

ART. V.—THE CATHEDRAL AND THE DIOCESE.¹

THE beauty of our cathedral churches always commands admiration; but the question is often asked, Are they centres of useful work or spiritual influence bearing any just proportion to the magnitude and magnificence of the fabrics? If not, how can they be made such as they ought to be? Now, in considering how the efficiency of any institution may be increased, I take it to be a safe and sensible rule to inquire, in the first place, what purpose it was originally intended to serve. The best reforms are commonly those in which a return has been made to first principles. This, in fact, is reform as distinguished from revolution.

In the question before us the very name "cathedral church" may help us to a right answer. The cathedral church is that in which the bishop's cathedra, throne, or "stool" (as it was called in early English times) was placed. It was originally the church of the bishop, and of the staff of clergy who were appointed by him and were most closely associated with him in his work as the chief pastor of the diocese. Round about the church they dwelt; in it they worshipped; from it they went forth on their missionary journeys; to it they returned for bodily rest and spiritual refreshment. The immediate companions and assistants of the first bishop in any diocese formed the original chapter: thus the chapter is prior to the cathedral; the chapter was not created for the cathedral, but the cathedral for the chapter. Now, all the ancient canonists unanimously and emphatically assert that the essential function of a chapter—the true end for which it exists—is to be the bishop's council or senate. Monarchy was not to be any more absolute in the Church than in the State. As the king had his council, so the bishop had his to assist him in the administration of the diocese, to supply his place so far as it could be supplied during his absence or illness, or during the vacancy of the see. This relation of the chapter to the bishop is expressly recognised in the ancient statutes of nearly all our cathedrals, and not denied in any. I could cite many passages in proof of this statement did space allow, but it must suffice to say that the bishop is commonly styled the "head of the chapter," and that he could convene it whenever he pleased for consultation on diocesan affairs, issuing his mandate to the dean to summon it for that purpose. The right of the chapter, indeed, was restricted in most, if not all, cases to the expression of opinion and delivery of advice, the final decision resting with the

¹ This paper was read in substance at the Chichester Diocesan Conference in 1890.

bishop ; but in important questions connected with the disposition of patronage, the trial of delinquent clerks, the foundation of collegiate or monastic churches, the passing of rules ("constitutions," as they were called) for the observance of the clergy throughout the diocese, the consultative right of the chapter was generally respected. St. Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln A.D. 1186-1203, was careful, we are told, to appoint wise and learned men as prebendaries, on whose advice and judgment he could rely. The practice of convening the chapter as a diocesan council became rare as time went on, from causes to which I shall presently allude ; but it never quite died out, and of late years it has been revived in several dioceses. I may mention more especially Salisbury and Lichfield.

After having been long suspended in our own diocese, the action of the chapter as a diocesan council was called into being by our present Bishop in the year 1876. His right to summon it was disputed by the residentiary chapter of that day, some of the members of it maintaining that we were not a chapter at all, but only a fortuitous concourse of clerical atoms. Nevertheless, we did meet and we did deliberate, and the first scheme for the constitution of the Diocesan Conference was the result. This institution, at any rate, owes its birth to the action of the cathedral chapter resuscitated by our Bishop fourteen years ago. It has since been called together from time to time ; and if it were annually convened as a diocesan council, it might originate much useful work and make its influence felt in all parts of the diocese. The right of summoning the chapter for consultation on diocesan affairs is almost the only survival of the power which the bishops originally enjoyed as acting heads of the chapter for all purposes. It would take too long to trace the steps by which they gradually lost this position and sank into that of mere external visitors, the exercise even of their visitatorial rights being often vehemently resisted, and the final issue of the strife being in most instances the singular anomaly that the bishop has less power in his own cathedral church than in any other church in his diocese. It must suffice to say that the weakening of the tie between the bishop and the chapter dates from the institution of the office of dean soon after the Norman Conquest. The deans being acting presidents of the chapter, and more constantly in residence than the bishop, gradually drew to themselves the chief practical power. They were elected by the canons, and the aim of the whole body was to make themselves an independent corporation, shaking off the authority of the bishop as much as possible. The cathedral, of course, lost much of its proper character as the mother-church of the diocese.

