

**THE NEED OF AN INCREASE IN
THE HOME EPISCOPATE: WITH
SOME ACCOUNT OF HENRY
VIII'S SCHEME FOR ITS SUPPLY
AND THE CAUSE OF ITS FAILURE**

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The Need of an Increase in the Home Episcopate: With Some Account of Henry VIII's Scheme for Its Supply and the Cause of Its Failure by George Lewthwaite

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GEORGE LEWTHWAITE

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52.

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A Letter from the late REV. CHANCELLOR MASSINGBERD.

DEAR MR. LEWTHWAITE,

I quite agree with you in your learned and able Tract on "The need of an Increase in the Home Episcopate," and in the view you take of Henry VIIIth's Scheme for its supply. I have no doubt your former labours in this cause have helped towards the point at which we have now arrived, and I wish you all success in promoting further progress.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

F. C. MASSINGBERD.

Ormsby, June 4th, 1870.

A Letter from The LORD BISHOP OF NOTTINGHAM.

Collingham, 20th Sept., 1870.

DEAR MR. LEWTHWAITE,

I write to acknowledge the receipt of your letter and of the accompanying proof sheets.

It would be impossible for me, as the senior of the restored class of Bishops-Suffragan, to withhold my approval from your excellent Pamphlet.

I feel greatly indebted to you for the deep knowledge of the subject which you have been at the pains to acquire, and for the skill and care with which you have exhibited its bearings, both moral and historical. It is impossible to read your statement of the vast increase in our population without admitting the necessity for an increased number of Bishops, if the Church is to continue to be the Church of the People.

I must express my conviction that your theory of the signature of the Suffragan is right. I have adopted that which I now use as an act of *obedience*; but my belief is that it is contrary to precedent, inconsistent with Statute Law, and,—I should have added, but for the opinion of the Law officers of the Crown,—disrespectful to the Crown as the Fountain of Honour, and to the Law which seals the titles conferred by the Crown.

Excuse a somewhat hasty letter, and

Believe me always,

Your faithful Brother,

H. MACKENZIE,

Bp. Suff^m of Nottingham.

INCREASE OF THE HOME EPISCOPATE.

CHAPTER I.

The number of our Bishops small as compared with what was intended at previous periods of our History—especially so in the Province of York.—Canon of the Synod of Hertford.

THE population of England has multiplied five-fold since the middle of the sixteenth century. At that time it was one of the proposed measures of Reformation to institute at least ten new Sees in addition to the five which were then created,* besides providing for the appointment of 26 Assistant Bishops,† all for the requirements of the then existing population; yet only one See has since been added.‡ It is evident, then, that the increase of the Home Episcopate has become a matter of pressing importance to the Church. Indeed the number of Bishops in the Province of York has now only just attained to the half of what were designed for it in the time of

* 31 Hen. VIII. c. 9. See Collier's Eccles. Hist., Part II. Bk. iii. pp. 49, 79; Bk. iv. p. 464, ed. 1852: and below, p. 14.

† 26 Hen. VIII. c. 14, revived 1 Elizabeth, c. 1. See below, p. 19.

‡ Ripon and Manchester being created. Gloucester and Bristol were united. 6 and 7 Gul. IV. c. 77.

St. Augustine, the first missionary to the English people: the fulfilment of which purpose was urged as most important by Venerable Bede in the following century.* Moreover, it must be remembered that

* Bede's letter to Abp. Egbert. See extracts hereafter.
BRITISH PERIOD.

In the ancient British Church there were three Metropolitans or Primates, the Archbishops of London, York, and Caerleon, where we have now only two.

The number of Bishops in the British Church cannot now be ascertained. Matthew of Westminster informs us that on the first conversion of the whole of Britain in the time of King Lucius, through the preaching of Paganus and Deruvianus, A.D. 185, twenty-eight Bishops were established in so many cities of the kingdom, and were placed under three Archbishops. He gives the names of the Metropolitan Sees, and describes their provinces. See also Henry of Huntingdon, p. 176, ed. Saville; Soames' Anglo-Saxon Ch., Introduction.

Seven British Bishops are recorded as present at the Conference held by Augustine with the British Church. For accounts of the names of their Sees, see Spelman's *Concilia*, vol. I pp. 27, 106. Dr. Lingard, however, supposes that they were Chorepiscopi, of whom he believes that the successors of S. David were in the habit of ordaining a great number. (*Anglo-Sax. Ch. Hist.* vol. i. p. 70. See also, Tract "On Suffragan Bishops," p. 13 note.)

The learned Bingham, after mentioning the recorded Sees of the British Bishops who met Augustine, proceeds, "Now if the number of Bishops in other Provinces was answerable to this, we may conclude there were more Bishops before the invasion of the Saxons than there are at this day." *B. IX. c. vi. s. 19.*

SAXON PERIOD.

Pope Gregory's advice to the Missionary Augustine for the organization of the Anglo-Saxon Church was, that he should establish two Metropolitans, with twelve Suffragans under each of them. (A.D. 601, Bede's *Eccles. Hist.* i. 29.) These were besides the remaining Bishops of the British Church, of whom Gregory had made mention in a previous letter. (*Do.* I. 27.)



the Diocesans during the middle ages made great use of assistant Bishops for the service of their much

The Anglo-Saxon Bishops in the time of Bede, when he gave Abp. Egbert the advice in the text, amounted to fourteen, at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period their number was fifteen, new Sees having been founded, and others suppressed through the ravages of the Danes and other like causes. (Lingard's Hist. Anglo-Sax. Ch. vol. ii. pp. 87, 885. Soames' Anglo-Sax. Ch. p. 270.)

