



THE

Endowments and Establishment

OF THE

Church of England.

AN ADDRESS,

*DELIVERED AT BLACKMOOR, on Monday,
January 11, 1886,*

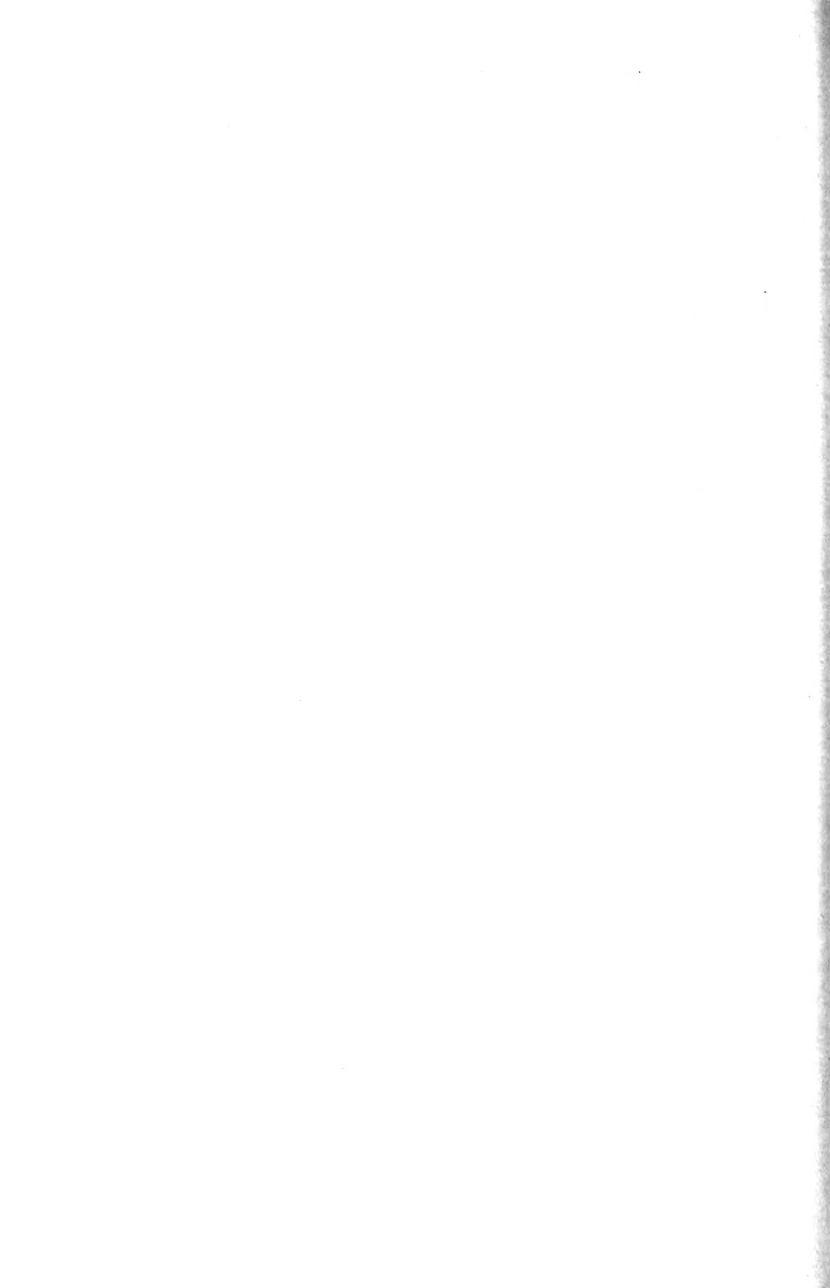
BY

ROUNDELL, EARL OF SELBORNE.



CASSELL & COMPANY, LIMITED :

LONDON, PARIS, NEW YORK & MELBOURNE.



The Endowments and Establishment

OF THE

Church of England.

MANY people in these days talk, and write in the newspapers and other publications, about the "Disestablishment" and "Disendowment" of the Church of England: which means, doing away with the "Establishment," and taking away the "Endowments" of the Church.

