

ART. VI.—ECCLESIASTICAL CENSUS OF THE DIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL.

WITHIN the last few months, a good deal of public attention has been given to certain enumerations of attendance at churches and chapels; and, so far as the statements are reliable and instructive, they afford useful suggestions for future action. But unfortunately, as each enumeration, however irregularly taken, and therefore comparatively worthless, was dignified with the name, "Census," that important term is likely to be brought into contempt.

It is known to the older members of the present generation, that the Decennial Census for England and Wales is not quite what it was at first; for during the five earliest occasions of it—1801 to 1841 inclusive—it had not taken the more extended and complete form with which we are now familiar. In 1851, the question of a religious census, or one according to the declared creeds of the people, was warmly discussed; and such an inquiry was adopted in reference to Ireland, where sectarian feeling is unusually strong. It is also well known in our colonies, and in various other countries of the world.

Some, however—especially certain bodies of Nonconformists—were strongly opposed; alleging, very truly, no doubt, that their influence would be misrepresented, for many people worshipped occasionally or regularly at their chapels, who yet called themselves by the names of other religious bodies. It was therefore resolved, partly perhaps as an experiment, and partly as a compromise, to have a "Census of Religious Worship;" and this was made, together with another on Education, which is comparatively little known. The publication of the Report on this subject, together with a detailed account of 73 great towns of the kingdom, gave rise to a great amount of controversy; for those whose purpose it served, confounded two entirely distinct sets of numbers—those representing *attenders* and *attendances*. It is clear that 100 persons might make 300 *attendances*, if each attended all the three services (morning, afternoon, and evening); or they would make only 100, if each of them attended only one service. These are the major and minor limits; but the distinction is not known—or rarely and badly known—even now, as anyone may see from the correspondence in the newspapers respecting the recent numbering of congregations.

In December, 1854, or nearly four years after, Mr. Horace Mann, who had been identified with the taking of the "Census of Religious Worship," read a paper before the Statistical Society of London; in which he made an effort to group the population

of the kingdom under three great heads. That is to say;— assuming the census, with all its defects, to be substantially correct, and the best information which we possess on the subject, could we not, indirectly, ascertain the numerical strength of the great religious communities. It was an interesting inquiry; there was no man better qualified to make it than Mr. Mann; and his mode of computing would evidently be a fair one.

He assumed the morning attendance as a basis; all those present at it were separate persons. Next, he regarded half the afternoon congregations as new comers, and a third of those in the evening. Thus, a church or chapel having 600 persons present at each of these services, would have 1800 attendances; but these would be made up by 1100 attenders or separate persons. Thus—morning, 600 + afternoon, 300 + evening, 200.

His next principle was, that in the Church of England, and among Roman Catholics, those present on any particular Sunday constitute only the half of the worshipping members who attend at other convenient times; but that among Protestant Dissenters and others, the attendance of worshipping members on any given Sunday is about 57 per cent. of the whole, so that their numbers would be reached by adding 75 per cent.

Computing in this way he easily reached the following:—

Church People	7,546,948
Roman Catholics	610,786
Protestant Dissenters, and others	5,303,609
	13,461,343 ¹

I ventured to go one step further, and throw these numbers into percentages, from which it appeared there were—

		Of the gross population.	
Worshipping	{	Members of the Church of England	42 per cent.
		Dissenters and others	29½ ”
		Roman Catholics	3½ ”
		75	
	Balance non-worshipping	25	
		100	

In a general way, the 25 per cent. of non-worshippers constitute the Home-mission-field of the Church of England; so that she is *ministerial* to 42 per cent. and *missionary* to 25 more. It must be admitted, however, that several of these “home-heathen,” as they are sometimes called, will not accept the services of the Church—*e.g.*, Roman Catholics, some nominal

¹ The population at that time amounted to 17,927,609.

Dissenters, Mormons, Secularists, and many of the poor who are criminal and vicious. We shall see, by-and-by, the reduction to be made on this ground.

In this position the question remained till last year—that is to say, over three decades. There were not wanting earnest efforts in the meantime to have a real religious census taken, especially in 1861. On that occasion, Lord Palmerston frankly avowed that the Government were in favour of the measure; but, he added, they did not like to alienate a large body of their supporters who thought otherwise. Also, several other attempts have been made to reach, approximately, the numbers of the various religious bodies, some of them very creditable indeed, and most of them showing that the Church of England is, now at least, stronger than is shown by Mr. Mann's computation.

