

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>


A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:


https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE
CHURCHMAN

A Monthly Magazine

*CONDUCTED BY CLERGYMEN AND LAYMEN
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND*

——
VOL. XII.

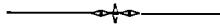
——

LONDON
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW
1885

Thus moral consistency and consequent dignity is perhaps the only point at which Molière surpasses him, while in poetic brilliancy of imagination and sudden flashes of Parnassian lightning he leaves Molière far behind. But Molière travels on a paved road, where all the comic writers of the old world, besides the mighty Spaniards of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had been his pioneers. Aristophanes had to hew and pave his own way, through rock and quagmire. Aristophanes is the explorer of an unknown ocean in the infancy of navigation. Molière sails on a sea with the chart before him, where all soundings are registered and all shoals lighted by the experience of those who have gone before.

HENRY HAYMAN, D.D.

(To be continued.)



ART VI.—DISESTABLISHMENT AND THE GENERAL ELECTION.

CHURCHMEN of all schools and of both political parties have a very unwelcome alternative thrust upon them. A General Election is evidently impending, and the active preparations for it on all sides have already generated amongst us something of the heat of the contest. Everyone who has "a vote and interest" has already laid on him the duty of considering what he will do and say. We Churchmen find, to our regret, that the Church is pressed into the foreground of the political strife. We must either stand passively by and see her made now the theme and ultimately the victim of unscrupulous calumny and unmeasured misrepresentation, or we must speak out and act too with a vigour, a determination, and a unanimity which thus far we have never yet applied. Concession after concession has been made in the hope of appeasing those gentlemen who bear the question-begging appellation of "Liberationists," and, far from being satisfied, they are only emboldened to demand the instant and total destruction of the National Church. Wherever they can bring any influence to bear that is worth using they exercise it without the smallest reserve or compunction, and the effect has already been marked in more than one constituency. Professor James Stuart, when he asked the electors of the University of Cambridge for their votes at the General Election, pledged himself definitely against Disestablishment. And why? Because he knew well enough that his cause was hopeless unless he did so. But when he had last year to solicit the suffrages of the electors of Hackney

—a borough in which Nonconformists are thought to be unusually strong—he was constrained to declare himself in favour of Disestablishment “in principle,” and in favour too of applying that principle immediately in Scotland and Wales. This is only a very gross and glaring instance of what is going on elsewhere. Does any reasonable person believe that Professor Stuart’s views had really undergone such a change on this very large question in four years, or that if he had had the same constituency to court in 1884 that he had to deal with in 1880, he would not have used the same language? He said what he said at Hackney because he feared that he would not win the seat if he did not say it. That is the plain English of the matter.

And if this be so, is not the duty and the policy plain of those Churchmen who are altogether opposed to the plans of the Liberationists? Whether they be Tory Churchmen or Radical Churchmen—whether they be “High,” “Low,” or “Broad”—their proper course is to make it understood by candidates at the next election, that they will vote without hesitation against any of them who will not pledge himself to maintain the rights and property of the Church. No doubt this may involve in some cases a sacrifice from the political point of view. That sacrifice will, however, seldom be very considerable. Between the moderate Liberal and the moderate Conservative, between the man of sense and patriotism who sits behind Mr. Gladstone and Sir W. Harcourt, and him of the same sort who ranges himself under Sir Stafford Northcote, there is not that wide and deep gulf of divergence or political principle that there was between the two sides of the House forty years ago. Moreover it is manifest also that party differences turn—with the exception of this very question of Disestablishment—rather upon the foreign than the domestic concerns of the empire. And if in every constituency those Churchmen will act together who deem that the maintenance of the Church’s claims to her own is a vital matter, they are quite strong enough to make a distinct impression on the result of the elections. In many places they would hold the key of the situation, and might turn the result this way or that by the transfer of their votes. It is very instructive to remember that in 1880 the seats were many which would have been lost to those who carried them had a score of electors migrated from one side to the other. It is quite evident, too, that tactics like these are being employed by Mr. Lyulph Stanley, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Richard, and their allies; and such tactics can only be effectually met and baffled by a counterstroke of the same description. If we can dispose of the Liberationist agitation at the next General Election, we shall, in all probability, have settled its fate permanently. There

are many signs that Dissent, as a religious power in the land, is declining—we believe somewhat rapidly declining. If they cannot score a victory at the ensuing elections, they will never win one at all, at least in our generation. It is the sense of this—the conviction that it is “now or never”—which goads the Liberationists and their allies to those spasmodic efforts which we see them to be making just at present.

