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WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO?

A QUESTION ABOUT THE
DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
EXAMINED AND ANSWERED.

BY THE

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"The thing as it is."—JOB xxvi. 23.  
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WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO ?

THERE is a subject much talked of just now, about which I wish to say a few words. That subject is the Disestablishment of the Church of England.

The subject is one of real importance, and demands the immediate attention of Churchmen. A Society has been formed for the express purpose of promoting Disestablishment, and has many active supporters. Mr. Miall, M.P. for Bradford, has brought forward, in the House of Commons, a motion for Disestablishing the Church of England, and, though defeated, had ninety-six votes on his side. In short there is, in full operation, an organized crusade against the Establishment. The campaign has begun. These are facts which every Churchman ought to know. It is folly to ignore them.

The world is fond of saying that clergymen cannot give an honest and disinterested opinion about this subject. "They are only fighting for the loaves and fishes," is the cry. Well, the world may say what it pleases: I am getting too old to care for such charges. I only care for the spread of truth, and I shall not shrink from giving my opinion, and showing "the thing as it is."

In handling the subject I shall say nothing about the justice, or wisdom, or honesty of Disestablishment, though I might say a good deal. I shall stick close to one simple question:—that question is, "*What good will it do?*"

Let us then suppose that Parliament resolves some day to Disestablish the Church of England, as it has already Disestablished the Church of Ireland. Let us suppose that an Act of Parliament is passed by which the connection between Church and State is dissolved for ever and the State takes possession, as far as it can, of the property of the Church. What would the consequences be?

The practical consequences of Disestablishment, I take it, would be something of this kind:—

(1) The Bishops would cease to be Peers of the Realm and to sit in the House of Lords.

(2) The income of the Bishops and clergy, from tithes and lands, would be appropriated by the State, and applied to other purposes, as fast as the present receivers of it died or were removed.

(3) In process of time there would be nothing left to the Church, out of all her present possessions, except the church buildings, the pew-rents, a life-interest in the income of the Bishops and clergy for a few years, and the endowments of the last two centuries. This property, on the principles of the Irish Act, would probably be left to the Church of England. Some wild and rabid Liberationists I believe, have coolly proposed that the clergy shall be stripped of their life-incomes, and turned into the streets as paupers, the very day the Disestablishing Act passes. They have also proposed that parish churches shall be taken away from Episcopalians, and applied to other uses! Whether they are to be put up to auction and sold to the highest bidder, or turned into Libraries, Museums, Mechanics' Institutes or Music Halls, I do not

et know. I decline however to notice such stuff as this. Until the House of Commons is very unlike any House which has ever been elected in this country, it will never sanction such a policy, or ignore vested interests. There is no earthly reason why the Church of England should be treated more hardly than the Church of Ireland.

After Disestablishment all churches and sects would be left on a dead level of equality. No favour or privilege would be granted by the State to one more than another. The State itself would have nothing to do with religion, and would leave the supply of it to the principles of free-trade and the action of the voluntary system. In a word, the Government of England would allow all its subjects to serve God or Baal,—to go to heaven or to hell,—just as they please. The State would take no cognizance of spiritual matters, and would look on with Epicurean indifference and unconcern. The State would continue to care for the bodies of its subjects, but it would entirely ignore their souls.

This, so far as I can make out, is the state of things which the Liberationists wish to bring about in Great Britain. This is the end and object of all their talk, and noise, and organization, and agitation. This is the delightful condition of matters which Mr. Miall and his companions want to set up in the land. This is what they mean when they talk of "Disestablishment." Let them deny it if they can.

Now let us consider quietly, what good will all this do? I will proceed step by step, and examine six broad questions one by one. I will assume that Disestablishment actually takes place. I will then ask:—

I. What good will it do to Dissenters?

- II. What good will it do to the Church ?
- III. What good will it do to the tithe-payers ?
- IV. What good will it do to the poor ?
- V.. What good will it do to the cause of Christian
charity ?
- VI. What good will it do to the State ?

I shall try to answer each of these questions in order.

I. First of all, What good will Disestablishment do to *the Dissenters*? I answer that question without the slightest hesitation. It will do them no good at all.

I take up this point first because it comes first in order. The Dissenters, as a body, are the chief agitators for Disestablishment. They evidently think that it would be greatly for their benefit, and would improve their position. I venture to think that they are totally and entirely mistaken. I will give my reasons for saying so.

Would Disestablishment *destroy* the Church of England and take the great rival of Dissenters completely out of the way? Would it leave the Dissenters a clear field, and throw the whole population into their hands? It would do nothing of the kind!—Unless the House of Commons resolves to proscribe the use of the Liturgy,—to make it penal to be an Episcopalian,—to confiscate the property of Churchmen, on the principles of French Communism,—and to imprison and shoot clergymen who work harder than others, on the principles of Sheffield rattening,—unless the House of Commons does this, the Church of England will never be killed by Disestablishment. The Dissenters would soon find that the old Church when Disestablished, was not dead, but alive.

Disestablishment would not even ruin the Church *nancially*. The pew-rents and offertories would still remain: Parliament could not take them.—The endowments of the last two centuries would still remain: Parliament, on the principles of the Irish Act, would not touch them.—The life-interests of the Bishops and clergy, on the same principles, would still remain. A judicious system of life insurance or commutation, such as certain lay churchmen in Lombard Street could soon devise, would turn those life-interests into a very large capital for investment, if safe investment could be found.—In short, though sorely crippled and impoverished, the Church of England would not be ruined. We could still get on, and could get on, though many of us might have to reduce our expenditure. The Liberationists would soon discover, after robbing and plundering us as much as they could, that we were not quite bankrupt. We should maintain our position, in spite of our poverty, and not die. Let the Dissenters remember that.

Disestablishment would not affect the influence of the Church *in great towns* in the slightest appreciable degree. The tithe-receiving clergy in rural districts would doubtless lose half their income by life insurance or commutation, and be sorely hampered. But the clergy in most large cities, who depend on pew-rents, Easter offerings, and offertories, as a body, would be quite as well off after Disestablishment as they were before. "The great towns govern the country," we are continually told. Yet in most great towns the Church would be as powerful as ever! Once more I say, let the Dissenters remember that.

Disestablishment would not make the bulk of Englishmen *forsake the Church of England* and become Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians, or Methodists. It would

not fill the chapels and empty the churches. It would not make the aristocracy, or the upper and middle classes, burn their Prayer-books, desert Oxford and Cambridge ministers, and fall in love with extempore prayer. Not a bit of it! The vast majority of Churchmen would stick to Bishops, rectors, vicars, curates, liturgical worship, and the old paths of the Church of England, closer and tighter than ever. They would make more of their poor old Church in her adversity than they ever did in her prosperity. They would love her better and open their purses more liberally, when they saw her in plain attire, than they ever did when she was clothed in purple and fine linen. In point of number of adherents I verily believe Disestablishment would soon prove a de-
loss to Dissenters, and not a gain.