To understand that, we must first know what is meant by the words "Establishment" and "Endowment."

The "Establishment" of the Church of England consists in certain relations, different from those of other religious bodies, in which the Church of England now stands towards the State, or the Public Law and Government of the country.

"Endowment" is the possession of property, secured for the purposes of the Church by law. The possession of such property is by no means peculiar to the Church of England; the Roman Catholics and the Dissenting bodies have also property permanently secured to them by law.

Those who speak of "Disestablishment" generally mean "Disendowment" also; those who advocate Disestablishment, want to take from the Church its property. I wish to put before you some facts as to that property. But I must first say something of the Church of England itself: not, indeed,

of what it is, or ought to be, spiritually (about which I hope all who hear me know something already), but of what it is as an organised religious body—that, is a body united together and working under a definite framework or system of means, through which alone it is capable of receiving and holding property, and of standing in any relation to the Government and law of the land. No doubt, the spiritual character and work of the Church, in teaching and maintaining the knowledge and practice of true religion, in dispensing the Word and Sacraments of the Gospel, and in promoting righteousness, good-will, and good living among men, is the foundation of all: it is for the sake of these objects that the Church, its government, its ministry, and its endowments exist. If there are men so unhappy (and some such, I fear there are) as to have no belief in anything spiritual, in any religion at all, or in any Divine law of righteousness—who reject the Gospel message of “Glory to God in the highest, peace upon earth, and good-will towards men”—it may be consistent in them to wish to take away the means, because they are enemies to the work. And perhaps it may also be consistent in some others, who are so far blinded by sectarian jealousy as to have persuaded themselves that those objects are not really promoted by the ministry of the Church of England. But I cannot think that my countrymen in general, whether they are professed churchmen or not, labour under either of these delusions. It is possible to differ, more or less seriously, from the Church, and to think that there are some (perhaps many) things in it capable of amendment, and yet to see and acknowledge the general excellence and public usefulness of the work which it does.

Coming, then, to the history of the Church of England as an organised Institution, the first thing of which I would take notice is, that it is the most ancient and venerable Institution of all in this country. It has existed, in unbroken



succession, for about thirteen hundred years, ever since the first conversion of the heathen Saxons by Augustin, the first Archbishop of Canterbury ; from whom the present Archbishop of Canterbury is the ninety-fourth successor, in a line never interrupted. Our own Bishop of Winchester is (in like manner) the seventy-ninth Bishop, in an uninterrupted line of succession, from the time when Winchester first became the seat of a Bishopric, just eighty years after the coming of Augustin.

There was an earlier Church of the ancient Britons, under the Roman Government, which produced saints and martyrs whom we still remember with honour ; particularly Alban, put to death for his religion at the town now called (after him) St. Albans, in the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, just about the time when the pots of Roman coins dug up a few years ago at Blackmoor may be supposed to have been buried. But when the Romans abandoned this island, and the Saxons and other sea-faring people from the North of Europe invaded it, those heathen conquerors persecuted and drove out that original British Church. Its few remnants were forced to seek refuge in the mountainous parts and remote corners of the island ; and when Augustin came, in the year A.D. 596, as a missionary from Gregory, then Bishop or "Pope" of Rome, he had to make an entirely new beginning, among a race of people ignorant of Christianity, just as if there had been no Church here before. The succession of the present Church of England, as an organised Institution, is derived from that new Church which Augustin founded.

It must not be supposed, because Gregory (whose missionary Augustin was) was Bishop of Rome, and called "Pope," that the religion which he professed and taught was like what we now call "Popery." The word "Pope," in its original and proper sense, meant nothing else than "Father : " and the Roman Christianity of those days had

not departed, in any matter of substance, from the purity and simplicity of Apostolic times.

I said that the Church of England was the most ancient of all our English Institutions. It is 230 years older than our Monarchy: for, when Augustin came, England was divided into the seven small kingdoms, called in books the "Heptarchy;" and it was not till about 230 years afterwards, that these were united together under one King. It is at least 670 years older than our Parliaments; for the earliest date which any historians assign to a Parliament, in which the Commons were represented, is the year A.D. 1265: 670 years after Augustin.

