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ISLE OF MAN CHURCH REVIVAL.

AN effort is now making to reanimate the principles which Bishop Wilson taught with so much success in the Diocese where he laboured faithfully for upwards of fifty years. Since his translation to a better world those principles have become almost a dead letter, and the remarkable unity which prevailed in his times has been undermined to a lamentable extent. This has resulted from the introduction of dissenting principles from England into the Isle of Man, and from subsequent efforts on the part of the Manx Clergy to reconcile Dissenters to the Church through the sacrifice of those principles, and the relaxation of that discipline, which Bishop Wilson enforced.

This Diocese has a strong claim upon the sympathy of Churchmen generally, not only through its traditional connexion with the name of Wilson, but because, though as ancient as any other English See, it is deprived of all those temporal aids which English Bishops derive from Public associations for Church purposes, and because of its poverty.

It was the Ecclesiastical condition of the Isle of Man, as well as the extreme poverty of its Clergy, and the size of the Diocese, that disposed the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to annex this See to that of Carlisle. Reverence for the name of Wilson, and regard for the great work done by him under great disadvantages, were among the chief arguments which were used in Parliament to prevail upon the English legislature to pass the Act 1 & 2 of Vic., c. 30, for continuing the Bishoprick of Sodor and Man. The Clergy of the Diocese, to their lasting credit, then petitioned Parliament for the preservation of their Bishoprick as a distinct and independent See. They said in their petition, "As to enriching its parochial Clergy by the spoils of their Bishoprick, your petitioners dislike the principle, and dread the example." They did

not affect to conceal their "lamentably straitened circumstances," for which they solicited "honourable relief." But they energetically disclaimed a wish "to procure temporal advantage at the expense of a spiritual loss."

One-third of the revenues of the Bishoprick has been applied to the amelioration of the temporal condition of the parochial Clergy, yet no portion of the Church of England has so little power to remunerate adequately her Clergy, and the Bishop is incapacitated from executing any great Church works, except by appealing to the piety and liberality of more favoured districts of the Church of England.

Unsuccessful attempts have been made to obtain help from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England and Wales, and every effort has been made in vain to secure assistance from the Crown, (the Isle of Man being, by purchase from the Duke of Athol, the private property of the Crown,) for the work of restoring what has almost unavoidably fallen into decay; and the great Incorporated Societies of England are precluded by the terms of their charters from aiding in works which they are competent to promote in foreign parts.

When the present Bishop of Sodor and Man took possession of his See, he found the ancient Cathedral of the Diocese in ruins; his own appointed residence so dilapidated as to be partially unsafe, and the Episcopal estate impoverished by long neglect and improper cultivation. The only certain source of income on which he can now depend is a share of the general commutation of the tythes of the whole island, amounting nominally to £1500 per annum. He has been compelled to undertake the restoration of the Episcopal residence out of his own resources, and he is now engaged in bringing an exhausted estate into a proper state of cultivation, from which it is improbable that he will derive any personal advantage.

By the aid of a few friends he laid the foundation, on the centenary of Bishop Wilson's death, of a building which may at any future time be extended to supply the place of his ruined Cathedral. The site chosen for it is that on which once stood the Chapel

which Bishop Wilson erected, and in which he personally trained young students for the ministry of the Manx Church. This work is regarded by the Bishop as the first step towards reviving practically the principles which his great Predecessor inculcated, and towards the completion of his undertaking he now pleads for the sympathy of Churchmen generally.

The design for the building has been prepared by Messrs. Buckler of Oxford, and is on the smallest possible scale consistent with the idea of representing a Cathedral Church. The same services will be continued in it which have already attracted overflowing congregations in the Bishop's private domestic chapel for the last three years.

There is scarcely a parish or a family in England where the writings of Bishop Wilson are not duly appreciated as sources of sound instruction, and as aids to private devotion. Surely thank-offerings for such benefits, derived by Churchmen generally, in the form of contributions to the work now undertaken in his name, will not be called for in vain.

The present Bishop of Sodor and Man has, moreover, strong personal claims upon the sympathy of his brethren in England, when it is remembered that, as the founder in England of three of its most successful Educational Institutions, he has bequeathed to them, at considerable sacrifice to himself, the Institution at Warrington for the education of Clergymen's daughters, and the two public Training Schools for Masters and for Mistresses, situated in the manufacturing districts comprised by the Dioceses of Chester and Manchester.

Contributions towards this object may be paid to the account of the Cathedral Fund of the Isle of Man, at the Bank of Messrs. Hoare, Fleet Street, London, or sent direct to the Bishop of Sodor and Man, Bishop's Court, Ramsey, Isle of Man.