Disestablishment *would not give more liberty* to Dissenters, or enable them to do anything which they cannot do now. No Christians on earth have such a plethora of civil and religious liberty as the English Nonconformists have in the present day. They have far more freedom than Churchmen! They can build chapels anywhere, preach anywhere, gather congregations anywhere, worship in any way, and serve God in any way, no man forbidding them while Churchmen are checked and stopped by laws and restrictions at every turn. What in the world could the Dissenters do more, if the Church was Disestablished to-morrow? I do not suppose they would ask leave to shoot or hang all the clergy, to "improve us off the face of the earth," to confiscate the cathedrals and parish churches, and to compel the millions of English men and women who now go to church to go to chapel, on pain of death. But, short of this, I know of nothing they cannot do now. They have free liberty to make all Englishmen Dissenters.

they can; and what more do they want? The dissolution of the union of Church and State would do dissenters no good at all.

In saying all this I would not be misunderstood. I claim the slightest feeling of ill-will towards Dissenters. I have not the least desire to interfere with them. I respect their conscientious convictions, even when I think them mistaken. I am thoroughly thankful for any good they do. I wish to let them alone, and to allow them to work and worship in their own way. I only express my own firm conviction that Disestablishment would do the Dissenters no good, but great harm. In their own interest they had better be quiet and let us alone.

II. In the second place, What good will Disestablishment *do to the Church of England*? My answer is two-fold. It will do it a little good and a great deal of harm.

The advocates of Disestablishment, I am well aware, are fond of telling us that their movement is all for our real advantage! They mean us no harm: not they! They love the Church of England, but dislike its connection with the State. The Liberationist agitators are in reality our best friends, and we ought to be exceedingly obliged to them for their disinterested labours for our benefit! Brave words these! and I heartily believe that some of those who use them mean what they say. But they utterly fail to convince me. At the risk of being told that I am only caring for "the loaves and fishes," I will give my reasons.

The good that Disestablishment would do the Church of England is very small. It would doubtless give us more liberty, and enable us to effect many useful reforms.

It would bring the laity forward into their rightful position from sheer necessity. It would give us a real and properly constituted Convocation. It would lead to an increase of Bishops, a division of dioceses, and a reconstruction of our cathedral bodies. It would make an end of Crown jobs in the choice of Bishops, and upset the whole system of patronage. It would destroy all sinecure offices, and drive all drones out of the ecclesiastical hive. It would enable us to make our worship more elastic, and our ritual better suited to the times. All these are gains unquestionably, but gains whose value must not be exaggerated.

On the other hand, the harm that Disestablishment would do to the Church of England is very great indeed. It would sorely impoverish the thousands of the rural clergy, whose income depends on tithes, and would make it ultimately necessary to diminish their number by at least one half, to consolidate half the livings, and put an end to half the services. The voluntary system in rural districts is notorious as an entire failure. It would tax the energies of a Disestablished Church most heavily to keep up an Episcopal ministry outside the towns.—It would immensely cripple the power of the Church of England to do much for the Evangelization of the heathen and the general spread of the Gospel. "Sustentation funds" would absorb three-quarters of the Church's attention; and we should find it hard enough to maintain our position, and much harder to extend our lines.—Last, but not least, Disestablishment would almost certainly lead to divisions, schisms, and possible disruption in the Episcopal body. Of course this goes for nothing with some Christians, who seem to think that divisions and schisms are very nice things, and that multiplication of sects is the nearest thing to heaven upon

th. I content myself with remarking that Jesus Christ
s, "A house divided against itself cannot stand." The
re divisions among Christians the greater the weakness,
the smaller the influence of Christianity! To promote
increase of division among English Christians is the
best way to help the Pope, the infidel, and the devil.

will not waste words on those who tell us that the
English clergy, after Disestablishment, would preach better,
write better, and speak better, and work better than
y do now, and that, like wild elephants, we should all
made tamer and more useful by starving. Anybody
make assertions like these; but assertions are worth
ning when they are contradicted by plain facts. I do
see that the American Episcopalians over the water,
have no connection with the State, are a bit better
achers and workers than the clergy of the English
ablishment. Above all, I do not see that English
nonconformist ministers, as a body, are at all superior, in
aching or working, to the clergy of the English Estab-
ed Church.

in short, the assertion of the advocates of Disestablish-
ment, that this movement would do the Church of
England good, appears to me utterly destitute of foun-
on. An ounce of facts is better than a pound of
ories. Free Churches are very fine things to talk about,
look very fine at a distance; but matters are not always
ne inside. The good that Disestablishment would do
the Church of England is comparatively small and very
ertain. The harm that it would do is very certain and
er great. The advocates of Disestablishment may say
t they please about wishing to do us good, but they
st not expect us to believe them. They had better
p that line of argument altogether. The man who

tries to Disestablish the Church of England is, in judgment, an enemy of the Church, and not a friend.

III. In the third place, what good will Disestablishment do to *the tithe-payers*? I answer that question very decidedly. It will not do them the slightest whatever.

This is a point that needs clearing up. It touches men's pockets, and therefore they feel interested about it. Moreover there is an amazing amount of ignorance in men's minds about it. I have not a doubt that many farmers and small occupiers of land in England are under the belief that if Disestablishment came they would be a great deal better off than they are now. They are secretly rejoicing in the vision of "no more Established Church, no more parsons to take rent-charge! no more tithes! much more money in our pockets!"

Now I am sorry to dispel this pleasing vision, but I am obliged to do it. Facts are stubborn things, and cannot be evaded. There is such a thing as "reckoning with your host." I recommend tithe-payers, who are generally sensible, hard-headed fellows, to look at the subject on both sides. "Wait a bit, my friends," I would say: "don't act in a hurry. Before you help to destroy the union of Church and State, consider whether the destruction will help your pockets." You think it will. I tell you it will not. Let us see.

It is a fact that for centuries nearly all land in England has been subject to the payment of tithes. For hundreds of years land has been bought and sold, let and hired, rented and farmed, at more or less annual payment according to the amount of tithe. Tithe has been a regular charge, which has been taken into account

any agreement between landlord and tenant for many generations. He that pays no tithe pays more rent, and he that pays tithe pays less rent. Every farmer of average sense knows all this perfectly well. To tell them such things, to use a homely phrase, is like telling them that three and two make four, or that there are twenty shillings in a pound. It is a simple fact, which is known from one end of England to another.