Nevertheless, for some centuries at least after the Norman Conquest the cathedral was a centre of activity, which made itself felt not only in the city, but more or less throughout the diocese. (1) It was a school of architecture. The masters of the fabric kept in touch with architects and masons of the highest repute not only in England, but on the Continent. They not only secured good designs and workmanship for the additions and repairs executed in their own cathedral, but were doubtless consulted about the building of many of the parish and conventual churches, for in these we can often detect adoptions or imitations of some of the work in the mother-church of the diocese. (2) It was a school of music. It was the business of the precentor (the second dignity after the dean) not only to make the music in the cathedral as good as possible, so that it might be a model for all other churches, but also to superintend schools of song throughout the diocese. By some cathedrals (I cannot say whether our own was one) grants in aid were made to these song-schools, except those which were entirely supported by a prebendary or by the rector of the parish. (3) It was a school of grammar, under the superintendence of the chancellor (the third dignity), who was a kind of minister of education. He had the oversight of schools not only in the city, but in the diocese, with the exception of such voluntary schools as were maintained entirely by a rector or prebendary, and of the prebendal school, of which the master was a prebendary appointed by the chapter. The school of theology was also under the chancellor. He was bound to lecture in the school himself, and to provide for a continual course of instruction. This part of his business was lightened at Chichester (as was the case in many other cathedrals), about the middle of the thirteenth century, by the foundation of a theological prebend, with the duty of lecturing annexed to it. The chancellor was also the official secretary of the chapter, their librarian, and the keeper of the chapter seal and the chapter archives. His duties were so important that he is sometimes styled "*principium et quasi undamentum ecclesiæ*;" they were so various and onerous that in some cathedrals he was assisted by a vice-chancellor. (4) The treasurer (the fourth dignity) was not only the custodian of the "ornaments of the church and of the ministers thereof," but also the official dispenser of charitable funds, which in some cases included clothing and medicine as well as money.

The duties of the four chief dignitaries compelled them (indeed, they were compelled by statute) to be resident in the cathedral city during the greater part of the year. Besides them, however, there was always a fluctuating number of

canons in residence. Originally all canons were free to reside either in the precincts of the cathedral or on their own prebendal estates, and all were summoned to the chapter meetings. I cannot now describe at length how residence in the cathedral city came to be discouraged; but it was chiefly through the institution of a curious custom that if a prebendary wished to come into residence he must purchase his right by a series of costly entertainments. This device deterred many from coming at all. At last, in nearly all cathedrals the number of residentiaries became fixed, never, I think, exceeding eight or falling below the mystical number of four. This small knot of residentiaries gradually drew all power into their own hands: when a vacancy occurred they called another prebendary into residence whom they would; and then there was no security that the precentor, chancellor, or treasurer would be called into residence more than any other canon. Their offices, therefore, became practically abolished, and as the non-residents also ceased to be summoned to the chapter meetings, the ties which had formerly connected the cathedral with all parts of the diocese were severed. At last, when it was decreed that each of the four so-called residentiaries should actually reside only three months in the year, being an absentee, if he pleased, for the remaining nine, the chapter became a mere shrunken shadow of its former self, and the cathedral came to be regarded less as the mother-church of the diocese than as the private chapel of the dean and the four venerable clerics, who attended in their turn the daily service behind the massive screen which parted the choir from the cold and empty nave. Then came the retribution. In the first half of this century there arose a great demand for more churches and more clergy owing to the vast increase of the population. How was provision to be made for the increased supply? The cathedral bodies had large estates, but could not point to any useful work commensurate with their wealth. Here was an excuse for acting on the convenient principle of "robbing Peter to pay Paul." Accordingly by the Cathedral Act of 1840 the cathedrals were shorn of a large portion of their revenues, which was thrown into the great crucible of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' fund. Hardly had this been accomplished than an earnest desire arose to make our cathedrals once more centres of life and power. The cathedral bodies themselves wished to be useful, and the public wished to see them useful, just when they had been deprived of the material means of usefulness.

Nevertheless, even with crippled resources much has been effected, and still more may yet be done. I am one of those who think that a most effectual way to increase the usefulness

of our cathedrals is to work as far as possible on the lines of their ancient constitution. For example, making due allowance for altered circumstances, I think that the ordinary offices of precentor, chancellor, and treasurer might still be made extensively useful, if the duties were discharged by three residentiary canons who were really resident not for three months only in the year, but for eight. A resident precentor, if he were a man who could speak and act with authority as having a thorough scientific knowledge of music, might promote the cultivation of church music in the diocese in many ways. He might form associations in various centres for the study and practice of music, more especially sacred music, advising them in their choice of music, and from time to time attending their rehearsals and concerts. He might, with the consent of managers, inspect the music in Church schools, thus relieving Diocesan Inspectors, who cannot always be musical men, from one part of their duty. Being in touch with the musical world, he might be helpful in the selection of organists, as well as in the choice of music for parish church choirs. In all this work he might be assisted by one of the priest-vicars, acting as succentor under him. The duties of the chancellor are discharged in part by the Principal of the theological college. If he had not time in addition to these duties to act as librarian and keeper of the records, a priest-vicar might be appointed as his vice-chancellor for these purposes. I think that the cathedral library might be of great use and value to the diocese if it were made the receptacle of all materials which could be collected for local history from parish registers and other parochial or municipal records. It would then gradually become a central depository of information concerning the ecclesiastical history of the diocese. The chancellor also would naturally take a leading part in the direction and oversight of any efforts for promoting systematic religious instruction, either ordinary, such as the diocesan inspection of schools, or special, such as the scheme for the preparation of which this very conference has been asked to appoint a committee. I am not fond of the system of rolling two offices into one. It has been one of the many causes of the decrepitude of our cathedrals in modern times. But if we have an archdeacon as canon residentiary, I am inclined to think that the office of treasurer might very suitably be held with the archdeaconry, for it pertains to the office of archdeacon to see that the churches under his care are in proper repair, and duly provided with the required "ornaments of the church and of the ministers thereof," which was precisely the business of the treasurer in respect of the cathedral.