The strength of the political Dissenters lies simply in their unity of action and in the belief, which they contrive to produce by their energetic attitude, that their voting power and influence are really very considerable. The truth is that the Protestant Dissenters in England are certainly less in number than a quarter of the nation “all told.” Nothing could be more decisive in its way than the voluntary census taken in Liverpool, in 1881, under the auspices of the Bishop, and on a scheme arranged by that master of statistics the late Canon Hume. There is no pretext for alleging that it is so imperfect as to be worthless for argument, for it was taken but some three months after the thoroughly exhaustive Government census. The latter was dated in April; the former was begun in August. The numbers registered in the two corresponded so nearly as to shut out all possibility of serious errors in the result. The difference between the Government return and that secured by voluntary agency was about 50,000 out of a population of near 600,000 in the city and immediate neighbourhood. And of this unaccounted 50,000, nearly half was due to sailors and emigrants, who sojourn in or near the port for a night or two, but cannot be got at by non-official persons; and a large portion of the rest consisted of the inmates of prisons, asylums, workhouses, hospitals, and so on. Now, no Nonconformist could fairly object that, in taking the population of Liverpool, we are taking a sample either too small for argument or too peculiar to be fair to his cause. On the contrary, the very large proportion of non-English elements in the population, render Liverpool a place where Dissent is undoubtedly above rather than below its normal strength. There are thousands and tens of thousands of Welsh and Scotch in Liverpool who contribute greatly to swell the ranks of Dissent there. What, then, were the relative dimensions of the religious bodies represented in the city and suburbs, and included in Canon Hume’s return? The Church counted 53·7 per cent. of the grand-total; the Roman Catholics, nearly all Irish of course, 27·1; those who declined to make a return were but 1·1; and the Protestant Nonconformists were but 18·1 per cent.

Nor are these the only facts and figures which yield similar results. Of our seamen and marines, more than 75 per cent. describe themselves as members of the Church of England.

In the army there are always very large numbers of Irish ; but yet more than 62 per cent. of its rank and file are Churchmen. Of the poor in workhouses, nearly 80 per cent. are so ; and of prisoners undergoing their sentences quite 75 per cent. The marriage-rate furnishes perhaps less reliable ground for argument, since many who would certainly enrol themselves as Dissenters in a census, prefer to be married at Church. This fact has, however, a value of its own, as indicating that there is not always insuperable alienation from the Church even when the Chapel is preferred. Yet, making all allowance for such inconsistency amongst Dissenters, it is surely of great significance that in 1884 very nearly 83½ per cent. of all the marriages that took place within the Metropolitan area were solemnized in Church, only 4 per cent. by Protestant Dissenting ministers. And this, we think, is a larger disproportion than was ever before known, though the disproportion has always been very large indeed.

It is impossible fairly to withstand the inferences which these statistics disclose. The strength of the Nonconformists in Parliament is altogether out of proportion to their numbers in the country ; and there is no way to redress the disadvantage to which the Church is in consequence exposed, except for Churchmen to resolve unanimously that when it comes to a question of the Church's property and the Church's national status, minor differences shall be sunk, and those members of Parliament who vote on the wrong side or absent themselves (a favourite expedient with weak-kneed politicians) on a critical division be made to understand that Churchmen of all sorts will remember at the ballot-box their failures of duty. Candidates who falter when plain questions are put to them about Church measures now in Parliament, or announced as projected, ought to be opposed without compromise or hesitation. Before we altogether quit the subject of the Liverpool census, we may remark how completely its success disposes of the difficulties decennially alleged by Dissenters in Parliament when Government decennially proposes that inquiry should be made as to the religious profession of the people. Such statistics are collected without the least difficulty in Ireland, and could be obtained just as easily and as thoroughly as any other statistics in England. The reason why Dissenters in England object to their being asked for is plain enough. They know that the results would at once explode the false and exaggerated notions which they have artfully contrived to manufacture about their numbers and their importance. How awkward their position has become in consequence of their boasts about their numbers on the one hand, and their dread of being enumerated on the

other, is apparent enough from the reiterated attempts made under the auspices of the Liberation Society to get up here and there—wherever they think Nonconformity specially strong—some sort of a partial substitute for a real census of religious opinion. The last enterprise of the kind was in February last, when, under the pretext of enlightening the Bishop of London as to the real state of the diocese which he was called on to govern, the *Nonconformist* newspaper published a statement of “church sittings” provided by the Church and the sects in the Metropolitan area. The point of the return concerned Mission-rooms, Schoolrooms used for worship, and such like. In these it was alleged that the Dissenters provided 194,685 sittings against 64,200 furnished by the Church. Nobody who knows anything about the Metropolis believed this, and it is a stretch of charity to believe that the compiler believed it himself. However, somewhat later in that same month the “Official Year Book” for 1885 came out, and showed that in the diocese of London there were 93,042 such sittings, and in that of Rochester, 63,190; to say nothing of many hundreds more which are found in those parts of London included in the county of Essex and diocese of St. Albans.