In the year 1880, the new Diocese of Liverpool was founded; and those of us who had taken a prominent part in securing this result, felt that we were specially called upon to assist the Bishop in what is popularly known as "getting the engine fairly on the rails." The diocese, though very limited in size—being actually smaller than one hundred of the shire, and only part of the former Archdeaconry of Liverpool—is yet a very important one, and presents features of unusual difficulty. For instance, though great towns present features of general resemblance, it is only when they become of a certain magnitude that the St. Giles's and St. James's become prominently developed—that rich and poor are separated by a chasm ever-widening. Liverpool is unusually remarkable for this feature. Thus, from its geographical position and commercial character, its inhabitants are of the most heterogeneous kinds. It is very Scotch, strongly Welsh, and in some quarters the Irish element and persons of the Roman Catholic faith outnumber all others. Nor is the American contribution without its influence. Those whose memories can carry them back twenty-five years will have noticed a decided lowering of our commercial morals; so that actions which formerly would have excluded a man from the society of gentlemen, now make him a good deal of a favourite. But looking broadly at our people, we have the large floating population of sailors at one point, and the emigrants who are seeking new homes; and on the Wigan side we have a community of coal-miners, who seem to be a law unto themselves. Everywhere we have the town gradually encroaching on the country—the modern villa sometimes forming a part of the old thatched farmhouse—until it has been prophesied that our little diocese will soon be one continuous town.

In any case, it would have been of importance to an ecclesiastical head, to know as much as possible of those whom he was called to superintend; for benefices not far remote from each

other are of the most varied character; and one incumbent is sometimes called upon to superintend a population nearly twenty times as great as that of his neighbour. Why should not a bishop do upon a larger scale that which a rector or vicar does upon a smaller one—viz., make a survey of his people, that he may know the exact number of persons of each creed, and where those persons reside to whom his pastoral superintendence is specially due? Besides, in this case we were entering on the census year; and if our inquiry could be made about the same time, the general results would be a check upon each other.

Though every one in general terms approved of the suggestion, no one made any decided movement. The Bishop expressed his great desire to possess information of the fullest kind; but then followed the questions, Who is to do it? What will be the cost? Will the public regard it as trustworthy when it has been completed? And how can you complete it, for a single recusant among the clergy will upset everything: there can be no tabulation and summary of his Rural Deanery, the Arch-deaconry, the Diocese.

There was a show of truth in all this, but it was a magnifying of difficulties. I had encountered similar reasoning in 1861, when the town was enumerated for the first time in Ecclesiastical districts; and experience had shown that when even one man is earnestly desirous to see a good work accomplished, there are kind and generous people whose timidity will rapidly disappear. Accordingly, the enumeration books were printed and prepared, in general of sufficient size to contain a record of 6,000 people, or about 1,200 families: but while some of these were too large, and could spare a few sheets, others had to be enlarged, and on a few occasions several books were required.

The civil, or Government census, was made on the 3rd of April, but as ours was not intended to comprise the "floating population"—some of whom might be within our limits for one or several nights—there was no necessity for the two enumerations to be simultaneous. We wanted only the permanent residents or parochial population, to the exclusion of such persons as emigrants, sailors, guests at hotels, persons in public institutions having chaplains of their own, Irish harvest men, weekly visitors at Southport, &c. Our return, therefore, would be inevitably smaller than that of the Government; but as a local one, and not part of one for the whole kingdom.

On the 18th of April, a meeting was held of representative men from various parts of the Diocese—laity and clergy—the Bishop in the chair. The object of it was to see if a central committee could be formed to superintend the proceedings, and if a central fund could be raised for the payment of those expenses which were not chargeable to any particular parish. To

a large number of them, the necessity for such an inquiry had almost passed away, for the Government census had been made nearly three weeks before; and it would only be entering upon a sea of troubles—the amount of which no man could foresee—for an advantage of a somewhat questionable nature. So the meeting dispersed, having affirmed nothing and rejected nothing: but no central committee was formed, and not a shilling of a guarantee fund was suggested or promised. Next morning, those of our local newspapers which do not seek to promote the interests of the Church, formally announced that the project had been abandoned, that its chief advocate met with very little support. The latter statement was true; but it is due to the Bishop to say that he never wavered in his warm approval of the scheme.