Well, if the Church of England is disestablished and endow'd, it is plain that tithe-payment will either be done away or not. The clergy of course will cease to receive the tithes. But will Parliament do away with the payment of tithes altogether? or will Parliament decree that tithes shall be paid to some other purpose than the support of the clergy? One course or another must be adopted, and in either case the tithe-payers would not gain a single farthing.

Let us suppose, on one hand, that tithes are completely abolished, and cease to be paid. At once every landlord in England would raise his rents, and on every principle of justice and equity would have a right to do so. A very bad thing it would be for the landlords, and a very pretty addition it would be to their incomes! But the tenants would gain nothing at all! What they saved in tithes they would lose in rent.

Let us suppose, on the other hand, that tithes are not abolished when Disestablishment comes, but applied to some other purpose than the support of the clergy. Well, if they are not abolished, there is an end of the whole question. Disestablishment would evidently do no good, in that case, to the pockets of tithe-payers. They would be just where they were before!

I defy any advocate of Disestablishment to show any escape from these conclusions.—Some tell us they would

apply the tithes to the payment of poor-rates and highway-rates. Where would be the good of this? At once landlords would raise their rents. Land is now let hired subject to payment of poor-rates and highway-rates and they make a regular deduction from the rent. To take off the burden of poor-rates and highway-rates, and of course the rent would be raised!—Some would-be philanthropists tell us they would apply the tithes to public objects, such as harbours of refuge, public parks for great towns, museums, lunatic asylums, and the like. Public objects, indeed! What benefit would rural tithe-payers derive from them? What would a Suffolk tithe-payer care for harbours at Filey or Dover, or parks and museums at Wolverhampton or Oldham? His tithe-money would annually go away for objects which would do him no good at all. I suspect in a few years the tithe-payers would get sick of the new system, and would wish the old system could be set up again.

Let us add to all this, that the Episcopal clergyman deprived of the tithes in a rural parish, would of course cease to pay any rates, except for his house and garden. At present the clergyman is often the largest rate-payer in the parish. In future what he used to pay must be made up by the other rate-payers.—Let us remember besides that without the tithes the rural clergyman would in many cases be obliged to curtail his expenses, and to spend much less in the parish than he does now. In either case the tithe-payers would suffer, and the parish would lose more than it gained by Disestablishment. There is an old fable which tells of a man killing his goose for the sake of the golden eggs she laid. Of course he found that he never got another egg! I often think of that fable when I hear of rural tithe-payers clamouring for Disestablishment. In any rate it would do *them* no good.

V. In the fourth place, what good would Disestablishment do *to the poor*? I answer that inquiry without hesitation. It would not only do them no good, but would do them great harm.

This is a very serious question. "The poor shall never be cast out of the land." To "remember the poor" is a plain command of Scripture. All changes, whether political or ecclesiastical, which tend to injure the poor, are, on the very face of them, objectionable. This is the heaviest objection I bring against the whole Disestablishment movement. It would inflict grievous damage, both temporal and spiritual, on the agricultural poor, the very poor of all classes in England deserve most consideration. Disestablishment would injure the poor *temporally*. I challenge any man to deny that in thousands of rural parishes throughout England the clergyman is the means of doing an immense amount of temporal good to the poor. Where is the well-ordered parish in which the clergyman's house is not the mainspring of a large machinery of charity to men's bodies?—Who does not know that it is the clergyman who in every well-ordered parish is naturally expected to take the lead about clothing-clubs, shoe-clubs, boot-clubs, coal-clubs, soup-clubs, blanket-clubs, and a hundred other means of helping the poor?—Who does not know that in every well-ordered parish the clergyman is ready to be the unpaid friend of every one who needs a friend, whether in the way of money, or advice, or sympathy,—and the friend of poor dissenters as well as of poor church-goers?—I defy any one to deny this. The quantity of temporal good which the agricultural poor receive from the clergy at present, is something, I suspect, which dwellers in towns, and Liberationist orators on the stage, have not the slightest idea. It is good which

is done quietly, and unostentatiously, without parade blowing of trumpets. But it IS done; and the last day alone will declare the full extent of it.

Well, there will be an end of a great deal of this Disestablishment comes. Stripped of more than half his professional income, reduced to be the minister of ten Episcopalians alone in his parish, the rural clergyman would of course cease to do what he once did for the poor. In most cases he would not be able to do much, if he had the will. He must rigidly confine himself to the members of his own congregation. If any man thinks this would be a nice change, and an advantage to the rural parish, I beg leave to differ from him entirely. The destruction of the Establishment would inflict immense temporal damage on the poor.

Disestablishment would do great *spiritual harm* to the poor. Stripped of a large part of her present endowments, the Church of England would be able to do far less than she now does for the extension of Christ's kingdom, whether at home or abroad. Aggressive measures for the evangelization of mining and manufacturing populations, the building of new churches and schools, the formation of new districts in poor neighbourhoods,—all these things would either be entirely stopped or greatly curtailed. With a rural clergy deprived of more than half their income, with town congregations obliged to give liberally to support the Church in the country, the Church's power of doing good to souls would be painfully lessened and diminished. To sustain her without extending, to keep her alive without increasing, to live without much growth would require the utmost exertions of her children. No one would suffer so much from this state of things as the poor.

The plain truth is, that the voluntary system, on which

great measure the Church would be thrown, after Disestablishment, is a total and entire failure. Dr. Parker, eminent Nonconformist minister, calls it "a miserable failure." It is a failure in the United States of America, in spite of all the wealth and energy of the Americans. There are myriads of poor in New York and in the backwoods who are just like sheep without a shepherd.—It is a failure in England among the Nonconformists at this day. With all their many privileges and advantages, they can neither pay their ministers sufficiently in rural districts, nor provide sufficient chapels for poor neighbourhoods. Above all they cannot provide day-schools for their own poor children, and are obliged to confess it! At the eleventh hour they have supported an "Education Act," which requires schools to be built by a compulsory rate, and by doing so they have practically admitted that the voluntary system has thoroughly broken down.

I cannot get over facts like these. I advise every poor man in England who is urged to sign a petition for Disestablishment, to think twice before he signs, and to ask "What good will it do to the poor?" Disestablish the Church of England, and the very first to suffer from it would be the poor. In the interests of the poor, if there were no other reasons, I see no good, but immense evil in Disestablishment.

7. In the fifth place, what good would Disestablishment do to the *cause of peace and charity*? I shall answer that question very decidedly. It would do **no** good at all.

