools ; but now the financial outlook was much more satisfactory. There was an increase in the subscriptions of between £17,000 and £18,000, and an increase in the amount of grants obtained by children in the schools of no less than £106,000. When they contrasted this increase with the loss of £6,000 on the earnings of the preceding year, they had something to congratulate themselves upon. Having had the honour to be connected with the Education Department in the last Conservative Government, he might say that £1 voluntarily subscribed did as much as £3 levied from the rates in promoting education. This was a strong assertion, but he would justify it by figures. Three-sixths of the total elementary education of the country was carried on by the Church of England, two-sixths by school boards, and one-sixth by various voluntary associations. Now, it was clear that if the National school system were to break down, the work of the other voluntary associations, which were so much weaker, would also fail. Hence it followed that two-thirds of the elementary education of the country was carried on by voluntary effort. Now the amount of subscriptions was £730,000 a year, and the amount which fell upon the rates for school maintenance was £915,000 entirely irrespective of interest on loans. The latter item was at least half as much as that for school maintenance ; and thus it appeared that it cost at least £1,360,000 from the rates, to do half the work that was done by £730,000 of voluntary subscriptions. (Cheers.) It was fifteen years since the Education Act was passed, and no one could have expected that the voluntary schools would be subjected to so great a strain. He was, however, bound to say that the Vice-President of the Council, Mr. Mundella, had dealt very fairly with voluntary schools. With regard to over-pressure, although there was a tendency in some quarters to exaggerate, he thought that the evidence of mothers showed that in numbers of cases over-pressure had taken place. Something had been done to mitigate this by providing cheap penny dinners, but he thought all interested in elementary education ought to deal very tenderly with this complaint. He did not see any objection to allowing teachers—especially in view of the superior position and attainments of the persons entering the profession—to exercise a greater latitude with regard to classifying children for examination. (Cheers.)

The Bishop of Oxford, in seconding the resolution (which he did with great cordiality), observed that the difficulties with which the managers of schools had to contend were enor-

mous; but he could not help thinking that they might in great part be removed by a little good sense and good feeling :

For instance, the Great Western Railway ran through a great many parishes in his diocese ; but the directors declined to subscribe to the schools, though some of them were maintained very largely for the sake of the children of their own servants, for whom he held that they were distinctly responsible. So much for the question of duty and good feeling ; now for the good sense. If the result of refusing to subscribe a few pounds here and there for the support of voluntary schools and the consequent substitution of school-rates should throw upon companies a payment of some thousands that might have been avoided, he did not think that the shareholders would be pleased. Indeed, he thought they would have a good right to complain, and he was not sure that they would not do so. (Cheers.) It was not altogether a question of money ; but it roused a feeling of indignation amongst the ratepayers when they saw the largest of their number refuse to bear its share of the common burden, and when they were asked to subscribe they said, "No, we won't." (Laughter.) As to the general question of difficulties, he thought the managers of schools had some reason to be dissatisfied with the Government. In 1870 they heard the most beautiful and brotherly language. They were told by the most eminent members of the Ministry that there was nothing they desired so much as to support the voluntary schools. At the very beginning, the Government had come to the rescue of voluntary education, and at that time—he was speaking of 1845—many of them gladly welcomed the interference of the State. But now the Government seemed always to be jealously watching the promoters of Church schools as if there were some interest—he really did not know what that interest could be—that needed to be protected against them. He would not say that the Department was always hostile, but no promoter of voluntary education expected to find his best friend in Downing Street. (Laughter.) Yet why should the Department take that view of people who had contributed to schools £5,000,000 in the course of the last twelve years, and who were now spending £600,000 of their own money per annum ? Why should the Government—just now there was no Government, and therefore he was not speaking politically—(laughter)—why should the Government want to throw away this magnificent aid to the cause of public education ? Why did they wish to limit its area when they knew that for every sixpence which the voluntary schools spent the State would have had to spend ninepence ? (Cheers.) He did not see why the Government should not co-operate with Church schools, which were sustained by faith and love, and which saved the public hundreds of thousands of pounds every year.

At the anniversary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel the Archbishop of Canterbury said :

I perceive that the Church of England raises £500,000 a year for Missions, and that all the bodies of Nonconformists put together—I am speaking in both cases with reference to the British Isles—raise £550,000. Now I am very eager that this present year the Church should raise that additional £50,000. (Cheers.) It is no question of rivalry. I think that while all those Nonconformist societies are our brethren, united in one common faith, striving for one common object, working in Christ's name, and for the good of all men, they would desire this thing also. (Cheers.) The aim of the societies ought to be mutual provocation to love and good works, and the Church of England ought to make her contributions equal to those of other Churches, but particularly in spiritual matters.