In the meanwhile, large sections of the city clergy had been called together; they had taken up the subject warmly; the enumeration books had been given out, and the work was already going on. I resolved, therefore, to complete one large section in the first place—which was in a great degree distinct from the rest—and then to stop, or to proceed with the remainder, as circumstances might require. The two rural deaneries of Liverpool, north and south, embrace the whole city, and some rural parishes adjoining, chiefly along the shore on the one side, and the river bank on the other. These contain nearly one-half of the “churches”—consecrated or licensed places of worship—almost half of the distinct cures of souls, and upwards of 57 per cent. of the gross population.

In the beginning of August this part was complete, and the result was laid before the public in our local newspapers. It was then seen that the work had not been abandoned, but that in the central and most important part it had been completed. The old parish of Liverpool, which is now about one-third of the area of the borough, is a registration division of itself, and is one of seven of which the whole diocese is composed. It is the only one which, during the last ten years, has not increased in population; indeed, for at least forty years, or before the whole ground was built over, it has been emptying out its population; and this is now so regular that each of its ten sub-districts shows periodically a diminution, and, with perhaps a single exception, each ecclesiastical district. From 1851 to 1861 every district was said to contain in round numbers 10,000 souls; there are now only two—St. Alban's and St. Matthew's—which reach that number. At present the average of 34 is 5,264, or little more than the half; and as all the old churches were built in prominent positions, which commerce specially claims as its own, the clearances, especially in the south, or more aristocratic end, are much more remarkable. The following Table tells its own tale:—

PARISH OF LIVERPOOL.

NORTH DIVISION.	Ch. of Eng.	Dis. & others.	Roman Cath.	Religion un-known.	Total.	Govt. Census.
¹ <i>St. Aidan's (in Liverpool)</i>	1,568	422	6,716	162	8,868	9,604
All Saints	1,748	141	2,881	—	4,770	5,225
Christ Church	2,154	782	1,322	—	4,258	5,672
Holy Trinity	3,729	590	3,265	—	7,584	9,492
² <i>St. Alban's (Bevington)</i> ³	3,267	354	6,527	10	10,158	11,309
⁴ <i>St. Anne's</i>	3,062	140	3,992	825	8,019	10,491
<i>St. Bartholomew's</i>	634	53	3,754	230	4,671	5,457
<i>St. Columba's</i>	2,616	1,079	1,375	—	5,070	5,499
<i>St. James-the-Less</i>	3,344	643	3,990	28	8,005	9,111
<i>St. Martin's</i>	2,895	908	5,969	—	9,773	10,211
<i>St. Matthew's</i>	4,296	1,250	5,197	—	10,743	11,167
<i>St. Matthias's</i>	971	241	5,135	—	6,347	6,965
<i>St. Paul's</i>	1,790	571	2,244	32	4,637	5,840
⁵ <i>St. Peter's</i>	992	230	312	—	1,534	2,149
⁶ <i>St. Nicholas's</i>	1,456	364	1,228	—	3,048	4,055
<i>St. Stephen's</i>	1,769	119	6,440	58	8,386	8,774
<i>St. Titus's</i>	2,724	279	4,554	12	7,569	8,161
² <i>Vauxhall (All Souls)</i> ⁸	2,328	102	3,064	—	5,494	6,226
	41,344	8,268	67,965	1,357	118,934	135,407
Percentages	34·8	6·9	57·1	1·2	100	

PARISH OF LIVERPOOL.