The quantity of stuff, and nonsense, and silly romantic rubbish, which is talked on this point, is very curious. There are many innocent-minded people, I believe, both

Churchmen and Dissenters, who really think that, if the union of Church and State were dissolved, English Christians would get on far more happily and comfortably than they do now. There would be no more jealousies, envyings, or rivalries, or wranglings, or squabbings, quarrelling, or party spirit! Ephraim would no longer vex Judah, nor Judah Ephraim! The whole Christian body in Great Britain would become a great Evangelical alliance and happy family! Baptists, and Independents, and Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, would fraternize lovingly and exchange pulpits! Mr. Spurgeon would preach in St. Paul's, and the Bishop of London in the Metropolitan Tabernacle! Such are the visions with which many worthy Christian laymen amuse themselves, and even laymen who do not approve of Disestablishment. They regard it as a painful operation, like drawing a tooth, and they are very sorry it should ever be performed. But the operation once over, and the tooth once out, they really believe we shall all be much happier and better friends for it. Like little children after a quarrel, we should just "kiss and be friends."

Now I believe nothing whatever of the kind. I am for unity, wherever it can be obtained, and I would willingly make large sacrifices in order to obtain it. I think the present divided state of English Christianity a disgrace to religion. I disclaim the slightest sympathy with those who think that you cannot have too many sects and denominations, and that it does not matter at all where you worship or what you hear preached. I want to see more unity, and I should like to see more uniformity. But, for all this, I have not the slightest faith in unity being promoted by force and plunder and spoliation: levelling down. Charity and peace among Christi-

It never be brought about by violence. Peace between Episcopalians and Dissenters is about the last thing which will result from Disestablishment. It will make a breach that will never be built up.

Let us just take a practical common-sense view of the matter in hand. Let us suppose that Mr. Miall and his companions, by the aid of the English Dissenters, succeed in carrying out the Disestablishment of the Church of England. Let us suppose that some reckless House of Commons, and some popularity-hunting Prime Minister, give way at length to Mr. Miall's importunity, and pass a Disestablishing Act for the Church of England, like that which was passed for the Church of Ireland. Such an event could only take place, I believe, after years of unrelentless strife and agitation, and after hundreds of bloody conflicts between Churchmen and chapel-goers all over the land. Will any man in his sober senses tell us that this miserable long-drawn strife would promote unity? Would it not rather leave behind it festering sores that would never be healed? Of course it would! It would make unity between English Episcopalians and their adversaries an impossibility for several generations. The costly China plate would be broken. It might perhaps be riveted, but it could never be mended again. But this is not all. Suppose that the Disestablishing Act tends to deprive the rural clergy, who depend on tithes, of half their incomes, as it certainly would. Suppose that thousands of quiet country rectors and vicars are suddenly obliged to reduce their expenditure, to alter their style of living, to take away their boys from good schools, to give their girls an inferior education, and to sacrifice a great many comforts; and all this in consequence of the attacks of Mr. Miall and the Dissenters.

Suppose all this to take place. Will any man pretend to say that there could possibly be much harmony and friendly feeling between Churchmen and chapel-goers in such a condition of things? It is absurd to expect that. For centuries there would be a gulf between Episcopalians and non-Episcopalians in England, which nothing would fill up. Disestablishment would be the grave of unity.

“It ought not to be so,”—some innocent-minded man may say.—“The union of Church and State is not essential to Christianity. Men may surely differ about it and keep friends. When the battle is over, why not forgive and forget?”—What OUGHT to be, is a vague phrase, which I will not stop to discuss. What WOULD be, is another question, and from my observation of human nature I have a very decided opinion about it. Believers who hold different views on non-essential points in religion can get on very comfortably so long as they are tolerant, and do not assault each other, and tread on one another’s toes. But at the first moment A begins to say to B, “I shall try to half-reduce your Church, and to get half your income taken away from it is nonsense to expect any more friendship between A and B!—The Bible commands us to “forgive our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for those that despitefully use us.” But the Bible nowhere says that we are to regard our enemies as beloved brothers and friends. The Bible says, “If any man take thy coat, let him take thy cloak also.” But the Bible nowhere says that we are to regard the man who has violently taken our coats and cloaks as an honest man, and to shake hands with him as a dear friend.

For my own part, I can truly say that for thirty years I have laboured hard to promote unity and good feeling between Churchmen and Nonconformists. I have g

far in this direction that I have often been blamed, vilified, and slandered by my brother Churchmen, as half Dissenter. I have gone on steadily nevertheless, and have always said that Dissenters deserve much kindness and consideration, because the Church's neglect has made them what they are. But if Dissenters will not let the Church alone, and will not rest till they have destroyed the Establishment, I give up all hopes of unity. You cannot get on comfortably with men who have deliberately given to upset your Church, and to take away half your income!—Co-operation in future would be almost impossible. The Bible Society and the London City Mission would suffer heavily. From the day that the Church of England is disestablished there will be an end of much unity between Episcopalians and their dissenting adversaries. There is little enough now, and after Disestablishment there will be much less. It is my deliberate judgment that those who labour to destroy the union of Church and State in England, under the vain idea of putting all Churches and sects on a dead level, are making unity and good feeling between Church and chapel impossible for two hundred years.

VI. In the last place what good would Disestablishment do *to the State*. My answer is short and decided. It could do it no good, but very great harm.

This question is far too wide and complicated to be fully discussed in a tract. But I shall try to throw a little light on it. If I can only show that the dissolution of the union of Church and State involves far more serious consequences than most of its advocates dream of, I shall be content. Such clap-trap phrases as "non-interference with spiritual matters,"—"unsectarian legislation,"

—“allowing no special privilege to any denomination,” “adopting the principles of free trade in religion,” “leaving all Churches and sects to themselves,”—“taking no cognizance of any but secular matters,”—all these are fine high-sounding expressions, and look very pretty in theory. But the moment you begin to work them out in practice, you find grave objections rising up in your way, objections that cannot be got over.

To begin with, Scripture teaches plainly that God rules everything in this world, that He deals with nations as they deal with Him, that national prosperity and national decline are ordered by Him, that wars, pestilences and famines are part of His providential government of the world, and that without His blessing no nation can prosper. Now do we believe all this or not? If we do believe it is simply absurd to say that Governments have nothing to do with religion, and that they may safely ignore God. That often quoted text, “My kingdom is not of this world,” has nothing whatever to do with the matter in hand. When our Lord spoke these words He simply meant to tell Pilate that His kingdom was not a secular kingdom, like the Roman Emperor’s, and that it was not maintained or propagated, like the kingdoms of this world, by the sword. But, to say that our Lord meant that “Governments were never to support or countenance religion,” is a preposterous and unwarrantable interpretation of Scripture. Whether men like to see it or not, I believe it is the first duty of a State to honour and recognize God. The government that refuses to do this, in order to save itself trouble and to avoid favouring one Church more than another, may think it is doing a very “smart” and politic thing. But we believe its line of procedure is offensive to the Most High God, and eminently calculated to draw down His displeasure.