We are a little afraid that the real bearings of this whole question upon the welfare of the country have not been by many at all seriously considered. We take it for granted that no one with the least tincture of statesmanship in him would ever deem it possible that a measure of Disestablishment would pass without its being accompanied with a Disendowment partial or total. That any Parliament in its senses would ever set entirely free from State supervision and official regulation a community like the Church, and would leave it in so doing in full possession and independent control of its property of various kinds, is simply inconceivable. That property is too little, indeed, for the work the Church has to do; and its amount has been vastly, and we fear we must say purposely, exaggerated by Liberationist orators, who are not ashamed to appeal to the cupidity of ignorant hearers. But yet in the aggregate the property is large. The inheritance of the Church is but a fragment of what was once hers, but it is a noble fragment notwithstanding. The statesmen who should take in hand the gigantic enterprise of severing Church and State would undoubtedly feel it incumbent on him to try and weaken the ecclesiastical power thus emancipated from civil superintendence by reducing it to as deep a poverty as he could hope to be allowed to inflict. Have those who palter with the question ever thought out the consequences of a wholesale spoliation of the Church of England? Those conse-

quences would be manifold and far-reaching. First and foremost we must name the general surrender of Church Schools. These would be "thrown on the rates," and Churchmen would save thereby something not far short of three-quarters of a million of annual contributions. The ultra-Radical, of course, would reckon this as one of the recommendations of Disestablishment, not as an evil incident to it. What the British ratepayer would have to say when the enormous extra burden was suddenly thrown on him, we can guess very well. For the amount of that burden would certainly be double or treble the sum now raised from Churchmen in the shape of "voluntary contributions" by reason of the excessive costliness of the School Board system. To many of us, the instant unpopularity of the cause of education altogether, and the serious check it would receive all through the land, will seem serious considerations.

If our property were taken from us, Churchmen would undoubtedly have to concentrate on maintaining their churches and clergy very large sums which are now set free for general charitable purposes. We will not quote the figures which the Hospital Sunday collections in every large community afford. The churches often contribute two-thirds, sometimes three-fourths, sometimes more, of the totals. These amounts would certainly be largely reduced under the state of things we are suggesting. There is not a medical, or benevolent, or educational institution in the land which would not suffer terribly, and many would be simply ruined. Similar results must be apprehended for Home and Foreign Missionary work; for all enterprises of extending and improving religious machinery; for all societies and organizations which dedicate themselves to caring for and curing the manifold vices and miseries which infest this fallen world. Of course we shall be reminded of "the six million of annual income" with which the Church is credited, and of the immense sums available out of this for national purposes. To which it is enough here to rejoin that no such income, nor anything near it, exists for the spoiler's hand to reach. Those who talk of these amounts cannot be acquitted of deliberate misrepresentation until, indeed, they plead guilty of culpable ignorance. And whatever amount could by any ingenuity be laid hold of, as "national property," would be greatly diminished by the inevitable compensations. All experience, too,—that of the Irish Disestablishment the last—shows how lamentable is the waste always connected with processes of this nature. It does not at all follow that the State would get three or four millions of annual available income for its purposes because it had ousted the Church from possessions which to her had been worth that amount.

We abstain from entering on the large and grave consequences to the security of property at large, and from describing the general mistrust and apprehension which the spoliation of the Church would beget. Speaking broadly, the property of the Church is the gift of individuals. It cannot be pleaded, in any way, that the purposes to which their gifts were dedicated are obsolete. It cannot be pleaded that church endowments, like some ancient charities—we will say, *e. g.*, those left in the earlier part of the Middle Ages to found hospitals for lepers—ought now to be taken in hand and diverted to some useful object, since that for which they were bequeathed has ceased to be. Nor is there room here for the principle of "*cy près*." The very cause for which the Church revenues were parted from the private possession of individuals and dedicated to God's service is as conspicuous in the national life and as much needing succour as in the dim ages far away when the first tithes were allotted to the Church. And these donations of individuals have been in every way sanctioned and encouraged by the State. To seize them now, and apply them to quite other purposes than that for which they were originally destined, is a transaction quite unprecedented in this country. It is not at all similar to the readjustment of old endowments by the Charity Commissioners; it is not even similar to the dealings of Parliament with the Church of Ireland sixteen years ago. Indeed, at the time, no little pains were expended in demonstrating that the case of that Church was altogether in another category from our own.