SOUTH DIVISION.	Ch. of Eng.	Dis. & others.	Roman Cath.	Religion un-known.	Total.	Govt. Census.
<i>St. Andrew's</i>	1,162	277	415	⁵ 572	2,426	3,018
<i>St. Barnabas's</i>	1,165	123	2,069	—	3,357	3,477
<i>St. Bride's</i>	2,492	1,306	293	195	⁷ 4,286	4,296
<i>St. Catherine's</i>	4,547	1,880	1,073	152	7,652	7,890
<i>St. David's</i>	2,127	411	2,012	25	4,575	4,996
<i>St. George's</i>	564	240	553	34	1,391	1,850
<i>St. John's</i>	341	78	734	133	1,286	1,886
<i>St. Luke's</i>	2,185	385	779	6	3,355	4,094
<i>St. Mark's</i>	4,206	1,393	1,808	66	7,473	8,732
<i>St. Mary Magdalene's</i>	3,037	792	1,463	193	5,485	6,214
<i>St. Michael's</i>	1,082	170	1,056	—	⁸ 2,308	⁸ 5,052
<i>St. Philip's</i>	731	311	535	—	⁸ 1,577	⁸ 1,338
<i>St. Saviour's</i>	1,908	1,034	161	—	3,103	3,577
<i>St. Silas's</i>	3,035	678	983	467	5,163	6,280
<i>St. Simon's</i>	1,069	197	595	80	1,941	2,156
<i>St. Thomas's</i>	1,669	298	2,679	—	⁸ 4,646	⁸ 5,571
	31,320	9,573	17,208	1,923	60,024	68,427
Percentages	52·2	15·9	28·7	3·2	100	

¹ The church, and the remaining population are in Kirkdale.² Name of the church.³ Name of the parish.⁴ The centre of crime and immorality.⁵ The two parish churches of Liverpool.⁶ Shopkeepers unwilling to reply in presence of customers.⁷ An unusually close approximation to the Government Census.⁸ The two areas not the same; that for the Government Census slightly erroneous, too much or too little.

It will be seen that thirteen names of these districts are printed in italics, in all of which the Roman Catholic element preponderates; so that while we have in Roman Catholic Ireland numerous Protestant communities, we have in Protestant England various Roman Catholic communities. The ancient parish of Sephton, to the north of Liverpool, and in the north rural deanery, is almost wholly agricultural. It contains a gross population of 2,147, of whom 1,253 are Roman Catholics. Two of the constituent townships contain scarcely a single Protestant, if one.

In the second week of August, the enumeration books were sent out to the other parts of the diocese, embracing four rural deaneries in the more distant parts; but though all the clergy now saw that success was highly probable, and though printed details respecting the Liverpool portion had been sent to them all, the response was neither so prompt nor so hearty as on the part of the city clergy. There was a general impression that it affected them less for good, and that with their sparse and scattered populations, it was more difficult to make an enumeration of 2,500 than it would be to get the details respecting 6,000 in a town, where they all live within a narrow compass. There is truth in all this; and it was further found that in the outer deaneries there was scarcely such a thing as an intelligent man out of employment, whereas in the town there are many hundreds. The result of all has been, that what I expected to see complete towards the close of September, 1881, is finished on the night of February 8, 1882. Fewer than a dozen incumbents kept back the much-desired end; and yet it would have been injudicious to hurry them, or to introduce any element of doubt for the sake of gaining a few days or weeks. A unique task has been completed; slowly, it is true, but successfully.

The following is a summary of the whole:—

ARCHDEACONRY OF LIVERPOOL.

Char-ches.	Bene-fices.	Rural Deaneries.	Ch. of England.	Dis. & others.	Roman Cath.	Religion unknown.	Total.
16 ... 16	...	Wigan.....	74,653 ...	22,280 ...	19,381 ...	20 ...	116,334
27 ... 26	...	North Meols ...	48,328 ...	17,168 ...	9,596 ...	105 ...	75,197
50 ... 46	...	L'pool,North	175,624 ...	57,406 ...	111,945 ...	2293 ...	347,268
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93 ... 88			298,605 ...	96,854 ...	140,922 ...	2418 ...	538,799

ARCHDEACONRY OF WARRINGTON.

44 ... 43	...	L'pool, South	137,836 ...	48,529 ..	45,076 ...	3679 ...	235,120
36 ... 33	...	Prescot.....	89,894 ...	30,219 ...	37,356 ..	49 ...	157,518
24 ... 21	...	Winwick.....	48,460 ...	18,712 ...	14,661 ...	493 ...	82,326
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104 ... 97			276,190 ...	97,460 ...	97,093 ...	4221 ...	474,964
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197 ... 185	...	{ Total for } { Diocese }	574,795 ... 56'7 ...	194,314 ... 19'2 ...	238,015 ... 23'5 ...	6639 ... '6 ...	1,013,763 100

PERCENTAGES.