Again, reason itself points out that the moral standard of a nation's subjects, is the grand secret of its prosperity. Gold mines, and manufactures, and scientific discoveries, and eloquent speeches, and commercial activity, and democratic institutions, are not enough to make or to keep nations great. Tyre, and Sidon, and Carthage, and Athens, and Rome, and Venice, and Spain, and Portugal, had plenty of such possessions as these, and yet fell into decay. The secrets of a nation's strength are, truthfulness, honesty, simplicity, purity, temperance, economy, diligence, brotherly kindness, charity among its inhabitants. Let those deny this who dare.—And will any man say that there is any other way of producing these characteristics in a people than by encouraging, and fostering, and spreading, and teaching pure Scriptural Christianity? The man who says there is must be an infidel.—Then, if these things are so, the first duty of a State ought to be to encourage and countenance religion among its subjects in every possible way. Does a State want its subjects to be provident, truthful, diligent, temperate, honest, moral, and charitable? Does it or does it not? If it does it ought to support religion. To punish vice and yet not cherish virtue,—to spend public money on building jails and yet not encourage churches, is, to say the least, an absurdly inconsistent policy. The more true religion the better subjects! The more good subjects the more prosperity! The government which ignores religion, and coolly declares that it does not care whether its subjects are Christians or not, is guilty of an act of suicidal folly. Irreligion, even in a temporal point of view, is the worst enemy of a nation.

Once more, the practical consequences which logically result from carrying out the principle of Disestablishment, are so monstrous and appalling, that one can hardly believe

that people who clamour for disconnecting Church and State, have ever fully considered them. Let us look them. Grant that the Church is Disestablished, and that the English Government resolves to have nothing more to do with religion, and to leave it to the voluntary system. In order to carry out this principle consistently, the Succession Acts must then be repealed, and our Sovereign might be Papists! Our Kings and Queens, if we had any more, would be crowned without any religious service. Our Parliaments would carry on their proceedings without prayer. Our regiments and men of war would no longer have chaplains. Our prisons and workhouses would have no chaplains. Even the religious observance of Sunday would be in danger.—“Nonsense!” some may say. “Of course we do not want such a state of things. We only want to dissolve the union between the State and the Church of England.” People may cry “Nonsense,” if they like, but they will never prove that the state of things we have just described will not be the logical consequence of Disestablishment, if followed out to its legitimate conclusions. After Disestablishment, the State, if it acts consistently, must either leave the souls of soldiers, sailors, prison and workhouse inmates entirely alone, or else must get over the difficulty by putting up chaplaincies on public tender, and jobbing them out to the lowest bidder, whether he be Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Congregationalist, Socinian, or Papist! There is no other course open to us. If the rulers of the State, after Disestablishment, appoint any particular chaplains to ships, regiments, workhouses, and jails, they are at once open to the charge of showing favour to one denomination more than another. Of course Mr. Miall and his companions will not let the State do this!

The example of the United States and the Colonies is the slightest reply to what I am saying. The Americans do not entirely separate religion and the State. The American Congress, no doubt, has a chaplain, and is opened with prayer. The army and navy, the prisons and reformatories of America have chaplains, I have no doubt. At even then I can find no guarantee that these chaplains may not be Socinians or Papists!—And after all, the case of America only shows that our shrewd cousins, unlike Mr. Miall, see the utter uselessness of trying to carry out the principles of the Liberationist Society to their logical results. In practice even a new country like America, not fettered by old precedents, finds it impossible entirely to ignore God. I cannot quite persuade myself that what Americans find impossible will ever be attempted in England. When Mr. Miall and his party have upset the union of Church and State, they will have to connive at some inconsistencies!

What may be before us no man can tell. But in an age like our own,—an age of restlessness,—an age of liberality, falsely so called,—an age of popularity hunting,—an age of sensationalism and surprises,—an age of idolatry of the mob,—an age of contempt for old things, merely because they are old,—an age of spasmodic feverish zeal for new things, merely because they are new,—an age of change for the sake of change,—an age of laziness and apathy among the defenders of the old things, and of earnestness and perseverance among the advocates of the new,—in such an age I shall never be surprised if Disestablishment comes. When it does come, I believe it will inflict such an amount of damage on the State, as the mind of man can hardly conceive. I declare I had far rather see the Episcopal Establishment upset, and the Baptists or Inde-

pendents made the Established Church of England, than see the State ceasing to recognize God. I had far rather see our next Sovereign crowned in Westminster Abbey by Mr. Spurgeon, or Mr. Binney, or Dr. Cumming, with extempore prayer, and the Archbishop of Canterbury standing as a private individual in the crowd, than see our Government turning its back on Christianity altogether.

When I read English history, I see plainly that the real greatness of this country dates from the Protestant Reformation. I see that it was under Sovereigns who ordered the Bible to be translated and circulated—a King and under Parliaments which ratified the Thirty-nine Articles and took great practical interest in religion, that our nation took its first great start in its career of freedom, wealth, and power. I see that the influence of England was seldom more felt in Europe than it was in the days of Oliver Cromwell, when that great though misguided man threw the shield of England over persecuted Protestants in Savoy, and even awed the Pope by interfering in religious matters. Seeing all this, I will never believe that Disestablishment would do no harm to the State. On the contrary, I believe it would bring down God's heavy judgments on this realm. The Act of Parliament which dissolved Church and State would do great damage to the Church; but it would be as nothing compared to the injury it would ultimately inflict on the State.

In what manner God would punish England, if English Governments cast off all connection with religion, I cannot tell. Whether He would punish us by some sudden blow such as defeat in war, and the occupation of our territory by a foreign power,—whether He would waste us away gradually and slowly by placing a worm at the roots of our commercial prosperity,—whether He would bre-

to pieces by letting fools rule over us and allowing Parliaments to obey them, and permitting us like the Medianites to destroy one another,—whether He would punish us by sending a dearth of wise Statesmen in the lower ranks, and giving the reins of power to communists, socialists, and mob-leaders,—all these are points which I have no prophetic eye to see, and I do not pretend to determine. God's sorest judgments, the ancients said, "are like mill-stones,—they grind very slowly but they grind very fine."—The thing that I fear most for my country is gradual, insensible dry-rot and decay. But of one thing I am very sure,—the State that begins sowing the seed of national neglect of God, will sooner or later reap a harvest of national disaster and national ruin. If Disestablishment comes, it will do no hurt to the true Church of Christ, the body of real believers: that is beyond the power of man to harm. It will do little comparative injury to the visible Episcopal Church of England: though impoverished and crippled in many ways she will still live and not die. But it will do boundless harm to the State, and in the end will prove the ruin of our greatness.