I do not find in ancient statutes any special duty assigned to

the dean in relation to the diocese at large. As acting head of the whole cathedral body, and responsible for the good order and well-being of the whole institution, he was obliged to be more continually in residence than any other dignitary. The cathedral has, of course, the first claim on the time and attention of a dean, but there will always be intervals of leisure in which he can take a leading part in good work, for the benefit of the city and of the diocese, and as we know from experience at Chichester, men of learning can find time for literary work of lasting value to the Church at large.

In some cathedrals the diocesan inspector, in others the diocesan missionary, is a residentiary canon. Opinions may differ as to the expediency of this arrangement; and I will content myself with saying that it is at any rate entirely in harmony with one of the original purposes and ends of a cathedral chapter, which was, as I have said, to assist the bishop in the evangelization of the diocese.

The great size of a cathedral church and the multiplicity of its parts point to the ways in which it may be used; first for large gatherings, as on the occasion of a visitation or synod, or for choral festivals, or performances of sacred music such as Bach's Passion music on a large scale, or for assemblies of clergy in retreat: secondly for a variety of short services, for lectures, or classes of instruction. I was told the other day that in one of our Midland cathedrals during the season of Lent there were no less than five daily services, various in length and character, adapted to the different classes of worshippers for whom they were more especially designed; and at most of them a short address, an instruction or meditation was delivered. I may mention that it is the practice of one of the canons in the same cathedral at a certain hour on market days, when the city is most full of people from the surrounding country, to take any who like to come over the cathedral, giving them an explanation of its structure and some account of its history. Large numbers, I am told, of the country folk avail themselves of this privilege every week, and it is easy to see what an opportunity may thus be afforded for giving such instruction upon the history of the National Church as may help to explode some of the vulgar fallacies of the day upon that subject. Let me, in conclusion, sum up the points for which I contend.

1. An annual convocation of the whole chapter as the bishop's diocesan council.

2. An occasional, if not annual, convocation of the whole chapter by the dean, for consultation on all matters of vital importance touching the fabric or services of the cathedral.

3. A lengthened term of residence for three at least of the residentiary canons, who should hold, if possible, the offices of precentor, chancellor, and treasurer, or at any rate have some definite duties assigned to them.

It may be said that the old constitution, as I have sketched it, is an ideal which was never thoroughly realized. I grant it, and I am far from denying that, even as it is, the cathedral has been, and may be, a source of useful influence, because able and zealous men will always devise some means of doing good. But in all matters it is well to have an ideal to aim at, to keep it steadily in view, and to get as near it as we can. And I do thoroughly believe that the restoration in its main features of this ancient constitution is the only way to recover for the cathedral its true character as the mother-church of the diocese and enable it to become a centre of life and light and power.

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Notes on Bible Words.

NO. XII.—“CONVERT.”

THE influence of the Vulgate on our theological language, as all students know, has been great. A remarkable illustration is the word “Convert.”

“Conversion” appears once in our Bible. Acts xv. 3, “declaring the conversion of the Gentiles” (R.V. and A.V.), τὴν ἐπιστροφὴν: (la conversion). The Vulgate gives *conversationem*. This word ἐπι-στροφή occurs only here in N.T.

Στρέφω is to *turn*; reflexively, to *turn one's self*. Acts vii. 42, “God *turned*,” ἔστρεψε; Vulg., *convertit*. So pass., Luke vii. 9, “*having turned*”; Luke xxii. 61, Καὶ στραφείς ὁ Κύριος ἐπέβλεψε, “and the Lord turned and looked upon;” Vulg., *Et conversus D. respexit* (Et le Seigneur se tournant, regarda Pierre). Acts vii. 39, ἐστρέψασαν, “turned back in their hearts.” The Vulgate here has *aversi sunt*. Absol. and trop., *turning from one's course of conduct* (to change one's mind). Matt. xviii. 3, “Except ye be converted,” στραφῆτε; “except ye *turn*,” R.V. (Vulg., *nisi conversi fueritis*).

Ἐπιστρέφω is to *turn to*. Acts xxvi. 20, “that they should repent, and turn to God” (se convertissent à Dieu; Vulg., *converterentur*). to *cause to return*, Luke i. 16, “shall he turn unto the Lord”; Jas. v. 19, 20, “one convert him”; “which converteth the sinner.” Intrans., to *turn one's self*. Acts ix. 35, “they turned to the Lord:” *turn one's self about*, Acts xvi. 18, “Paul . . . turned, and said:” to *return*, come back. Luke ii. 20, “the Shepherds returned.” Metaph., to *turn*