Especially ought we to lay to heart that this is no mere contest of money. We must lay to heart that gifts are but an index of feeling. Now that the Intercession Day has been moved back to the old day, which has been found to suit so much better the custom and habits of English society—(cheers)—I do trust that both the existence of that day and the change that has been made in deference to so many requests will be marked by very full churches, by churches open all day, and by a great deal of private prayer.

At the ninth Annual Meeting of the Yorkshire Clerical and Lay Union a paper on "Controversy in Relation to Rome and Ritualism" was read by the Rev. Canon McCormick, marked with his usual ability and judgment. Dr. McCormick said :

It is not controversy in the abstract, but the judicious handling of controversy that is really the question. The sermon of Canon Liddon serves as an illustration. Supposing that any leading Evangelical clergyman had been invited to occupy the pulpit at the consecration of one or more Bishops, and having accepted such invitation, had taken advantage of his position to treat of some controversial topic ; what would have been said of him ? Many of his own friends would have lamented over his injudiciousness. . . . We blame Canon Liddon, not for honestly stating his convictions, but for doing so on an occasion when good taste, to say the very least, ought to have led him to avoid a burning question and direct controversial matter, especially as one of the Bishops to be consecrated was a leading Evangelical clergyman, who must not only have dissented from his views, but been pained at them. It may be quite true that the great leaders of the Evangelical revival at the end of the last century and at the commencement of the present "cared little for mere polemics" as far as Romanism was concerned. Their controversy was of another kind. They had to fight against formality, worldliness, and notorious sin. Romanism was not making any progress in the land. So-called "Catholic Emancipation" was not then passed. They knew nothing of Ritualism. Had such a state of things existed as now prevails, it is a question as to whether they would have been content with spiritual work only. The absence of the flagrant evil, at any rate, accounts for the silence.

In an article headed "Canon Liddon's Retractation," the *Record* points out some remarkable alterations in the published sermon, rendered all the more remarkable by the fact that the sermon was originally a written one, and from the nature of the occasion must have been carefully considered. Here are the two versions of the crucial passage in parallel columns :

AS DELIVERED.

But the greater English divines have also felt that when insisting upon the Episcopate as organically necessary to the structure of the visible Body of Christ, as necessary not merely to its *bene esse* but to its *esse*, they were indirectly raising a solid barrier against Ultramontaniam.

AS REVISED.

But some English divines may also have felt that when insisting upon the Episcopate as organically necessary to the structure of the visible Body of Christ—as necessary not merely to its *bene esse* but to its *esse*—they were indirectly strengthening a barrier against Ultramontaniam.

At the annual meeting of the Church Army the Bishop of Durham presided. The Bishop spoke of three of the chief features of the movement. First there was its magnificent hopefulness; secondly, there was the adoption of more various and less conventional modes of teaching and religious services than those hitherto prevailing; and thirdly, there was the feature of the highest importance—namely, the principle of the Army's sending out working-men as evangelists to working-men. Those were the three features which recommended the movement of the Church Army to his notice. That Army was loyal to the Church, said Bishop Lightfoot, to which it was a valuable handmaid. In his speech the Bishop of Oxford described how from early life he had been attracted by the ideal of the Church of England in the pages of George Herbert, and by the thought of having a scholar, a divine, and a man of some social standing, descending from his height to the plain people of his parish. But that ideal could, after all, only be in a very limited sphere, and even in his (the Bishop's) own short life the increase of population had brought them experiences quite outside of it. The Church, said Bishop Mackarness, must try to reach all classes.

To the Canonry at Winchester, vacant by the resignation of Canon Carus, Archdeacon Sumner—we record with pleasure—has been appointed by the Bishop.

At the anniversary of the English Church Union, the President (Mr. Wood), in pleading for unity (according to the *Record*) said :

Peace with one another, not by the sacrifice of the truth, but through the truth, peace with our separated brethren at home, union among ourselves, and the restoration of the visible unity with the members of the Church abroad, East and West alike, but *above all with the great Apostolic See of the West, with the holy Roman Church which has done so much to guard the true faith—these surely should be our objects and the objects nearest our hearts.*

The general opinion touching the Revised Old Testament appears to be decidedly favourable, as we ventured to predict a month ago. Several critics, however, consider the work to be unduly conservative.