I have now answered the question which heads this tract to the best of my ability. I have done it honestly and conscientiously, and have carefully avoided any exaggeration. It only remains for me to wind up the whole subject by a few words of friendly advice to the various classes into whose hands this tract may fall.

(1) Some of my readers may perhaps be men *who make no profession whatever in religion*, and care neither for church nor chapel. I fear there are many such men in the land, and I suppose there always will be. Pilate, who

asked sneeringly, "What is truth?" Gallio who thought Christianity was only a "matter of words and names" Festus who thought it a "superstition concerning Jesus,"—all these have never wanted successors. Men of this sort, of course, do not care a jot whether the Church of England is disestablished or not.—"It is all the same to them. Religion is not a thing in their way."—Yet even these men I offer a word of counsel.

Are you quite sure that it would be a good thing to have less religion in England than there is now? Of course if the Church is disestablished and impoverished there will be less. Now are you quite sure you will like this? Do you wish your wife, your children, your servants, your clerks, your tenants, your labourers, your partners in business, to have less religion and to become more godless than they are now? I should like that question to be answered.

If you do not wish this state of things to arise, I advise you to think twice before you allow the English Church Establishment to be destroyed, and the tithes and lands to be taken away. Say what men please, this must have the effect of weakening the Church, lessening the number of her clergy, and reducing the whole quantity of religion in the country to a lower level. A tree once felled and cut down can never be put up again, and its shade and beauty may be regretted in vain. If you stand by and look on with folded arms, careless and unconcerned, while men are sawing in two the connection of Church and State, you may live to find out too late that you committed a fatal mistake.

(2) Some of my readers may be *zealous Churchmen* who really believe it would be a good thing if the Church was disestablished. There are many men of this class in England, some very "high," and some very "low" in opinion

to are continually building castles in the air about the "Church of the future." They have pleasing visions of a free, rich, and powerful Church, no longer fettered by connection with the State, guided by perfect Bishops, no longer interfered with by naughty Parliaments and wicked Courts of Law, possessing perfect unity, and able to do a hundred things which it cannot do now. To these amiable and well-meaning enthusiasts I offer a word of counsel. I will ask them to remember two old proverbs. One says, "All is not gold that glitters." The other says, "Look before you leap." A free Church is a fine thing to talk about; but it is not always so free as it appears. There are other chains, and screw-presses, beside those of Parliament and the Royal supremacy. The frogs in the fable found fault with "King Log," because he lay still like a huge inert mass, and did nothing at all. But they soon found that "King Stork" was much worse.—Appeals to Courts of Law will not be prevented by Disestablishment. So long as there are rights and wrongs, and questions of place and salary, so long the English Courts of Law will be open to Episcopalians who want redress.—A diminution of ministerial company Disestablishment in rural parishes, to the great damage of the Church's power. Let no Churchman dream that there will ever be Disestablishment without disendowment.—Last, but not least, unity will not be obtained by dissolving the connection of Church and State. There will be divisions of opinion among English Episcopalians after Disestablishment, and perhaps far more serious ones than there ever were before. Look at the American Episcopalian Church across the Atlantic. They have no connection with the State. But they have not attained perfect unity.

In short, I advise my zealous brethren in the Church of England, who are hungering and thirsting for Disestablishment, to be content with such things as they have, to live well alone, and to do nothing rashly. It is not a friend but an enemy, who is whispering to them, "Break off the union of Church and State,—cast thyself down." Let them ask the wisest Episcopalians in the United States and the Colonies whether THEY advise Disestablishment, and think it desirable! Let them beware, lest they learn too late, by painful experience, the wisdom contained in the famous epitaph—"I was well: I would be better: I took physic, and here I am." I always think of that epitaph when I hear of an English Churchman expressing a wish for Disestablishment.

(3) Some of my readers perhaps are *honest Dissenters* who have been told by the itinerant advocates of the Liberationist Society, that it is a Christian duty to endeavour to disestablish the Church of England. Their ears have been filled with monstrous stories about the Church until they regard her as a huge public nuisance which ought to be swept away. To them also I tender a few words of friendly advice.

I may fairly ask to be heard by Dissenters. I am, and always have been, what is called a "low Churchman." I have never in my life interfered with Dissenters, or turned a cold shoulder upon them. I have long supported the Bible Society and City Mission, and have spoken by the side of Dissenting ministers on their platforms. I have never refused to acknowledge non-episcopal services. I have never denied that Dissenters have done and are doing much good to souls. I have never vilified them or denounced them as schismatics. To none of these things will I plead guilty. When therefore I offer a word

vice to Dissenters, I may ask to be patiently heard. I advise them, for one thing, to use their own good sense, and not to believe all the gross misstatements that the Liberationists are continually making about the Church of England. It is utterly untrue that Disestablishment would enable the State to save twenty-six millions annual taxes. The whole endowments of the Church are not five millions a year!—It is utterly untrue that the Bishops are rolling in wealth, and the Clergy are overpaid. The Bishops have so many demands on their purses that they can hardly make both ends meet, and the clergy, if they were divided, have not three hundred a year a piece! It is utterly untrue that the Clergy are paid by the State, that the people are taxed to pay the Clergy: the State never gave the Church any tithes or lands at all!—It is utterly untrue that the Bishops and Clergy are “State-made persons,” seeing that the State cannot ordain any minister, and the Crown can only nominate as Bishops, men who are already ordained.—It is utterly untrue that the Church prayers are “State-made prayers,” seeing that the Prayer-book was compiled by our Protestant Reformers. It is utterly untrue that the Prayer-book is a mere Bishopish book, considering that the greater part of it is pure Scripture.—All these things are ridiculous untruths, which it is a shame for any man to circulate, and a discredit to any man to believe. May I not ask honest Dissenters, when they hear statements such as these, to exercise their own good sense, and to put the simple question, “Is this really true?” A cause which can only be built on a foundation of gross misstatements, is a very unsatisfactory cause to support. A readiness to believe falsehoods is not a nice character! If there is anything God hates, it is falsehood. “Thou shalt not

bear false witness," is a commandment not yet repea

For another thing, I advise all honest Dissenters to their own common sense, and to make a proper distinct between a system and the faults of those who work a syst. No doubt many clergymen are worldly, careless, unconverted men. No doubt the endowments of the Established Church are not always well employed. No doubt so many clergymen are half-sceptics and some are half-Papists. No doubt some rural parishes are sadly neglected. But this does not prove that the principle of an Established Church is wrong. This state of things will not be cured by dissolving the union of Church and State. Are Dissenting ministers converted men? Do no Dissenting ministers ever spend their incomes badly? Are all Dissenting ministers entirely sound in the faith, and free from any erroneous doctrine? These are unpleasant questions and I have no wish to press them. But there is an old proverb which says, "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones." The abuse of a thing is no argument against the use of it. The occasional inconsistency, unsoundness of clergymen, in so large a Church as the Established Church of England, supplies no proof that the principle of an Establishment is wrong and unsound.