The Church of England is living, growing, and working, and what has been given to her by her children to help her in her mission, cannot be taken from her by anything else than mere violence and robbery. Is it possible that measures of this character can be got through the Legislature without other ancient institutions being undermined and shaken? It is noteworthy in this connection that almost half the tithes at present belonging to parochial incumbents have been bestowed or restored to the parishes, not only since the Reformation, but since the Restoration. They were given to a Church which is identical in creed, worship, and discipline with that of our own day, even down to the Act of Uniformity. And even as regards the older endowments at present in possession of the Church, it is false to say that the State diverted them from Roman Catholic purposes to those of the national faith. The endowments that were specially mediæval in date and Roman in nature—the legacies for masses, chantries, and monastic institutions—were confiscated wholesale in the sixteenth century, and hardly any part of them remains to us. What does remain is the still more ancient parochial endowments,

or rather some portion of them, assigned by landowners and others interested in the parish priest and the parish church in ante-Papal times, if we may so say. Unless property become national property simply because it was bequeathed to a religious purpose long ago, there is no more reason for asserting that the State can justly confiscate the revenues of an ancient English rectory, than that it can appropriate the funds raised five years ago to found a Bishopric of Liverpool.

It ought, we think, to open the eyes of those who hesitate about defending the Church Establishment, and it ought to embolden those who are prepared to resist the threatened revolution, when they mark what allies the Liberationists are not ashamed to invoke. When we are asked to believe that this movement is designed for the benefit of the Church as a religious organization, and that, when it has wrought the change, the Church will find herself much more strong, free, and efficient, we inquire whether this can be the reason why Mr. John Morley, a leading Agnostic, aids the Liberation Society as a member of its council; or why Mr. Frederic Harrison, the leading Comtist, does so by lecturing? Do Mr. Lyulph Stanley, Mr. Labouchere, and others of the same clique, who work with the Liberationists, desire to invigorate and extend the religious agencies of the country? We think it is time that men, personally pious and earnest, such we believe Mr. Richard to be, laid aside these unworthy allegations, with which it is indeed quite possible that they have sometimes been deceiving themselves. Disestablishment and disendowment would greatly cripple the religious work of the Church in every department; and these men might easily know, if they do not, that it would do so. What their own forefathers in the faith, Baxter, Howe, Matthew Henry, or to come down to more recent times, Angell James and Pye Smith, would have said to an alliance offensive and defensive with unbelievers, we forbear to inquire. The truth is that the whole character and attitude of Nonconformity in this country have been greatly modified in the last two generations. Formerly the Dissenters had substantial grievances, for which they sought redress. In seeking this, they had, and deserved, the help of many good patriots and loyal Churchmen. They have no grievance left at all now, except indeed that which Mr. Guinness Rogers gave utterance to a few months ago, that the mere existence of the Church Establishment wounded his conscience. This is as nearly a sample of pure envy, to use no harsher word, as could well be imagined. The modern Dissenter is too often a politician first, and sometimes acts and speaks as if he were nothing else. And it is curious that, whilst the conscientious objections of the old-fashioned Dis-

senders to Church doctrines and modes of worship have receded into the background, the hostility to the Church herself, which used to be explained wholly by these objections, has grown if anything more intense. The more unreasonable the attack on the Church, the more firmly, the more unanimously ought it to be resisted. We are not in the least afraid of the verdict of the new constituencies if Church-people will take a little trouble to enlighten the minds of the people about the facts of the case. The Liberationist movement is more imposing than solid. The Society has a revenue of £8,000 a year or thereabouts; but the bulk of it comes from a few wealthy individuals who contribute large sums. If the friends of the Church, and indeed we might say the friends of religion in the broadest sense of the word, and of morality and charity as well, exert themselves wisely and perseveringly for the next few months, we shall probably see a decline if not a collapse of the misnamed "Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Control."

T. E. ESPIN.

Short Notices.

God in Nature. By Rev. R. APPLETON, M.A., Fellow and Senior Dean of Trinity College, Cambridge. London: Church of England Sunday School Institute.

THIS little book consists of a series of lessons on Natural Theology. It is based on Psalm civ., and is intended primarily for teachers. The lessons are of the nature of outlines. They often suggest lines of thought without developing them; and to carry out the author's plan in its integrity, should be supplemented by wider study before the subject is dealt with in public. For such study a valuable list of works is given in the Preface; and constant reference is made throughout to the highest authorities, as Barry, Kingsley, Flint, on the one hand, and Mill, Darwin, Huxley, on the other. These latter are named not because the author accepts all their conclusions, but because their writings should be studied by those who would know what opinions are held by scientific men of the day. The originality of the book lies in its method and aims, rather than in its matter. It does not pretend to do more than collect in a convenient form the arguments on which Natural Theology is based. The latest results of scientific research—such at least as are established by consensus of the leading physicists—are set forth in a lucid mode devoid of technicalities, and they are shown to be, when viewed in their true perspective, not incompatible with the Bible's teaching.

As a specimen lesson we select that on the words "How manifold are Thy works, O Lord." This introduces the argument for Causation. The steps are stated by which we infer that as a clock or table has a cause to which it owes its existence, so the human mind must owe its existence to a cause of some sort. And since it is *primâ facie* improbable that