

## Non-Conformist Congregations in Tisbury 1829



From a Return made to the Clerk of the Peace of this county by the Churchwardens and Overseers of Tisbury, the total number of members of the congregations in that parish not belonging to the Church of England amounts to 1711; of which 1000 are Roman Catholics, 509 are Independents, 103 are Wesleyan Methodists and 99 are Primitive Methodists.

Salisbury & Winchester Journal Monday 26 October 1829

Letters to the Editor



Sir,

Having felt considerable surprise at a paragraph which appeared in your Journal of the 26<sup>th</sup> ult. in which it was stated that "It appears by the Return made to the Clerk of the Peace of this county, by the Churchwardens and Overseers of Tisbury, that the total number of the members of the congregations in that parish, not belonging to the Church of England, amounts to 1711, of which 1000 are Roman Catholics", I have taken some trouble to ascertain whether such a return could be correct, and I am now enabled to assert, upon the most indisputable evidence, that so much of the paragraph quoted as relates to the number of Roman Catholics, is a gross falsehood, the whole number (including children) not exceeding 330.

Whether the Return referred to was ever made I have not taken the trouble to inquire, but I can positively assert that if it was made, it was done without the authority of *one of the Churchwardens* and of *two of the Overseers*, neither of whom heard of it until the paragraph alluded to appeared in your paper.

I have no doubt that you will, with your usual impartiality, give a place to this note, and so expose the designs of a party, eager, either by truth or falsehood, as may serve their purpose, to bring the established Church into contempt.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient Servant, A Churchman

Salisbury & Winchester Journal Monday 30 October 1829



Sir,

To repel the malignant attack made by an anonymous writer in your paper of Monday, upon a return officially made by myself and others, in compliance with an order of the last quarter sessions, I request you to insert this letter.

When the order to make a Return of the number of the places of worship (not of the Church of England) in this parish, and the number of the members of each congregation, was transmitted to myself and the overseers, we thought that the only method to ascertain with any degree of accuracy the number of the members of the several congregations, was to apply to the Ministers of each chapel; this we accordingly did and received from the Rev Mr Parker, the officiating Priest of the Catholic Chapel at Wardour, an answer that it was *about a thousand*.

Knowing that the Roman Catholics had a very extensive congregation, and believing Mr Parker to be a gentleman of undoubted veracity, we did not hesitate to state that number in the Return that was made to the Clerk of the Peace; and which was signed at a Vestry by myself and two of the Overseers, we being the only parish officers present. Thus I submit that we have acted correctly, and in compliance with the order of sessions; and let the following copy of Mr Parker's letter speak for him:

"I do certify that the estimate given of the number of the members of the Roman Catholic congregation of Wardour chapel as consisting of about a thousand, is a true and correct account, according to the best of my knowledge and belief. Wardour, Nov 30, 1829. R Parker"

I now publicly challenge the person signing himself "A Churchman" to come forward in his real name and produce "*indisputable evidence that so much of the paragraph quoted as relates to the number of Roman Catholics, is a gross falsehood, the whole number (including children) not exceeding 330*".

Till he shall do this, whatever his station in life or profession may be, he must be content with the appellation of "*a false accuser*".

I am totally ignorant of any "*designs of a party eager either by truth or falsehood, as may serve their purpose, to bring the established church into contempt*"; on the contrary, to that Church belong, for its honour and advancement I am solicitous, and therefore sincerely lament that such a string of malicious misrepresentations as appeared in your last Journal, should have emanated from "A Churchman".

Such conduct on the part of its members being calculated to bring our established Church into contempt; and consequently to advance the power of the various denominations of Dissenters, towards whom in his unchristian-like spirit, he (*The Churchman*) seems to feel so bitter a hostility.

That a vast majority of the parish are determined to resist the unjust attempts of a few individuals to bring the expenses attending an organ upon the church rate is, undoubtedly true; but this does not make that majority "*a party eager either by truth of falsehood as may serve their purpose to bring the Established Church into contempt*".

Neither have they the least objection to an organ in the church; indeed one Gentleman very liberally offered to those individuals soon after the organ was erected, that if they would raise a fund to defray the expenses of playing it, he would contribute one hundred pounds towards that fund; and when the case was in the Ecclesiastical Court of Sarum, all that the parishioners prayed for was, *the introduction of a clause into the decree confirming that erection of the organ, that no charges attending the repairing or playing thereof should be brought upon the rates of the parish.*

Hoping that in future "A Churchman" attending to the admirable injunction of our excellent Catechism, will "keep his tongue from evil-speaking, lying and slandering".

I subscribe myself, Sir,

Your obedient Servant, James Jay, Junior Linley Farm, Tisbury, Dec 4, 1829

Salisbury & Winchester Journal Monday 07 December 1829