I advise honest Dissenters, for another thing, to remember the broad fact that many of their forefathers and predecessors, among Nonconformists, were strongly in favour of an Established Church, and never admitted the principle that Governments should ignore God, and have nothing to do with religion. Owen, and Baxter, and Flavel, and Howe, and Matthew Henry, were men of whom Nonconformists are justly proud. They were men whose names would do honour to the rolls of any Christian Church. Yet every one of these good men was strongly

our of the connection between Church and State. No one loved religious liberty more. None contended more earnestly against the narrow-minded requirements of Churchmen in their day, and made more sacrifices for nonconformity than these good men. Yet none of them dreamed of maintaining that the connection of Church and State was "an adulterous connection," or that Governments had nothing to do with religion. Alas, we may well say, "How is the fine gold become dim!" I firmly believe that if Owen, Baxter, Howe, Flavel, and Matthew Henry could rise from their graves this day, they would be among the foremost opponents of the Liberationist Society.

Ask honest Dissenters, in the last place, to consider not so much what one single grievance they labour under now, but what disability, what hardship, what disadvantage,—which would be removed by Disestablishment. Let them name one if they can. I declare I cannot put my finger on one. They may possibly complain that Nonconformist ministers are not made so much of as Church ministers, and do not occupy so high a *social* position. Well, if that really is a grievance, I defy them to show how Disestablishment would remove it. The plain truth is, that until Dissenters can persuade the great bulk of the English people to give up Episcopacy and the Liturgy, and to become Baptists, Independents, Presbyterians, or Methodists,—until they do this, I say, they will never prevent the bulk of the English people making much of their own ministers, and giving them a *social* precedence. The alleged grievance has nothing to do with the connection of Church and State, and Disestablishment would certainly not take it away. Why then cannot Dissenters keep quiet, and let the Church alone?

(4) And now, last of all, this tract may perhaps be

read by *some honest Churchmen* who are content with the present relations of Church and State, and have wish to see them changed. To them also I shall offer word of advice, and I earnestly hope it may not be thrown away.

For one thing we must awake to a sense of the danger in which we stand just now, and must work hard to oppose our enemies. There is no safety in apathy. If others combine, we must combine. If others agitate, we must boldly resist the agitation. If others assert falsehood, we must assert truth. If others flood the country with cheap tracts and leaflets attacking the Church, we must meet the attack by a counter-flood of cheap literature for the Church's defence. "Defence not defiance" must be our motto. Controversies and conflicts with other professing Christians are odious things. But the conduct of the Liberationists leaves us no alternative. If they will not let us alone, we must fight.

We have nothing whatever to fear for the connection of Church and State, if Churchmen will only awake, arise, and do their duty. Twenty thousand clergymen and ten million laymen are a force which Mr. Miall and his companions ought never to overthrow. But we must combine, organize, work, write, speak, and spread information; and above all, we must not go to sleep. The Churchman who folds his arms in our camp, and says, "Peace, peace, anything for a quiet life: let things take their course" may be a very nice amiable Churchman, but he is not a true friend to the Church of England. I declare I dread the laziness of Churchmen more than the whole attack of the Liberation Society.

For another thing, if we would prevent Disestablishment, we must spare no pains to reform the Church of England.

We need reform: there is no mistake about that. Our unreformed abuses are the worst foes of the union of Church and State. Our large undivided dioceses, our useless cathedrals, our anomalous and ill-constituted convocation, our want of elasticity in liturgical worship, our stiff adherence to old-fashioned modes of evangelization, our helpless inability to arrange systematic cooperation of clergy and laity, our barbarous ecclesiastical courts, —all these, and not a few more, are weak points in our line of defence, which skilful enemies are not slow to detect. They are points in which reform would not be difficult, if the matter was not trifled with, but heartily and earnestly taken up. Oh, that God would raise up among us some powerful, wise, energetic Church reformer! Church reform is one of the best bulwarks against Church Disestablishment.

We all know what is done on board a man-of-war when an enemy is in sight, and an action is about to begin. The decks are cleared; the lumber is thrown overboard; every man is sent to his quarters; useless passengers and non-combatants are put under hatches or consigned to the hold. It is high time to do the same with the Church of England, if the struggle for Disestablishment is at hand. It is nonsense to ignore the weak points in our system. We *have* weak points, and they are part of the strength of our adversaries. Let us strive to get rid of them without delay. Let us resolutely and energetically take up the subject of Church Reform.

I leave the whole subject now with feelings of sorrow. It grieves me to think that English Protestant Christians should be on the point of wasting time, and energy, and strength, and talents in such a miserable, unprofitable controversy as this about Disestablishment! If ever there was a time

when British Christians should cease from controve and unite as one man, in order to resist the rising fl of Popery and infidelity, that time is now. Yet thi the very time when Mr. Miall and the Liberationist b choose to stir up strife all over England, for the n useless and unprofitable cause in the world,—a cause which their success will do good to nobody, and do ha to many. Well! be it so. The Liberationists are sow the wind, and they must reap the whirlwind. They the first to begin the miserable strife, and the blam all the wretched consequences must lie at their door. when I think of the ill-feeling they are stirring up, angry passions that will be called forth, the hard w that will be spoken, the divisions that will be made ever in parishes, the sin that will be caused, the g that will be for ever stopped, and the harm that wil for ever done,—when I think of all this, I cannot b saying with a wise old Statesman, “*Why cannot you things alone?*”

P.S.—Since the day when I began to write this paper, son the points which I have handled have received such remark illustration from public events, that I think it a plain dut invite attention to them. I need hardly say, when I spea “public events,” that I refer to the recent illness of the Prin Wales, and to the nature and amount of national feeling w that illness has called forth. I cannot lay down my pen wit saying a few words about the subject.