PRESENT TIME.

Our present number of Bishops amounts only to twenty-eight, inclusive of the four Welsh Sees and that of Man, all of which were established before the coming of Augustine, and are not included in the above reckoning.

The population of England and Wales was probably about 1,250,000, in William the Conqueror's time, and in the Reign of Henry VIII. amounted to about 4,000,000. (First Report of the Cathedral Commissioners, p. xxxviii.)

The rapidity of the increase of population has been described as follows in the Report of the Census of 1851:—

"The most important result which the enquiry establishes, is the addition, *in half a century*, of **TEN MILLIONS** of people to the British population. The increase of population in the half of this century nearly equals the increase *in all preceding ages*; and the addition in the last *ten years of two millions three hundred thousand* to the inhabitants of these islands exceeds the increase in the last *fifty years of the eighteenth century.*"—Census of Great Britain, 1851, vol. 1. p. lxxxii. s. 8; Cath. Com. First Report, p. xxix.

Thus it appears that, notwithstanding the manifold increase of population, the English Bishops are fewer in number than were intended for the population in existence at the beginning of the seventh century, when it had not attained to one-twelfth of its present amount.

"If parochial organization is indispensable for the well-being of a parish, diocesan organization is essential for the well ordering of a diocese: and, in point of fact, it is an anomaly of preposterous magnitude, that whilst the population of our dioceses is increasing with a rapidity unprecedented, whilst the number of Priests and Deacons is increasing,—

smaller populations. The appointments of 297 or more such assistant Bishops in England are on record between the years A.D. 1016 and A.D. 1605,* when the practice fell into disuse, though it had been approved and adopted under the Reformation, and has still the sanction of law.

It is then no disparagement to those who now occupy that exalted dignity, to say that it is physically impossible that the existing small number of Bishops can adequately discharge the duties of their function, immensely increased as these are by the increase of population, clergy, and churches; and that consequently a great loss results to the Church. How important it would be to have a spiritual head present in our great centres of industry! the more needed now that their parochial unity has in many instances been destroyed, and the power of the Rector or Vicar of the formerly united parish to bring the ability of the more wealthy districts to the succour of the poorer, greatly diminished. Still more would this boon be full of hope and promise, if the Church reposed her confidence in a Bishop in whose appointment she had been allowed her rightful and constitutional voice.

It was the rule and custom of the primitive Church to have a Bishop wherever there was a municipality for the regulation of civil affairs;† and our own Synod of Hertford, held under Archbishop

though in a ratio very unequal to the wants of the case,—the number of superior officers in this vast army is only greater by one than it was three hundred years ago." Dr. Atlay, (Bishop of Hereford), On Diocesan Organization. York Church Congress Report, p. 126.

* See Tract "On Suffragan Bishops," p. 11.

† Bingham, Orig. Eccles., bk. ix. c. 8, conclusion. "S. Paul

Theodore, in the seventh century, re-enacted, as one of the most important of the ancient Canons, that "more Bishops should be made as the number of believers increased."⁴

directed Titus to ordain Elders in Crete, 'in every city;' that is, to settle an ecclesiastical senate and government in every place where there was before a civil one; which, from the subsequent history of the Church, we learn, was a bishop and his presbytery, who where conjunctly called the elders and senate of the Church." *Jh. c. i. s. 2.* See also Hooker's *Eccles. Pol. Bk. vii. ch. viii. 2.*, and the references there given in Keble's note; *Cod. Just. i. 3. de Episc. et Cler. 36, p. 35 ed. Gothofr. 1688*; Photius, *Nomocanon, p. 85, ed. Paris, 1620.* "Let each city have its own Bishop:" and S. Cyprian, *Ep. iv. 20, Oxon. Trans.*, "Whereas Bishops have been already ordained through all provinces and through every city."

⁴ A.D. 678. Bede, *Eccles. Hist. i. iv. c. 5.* Dr. Lingard, in opposition to the authority of Mr. Soames, (*Hist. of Ang. Sax. Ch. pp. 70 note, 270.*) and of Henry Wharton, (*Anglia Sacra, l. 424*; see also a note on this Canon in Johnson's *Canons, ed. 1850.*) thinks that this Canon was not passed. He says, "No powers of any individual were adequate to the government of Dioceses so extensive; and Theodore, from the moment of his arrival in England, had formed the design of breaking them into smaller or more proportionate districts. But few men can behold with pleasure the diminution of their authority or profit: and the duty of transmitting unimpaired to future ages the dignity which they enjoyed would furnish the reluctant Prelates with a specious objection against the measures of the Primate." This stricture, however, on the possible motives which might influence the Episcopal mind, is no sufficient argument for interpreting the Council's postponement of the consideration of the details of the measure into the rejection of the Canon itself. It is evident, on Dr. Lingard's own shewing, that the Canon was speedily acted upon. Abp. Theodore himself consecrated five and four Prelates instead of one respectively, in each of the kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria; and his successor, Abp. Brithwald, divided the kingdom of Wessex into two Sees, establishing another in Sussex, where before there had been altogether only one. (*Lingard's Hist. Anglo. Sax. Ch. vol. i. pp. 86, 87.*)