Wigan.....	64·2	...	19·1	...	16·7	...	—
North Meols....	64·4	...	22·8	...	12·8	...	—
L'pool, North...	50·6	...	16·5	...	32·2	...	·7
„ South...	58·6	...	20·6	...	19·2	...	1·6
Prescot.....	57·1	...	19·2	...	23·7	...	—
Winwick.....	58·7	...	22·8	...	17·9	...	·6

The following remarks are supplementary to these results, and explanatory:—

1. The Government census of the diocese showed a gross population of 1,084,884, and of these we have enumerated and classed 1,013,763. This leaves 71,131, or 6·5 per cent. for the “floating population,” of which it is said there are about 50,000 in Liverpool alone.

2. The percentages, taken by themselves, give us information which the absolute numbers do not show. Thus, the Church of England is strongest in North Meols, which includes Southport and Ormskirk; and weakest in Liverpool North. Dissenters are strongest in North Meols, and in two of the benefices they outnumber the members of the Church of England. They are equally strong in Winwick, and in one benefice they constitute more than half the population. Roman Catholics exist in greatest force in Liverpool North, where they amount to nearly one-third of the population; and they are relatively fewest in North Meols, where they scarcely amount to one in eight of the whole.

3. The computation by Mr. Horace Mann’s formula, from the “Census of Religious Worship” for the borough of Liverpool, gave 26 worshipping members of the Church of England, 21 Roman Catholics, and 13 Dissenters and others, leaving a residuum of non-worshippers amounting to 40 per cent. Now the present census enables us to analyze this last number—for 53 per cent. of the citizens declare that they are members of the Church of England; so that to the 26 worshipping members—supposing that the proportions have not materially altered—we have to add 27 from the 40, or two-thirds of it. The remaining 13 per cent. of non-worshippers are called by many names; and they include, of course, the 1·1 per cent. of “Religion unknown.”

4. The clergy speak warmly of the value of the census to them already. An immense amount of time is saved; for each family can be recognized directly, and irregular worshippers are brought to light.

5. The non-attendance at public worship, which has recently excited so much comment, and which has elicited so many hypotheses, is, so far as we are concerned, quite explained. The absence of worshippers is not in the older and lower parts of the town, but in the upper and newer. The people whose masses constitute our missionary field are comparatively regular; those

who are well-fed, clothed, and lodged, are "conspicuous by their absence." There are not 73,000 Churchmen in the whole of old Liverpool; there are more than 188,000, or nearly three times the number, in the four townships which wrap it round. In eleven of the worst districts in the lower part, where Protestants are in a minority, and few above the grade of daily labourers, the attendance at church of both sexes and all ages was 7·6 per cent. In the same number of districts in the best parts of the town, the attendance was 5·5. Connected with this last group of churches there are 87,173 attached members of the Church of England absent from every service—an average of nearly 8000, but in one case rising to 13,105. If one-tenth of these could be visited and prevailed upon to attend, the existing churches would be insufficient for their accommodation in little more than a month.

Finally, the cost of the whole matter was a bagatelle amounting to only about a half of the original estimate. But upwards of 1,250 letters and post-cards were written, and the end is not yet. And practically there was no difficulty in obtaining replies to the inquiries; or where there was, it was not on political or sectarian grounds. I think I had two letters of remonstrance, one evidently from a working man; though a few, before stating the facts, made a mild protest, apparently more in joke than in earnest.

A. HUME.

Reviews.

The Holy Bible. (A. V.) With an Explanatory and Critical Commentary, and a Revision of the Translation by Bishops and other Clergy of the Anglican Church. Edited by F. C. Cook, M.A. New Testament. Vol. IV. Pp. 840. John Murray.

EIGHTEEN years have passed since this Commentary was undertaken. Its publication was commenced ten years ago, and the concluding volume is now before the public. There are six volumes of the Old Testament, and four of the New. The work is commonly called "The Speaker's Commentary." Its conception was due to the late Lord Ossington, then Speaker of the House of Commons; the idea was the Speaker's, and he maintained a lively interest in the progress of the work. That Mr. Denison's idea was carried into effect is due, in the first instance, to the present Archbishop of York. He called a meeting for forming a Committee, and took an active part in its formation. By that Committee, which comprised many Prelates and distinguished laymen, with the Regius Professors of Divinity in Oxford and Cambridge, the plan of the work was settled, and the selection of the Contributors and of the general Editor was finally approved. Archbishop Thomson, of course, became Chairman, and the practical direction of the work was entrusted to the Editor, Canon Cook.