It is notorious that there are men in England,—men of large minds, of highly-trained intellects, of great attainments in science, able writers, powerful speakers,—who do not scruple to make light of “national religion,” and the superintending providence of God. These men almost scoff at the idea of God ordering and managing public events, of God hearing prayer and removing evils in answer to prayer, of the usefulness of a nation humbling itself before God, and uniting in prayer and intercession. I say it is notorious that there are not a few Englishmen who hold such views as these. They do not flatly deny the existence of God; but they place what they call the “laws of nature” above God. No one can read with attention the daily and weekly newspapers, and the monthly periodicals, and fail to see that there are among us many clever men of this kind, men who are gradually sowing mischief over all the land.

Now I ask the readers of these pages to observe the remarkable light which the illness of the Prince of Wales has thrown on the true value of the views I have just described. Let them notice the following facts.

(1) It is a striking fact that, during the ten painful days of suspense, when the Prince’s life was in imminent danger, the men who deny God’s providence and the usefulness of intercessory prayer, were almost entirely silent! You could hardly take up a daily paper, without finding something about “heaven,” “God,” “Providence,” “a nation’s prayers,” “a people’s petitions,” and the like. There was a conspicuous absence of the least attempt to deny that there was a God in heaven who could do more for the Prince than Dr. Gull or Dr. Jenner! No one dared to tell us that God could not interfere with the “laws of nature,” and that it was useless to pray for the Prince’s recovery! Let this fact not be forgotten.

(2) It is another striking fact, that the views of these unhappy men who sneer at God’s providence, and deny the usefulness of prayer, turned out, during the Prince’s greatest danger, to be utterly unacceptable to the great bulk of the English people. Every one seemed glad when the Archbishop of Canterbury sent forth a form of prayer and intercession for the Prince’s recovery.

Telegraphic wires flashed that prayer, like lightning, from one end of the realm to the other, and no one dared to say that the wires were wrongly employed. Churchmen and Dissenters, for once, were of one mind, and the Prince was prayed for in chapels as well as in churches. The great heart of the nation was stirred to the very bottom, and gave "no uncertain sound," either about God's providence or the value of prayer. In short, there arose from the earth in a week an enormous mass of Christian evidence. It became clear as daylight, that however much Englishmen may admire clever sceptical writers in the day of ease and prosperity in the day of real affliction they find them "miserable comforters." They are obliged THEN to confess their belief in a God of providence, and a God who hears prayer.

(3) Last, but not least, it is a striking fact that even in foreign countries the attitude of the public mind in England, during the Prince's illness, excited much attention. No one dared to despise the nation for exhibiting such belief in God's providence and the efficacy of intercessory prayer. On the contrary, there were not wanting proofs that Frenchmen would be glad to see as much national faith among themselves! The following article, translated from the French newspaper *La France*, and copied into the *Times* of Monday, December 18th, deserves attentive perusal, and speak for itself:—

"*La France* says:—

"Political life is suspended in England. One sole anxiety absorbs all minds—the health of the Prince of Wales. An entire nation, which is still impressed with strong convictions, turns to God and partakes of the grief which afflicts its Sovereign, whose son is, perhaps, about to die. And yet the Prince of Wales appeared to be far from popular. He possessed neither the qualities nor the defects which old Albion admires or tolerates, and the English people were sometimes disinclined to regard in him the nominal master of their destinies, the future guardian of the Charter which is the basis of their liberties. But when death was threatening him the whole of Great Britain was at once excited. In its patriotic loyalty all errors and mistakes were forgotten, and nothing was remembered but the danger which threatened the Heir to the Crown. What a spectacle and what a lesson! The

Prince of Wales is dying, and yet upon the other side of the channel no one laughs, no one insults the high-placed personage cruck down by sickness. The Princess of Wales quits the bedside of the dying man, not to seek necessary repose, but to hasten to the church to pray and to listen to prayers—and no one laughs. The Queen, whom calumny sought to wound but the other day, kneels with her veil of widowhood beside the probable death-bed of her first-born—and no one laughs. The Council—Messrs. Russell, Gladstone, Forster, the Lord President and Lord Chancellor, whom England holds in highest esteem for talent, or position, or age, which is also a dignity—address themselves to the Archbishop of Canterbury and call upon him to prepare ‘new forms of prayer to appeal to the Almighty on behalf of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.’ And the people, instead of laughing at this, rush to obtain copies of these prayers, and recite them in their places of worship. Lutherans, Calvinists, Methodists, Anglicans, Catholics, Jews, all implore the Deity to prolong the days of the future Sovereign of England. This people has the courage, the good sense, not to disown either its history, its past, its Government, or its God, and yet it is a free people among all—who will dispute that? Such a spectacle affects us greatly, and we look around us with bitterness. In vain, alas! we look for one of these powerful bonds of union upon which we might rely in a moment of trial, and which might unite a nation in a common sentiment. We have no greater faith in men than we have in God. There is disunion even in our churches. And yet we are always talking of our unity, and declaring that we are the envy of other nations on that account. Is not this one of our self-complacent illusions? Switzerland, the United States, and England, those three countries where the dignity of man is well understood, retain respect for the governing principle; they accept public prayer and humble themselves; we in our disasters and misfortunes could think of nothing but mutual recrimination, and blush to address a prayer to God. Is that an advance? We may be allowed to doubt it. Faith has never derogated from man’s dignity, it has never rendered him less desirous of liberty. Who would dare to say that England had abased itself because it partakes of the grief which afflicts the family that governs it, because it obeys its natural chiefs who direct it to pray, as it would obey them

if they called upon it to fight and to sacrifice itself for the preservation of its old liberties? Since we are talking so much at present about reforming ourselves, let us begin by learning the affectionate respect for authority of which England is at this moment affording us so striking an example. And if the British Monarchy should appear to our Republican intolerance a bad model, let us look towards the American Republic. All who have visited the United States can affirm that the expression of sympathy with the rulers, a belief in God, and even the outward practice of religion are not incompatible with Republican virtues. At New York and at New Orleans prayers were offered up for President Lincoln, as to-day prayers are offered up throughout the three kingdoms for the Prince of Wales. When shall we learn how to pray, all together, for any one?"

In the face of such facts as these, I cannot help hoping that an English Parliament will ever be found so misguided as to vote for the Disestablishment of the Church of England, and the dissolution of the union of Church and State. When the Government of this great Empire ceases to recognize God and ignores religion I shall begin to despair of my country. The country which returns to Parliament a majority of members who wish the State to have *nothing* to do with God and religion, must be a country given over to judicial blindness. From such a blindness, good Lord deliver us! The illness of the Prince of Wales, I firmly believe has done great things for the maintenance of Monarchical Institutions among us. I trust it may also help to remind Englishmen that it is not a bad thing to have an Established Church.

Stradbroke Vicarage,

20th December, 1871.

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