In an article headed "Minor Orders," the *Record* comments upon one feature of a Report lately issued by a Committee of the London Diocesan Conference. The *Record* says :

We greatly rejoice at the acknowledgment of the necessity of enlisting Lay Help in the work, and especially the Evangelistic work, of the Church, a necessity long ignored and strenuously denied by all sections of Churchmen, except Evangelicals. Though tardy it is complete. The old prejudice has at last been broken down, and the question is no longer

whether the thing is to be done, but how it is to be done. We confess that the Recommendations of the Committee do not satisfy us in this latter respect. We doubt the need of these various grades of Lay Helpers each with a different title; and we most gravely doubt the wisdom of seeking to revive amongst ourselves the Minor Orders of the Roman Catholic Church. The advantages of Lay Help will, we fear, be greatly lessened and impeded if an attempt is made, even in appearance, to supply modern needs by the resuscitation of a set of ancient titles and offices connected to a large extent with a ritual and form of public worship of which our Church has known nothing since the Reformation. This objection appears to have been anticipated by the compilers of the Report, and they have endeavoured to meet it by a statement to the following effect: "There is reason to believe that it was not intended at the Reformation to abolish all minor offices in the Church of England." The Act 3 & 4 Ed. VI., ch. 12, is quoted which authorized the preparation of a new ordinal for "making and consecrating of Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, and *other Ministers* of the Church;" and in the appendix a passage from Strype's "Annals" is cited, second-hand from Burn's "Ecclesiastical Law," which gives certain conditions laid down by the Bishops in 1562 as required from all "Readers and Deacons." On the strength of these two authorities the Report finds that the Church of England after the Reformation "at one time proposed to make provision, and did actually at a later time make some partial provision for other ministers." . . . Had greater pains been taken to arrive at the plain historical facts of the case, instead of hastily generalizing on the haphazard materials which chance seems to have thrown in their way, the Committee would have found not, indeed, any ground for their somewhat crude guess of the continuation of the Romish Minor Orders after the Reformation, but, what is far more valuable, ample support for the employment of Lay Help from the course pursued by the Reformers themselves when brought face to face with difficulties not altogether unlike those of our own day.

There is high authority for supposing that, even prior to the Reformation, Minor Orders had, except as a matter of form, fallen into disuse in England. But, however this may be, it seems reasonably certain that they were definitely and deliberately discarded in Henry VIII.'s reign. In the Cotton MSS. there is still preserved a document (1537-8), signed by Vicegerent Cromwell, the two Archbishops, eleven Bishops, and twenty Divines and Canonists, bearing this title, "A Declaration made of the functions and Divine institution of Bishops and Priests." In this very important manifesto the following passage occurs:

Albeit the holy fathers of the Church which succeeded the Apostles, minding to beautify and ornate the Church of Christ with all those things which were commendable in the temple of the Jews, did devise not only certain other ceremonies . . . but did also institute certain inferior orders or degrees, as janitors, lectors, exorcists, acolites, and subdeacons, and deputed to every one of those certain offices to execute in the Church, wherein they followed undoubtedly the example and rites used in the Old Testament; yet the truth is that in the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only of deacons or ministers and of priests or bishops, nor is there any word spoken of any other meaning used in the conferring of this Sacrament, but only of prayer and the imposition of the Bishop's hands.

Commenting on the above, Bishop Burnet says : " On this paper I will add two remarks. The one is that after this I do never find the inferior degrees under a deacon mentioned in this Church, so it seems at this time they were laid aside."

Thus, for the last ten years of Henry's reign, Minor Orders do not seem to have been acknowledged. It would perhaps be rash to assert that no evidence of them can be found, but we are not aware of any. The same may be said of Edward VI.'s reign. No special stress can fairly be laid on the words "other ministers" in 3 & 4 Edward VI. ch. 12. The draftsmen of Acts of Parliament, in Tudor times especially, loved to make assurance doubly sure by using what lawyers still call "general words," without much heed to whether they were wanted or not. Thus in the same Statute the expression "Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, or Ministers" occurs, though obviously the addition is not necessary to the sense. The best commentary on the Statute is the use that was made of it. An Ordinal for the three Orders was prepared under its sanction ; but we do not read of any reformed method of admitting to Minor Orders having been even discussed. We may take it, therefore, that from 1537 to the death of Edward, Minor Orders were defunct and abolished. Bishop Gibson asserts this strongly. After enumerating the three Orders he added : " Besides these the Church of Rome hath five others, and that it may appear *what we reformed from* and how little they deserve the name of Orders, I will give a brief description of them." Later on he says, "because they were evidently elected for convenience only, and were not immediately concerned in the sacred offices of the Church, *they were justly laid aside by our first Reformers.*"

When Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558, the Church of England was in an extremely depressed and destitute condition. The monastic confiscations of Henry VIII. had seriously affected the parochial endowments also. The closing of the Ecclesiastical Courts under Edward VI. had produced a collapse of discipline and order which the subsequent creation of special Commissions had by no means completely removed. The violent retrogression of Queen Mary of course aggravated the existing evils in an overwhelming degree. Her successor therefore had to contend with grave difficulties. The deprivation of many of the Romish clergy, the non-residence of others, and the smallness of a large number of benefices produced many more vacancies than could possibly be filled by the regular clergy who had embraced the Reformation or were at any rate willing to conform. Even men very indifferently qualified by education or character for the oversight of a parish, were accepted in default of better. Thus Fuller in his irrepressible tone of quaint humour describes the condition of affairs :

As for the inferior clergy under them [the Bishops], the best that could be gotten were placed in pastoral charges. Alas, tolerability was eminency in that age ; a rush-candle seemed a torch where no brighter light was ere seen before. Surely preaching now ran very low if it be true what I read that Mr. Tavernour of Water Eaton, in Oxfordshire, High Sheriffe of the county, came, in pure charity, not ostentation, and gave the scholars a sermon in St. Mary's, with his gold chain about his neck and his sword by his side, beginning with these words : " Arriving at the mount of St. Mary's in the stony stage, where I now stand, I have brought you some fine biscuits baked in the oven of charity, and carefully conserved for the chickens of the Church, the sparrows of the spirit, and the sweet swallows of Salvation."

One of the first labours of Archbishop Parker was to draw up, in 1559, "An Order for serving cures now destitute." His plan was to give to one clergyman called a "principal incumbent," the oversight of several contiguous parishes, to enable him to discharge which, Lay Help was introduced thus :

. . . "The said principal incumbent to depute in every such parish committed to his care a Deacon (if it might be) or some honest, sober, and grave layman, who as a Reader should read the order of service appointed; but such Reader not to intermeddle, to christen, marry, or minister the Holy Communion, or preach or prophesy, but only to read the service of the day, with the Litany and Homily, as should be prescribed, in the absence of the principal incumbent.

These Readers were not ordained, and apparently admission by the Bishop was not necessary, for we read in the same "Order"—

The Readers not to be appointed but by the oversight of the Bishop or his Chancellor, to have their convenient instruction and advertisement, with some letters testimonial of their admission, how to order themselves in the said charge. The said Lectors or Readers always removable upon their disability or disorder by certificate and proof thereof.

Here then we have the true predecessor of the modern Lay Helper or Reader appointed for much the same purposes and under much the same circumstances, viz., when the supply of the clergy was unequal to the demands made on them. But the Readers of Archbishop Parker were an independent growth. They were not a survival of the old Romish Minor Orders. The Lectors, Acolytes, and Ostiaries of mediæval times were not intended to meet the same need as either the Reformation or the modern Readers. Instead of supplying the place of the regular clergy, they were used to give additional pomp to services in which a plentiful attendance of priests was already a *sine quâ non*.

In 1562 the rules, of which the Report gives a second-hand version, were drawn up in Convocation. They are interesting as showing what were the duties confided to Readers in the sixteenth century. These duties were practically confined to reading the service and a homily, and to keeping the parish registers. Preaching is strictly prohibited, and no wonder, if Thomas Fuller's quotation from Mr. Tavernour's discourse is at all typical of the style of lay sermons. There is one important point where the compilers of the Report have been led wrong by copying from Burn's "Ecclesiastical Law" instead of consulting Burn's authority for themselves. The last promise to be exacted from a Reader on admission is said to be, "I will not openly intermeddle with any artificers' occupations as covetously to seek a gain thereby." This, however, is an error. As before remarked, these conditions are said to be required of "Readers and Deacons," and this last one is, in the original, specially confined to the latter. Readers were apparently suffered to earn their living by any honest trade without impediment, a fact not without importance with reference to modern discussions on this subject.

It will be seen, therefore, that, although Archbishop Parker's plan supplies a very useful precedent for us to follow, it is wholly independent of any pre-Reformation or Roman Catholic practice. We confess that, apart from any question of historical accuracy, we are very unwilling to resort to mediæval models, or to countenance any attempt to assimilate our ecclesiastical machinery in any degree to that of the old dark days of Papal supremacy. By all means let us have Lay Help; but let such anachronisms as Minor Orders remain in the oblivion which for three centuries has covered them. At any rate, let us not sacrifice the plain truth of history in our ardour for their fanciful resuscitation.