I will now describe to you the organisation, at the present time, of the Church of England: that is, the system of outward means by which its government and ministry is carried on all over the land, and its endowments, or property, possessed and enjoyed. This consists of bishoprics under Bishops, and of parishes under settled clergymen, called "Rectors," or "Vicars." Every bishopric includes all the parishes within a district, called the "diocese" (which, in our own case, is the whole county of Hampshire, with the Isle or Wight, part of Surrey, and the Channel Islands); and all the clergy of each diocese are subject to the government, according to law, of their Bishop.

There are now thirty-three bishoprics in England (or thirty-four, if we reckon separately those of Gloucester and Bristol, at present united under one Bishop). Twenty-nine of these have Cathedrals, with bodies of Cathedral clergy, called Deans and Chapters. And it is not without interest and importance (as showing the unity from the first, and the life and growth of this Church of England in different ages), to observe the several periods of time at which these thirty-four bishoprics were founded. Nine were founded in the days of the "Heptarchy," before England was one kingdom—the latest more than 1,180 years ago. Seven others

were founded before the Conquest, the latest above 830 years ago ; five more under the three earliest Norman Kings (the Conqueror, and his sons, William Rufus and Henry), above 750 years ago. In Henry the Eighth's time, 340 years ago, after the beginning of the Reformation, six more were founded ; and seven more have been founded during the reigns of the present Queen and her immediate predecessor ; the latest of them, that of Southwell, in 1884.

The whole number of parishes (taking old and new parishes together) which I have been able to make out from the "Clergy Lists," and "Diocesan Calendars," annually published, is about 13,630. Of this whole number of parishes, 8,467 are old ; the rest are new. By "old parishes," I mean those which were founded before the Reformation : by "new parishes," I mean those which have been founded since (chiefly within the last hundred years), by the division of old parishes which had become too large and populous for the care of a single clergyman. Selborne is an old parish, founded just 800 years ago ; Blackmoor is a new parish, founded in 1869.

The first beginnings of the parish system in England may be traced as far back as within a hundred years of Augustin's time. It was extended gradually, through the next five hundred years, until it became complete, about 1,200 years after Christ. By that time (now 685 years ago), there is every reason to believe that the whole kingdom of England had become divided into parishes, each with its own church, and each church with its own endowments.

Before there were any such parishes, or any such parish endowments, it had been the custom of the Christian Church (I am not now speaking of England, but of other countries) to collect offerings from its members, for the general purposes of each bishopric or diocese ; which were brought together into a common fund or treasury, and distributed and applied under the direction of the Bishop.

You know that, under the Jewish law,* the people were commanded to pay tenths, or "tithes," of the increase of their land and all their substance. That Jewish law was not binding upon Christians; but Christians, from very early times, looked to it as suggesting a convenient measure of what it would be right for them to give, "as God prospered" them,† for God's immediate service. This grew into a custom, which gradually came to be regarded by members of the Church as a duty, and so to be enjoined upon them by regulations ("canons," as they were called) of the Church; which for a long time had such authority only, as the regulations of any religious society must always have, over its own members, upon the voluntary principle.

By the custom of the Roman, and of some other Churches upon the Continent of Europe, in those early times, it was usual to divide the tithes and other offerings brought into the common treasury of the diocese into four parts:—one for the Bishop; one for his clergy; one for the repair and maintenance of Church buildings; and one for the poor. In some countries (as, for instance, France and Spain) the distribution was into three parts instead of four. Whether any similar mode of distribution ever prevailed in England, is a point on which the opinions of learned men have differed. My own conviction, after looking carefully into the historical evidence upon the subject, is that we never had any such general custom; and that, even if it was at any time followed in the practice of any diocese where collections of foreign canons were made (of which there is no proof), it never, in any part of England, acquired the force of law. Very early after his mission, Augustin asked for Pope Gregory's advice on the question, "how the

* The *custom*, however, was patriarchal, and much older than the Jewish law. (See Genesis xiv. 20; and xxviii. 22.)

† 1 Corinth. xvi. 2.

“offerings of the faithful should be distributed?” and Gregory answered that, although the custom in most countries was to make that division into four parts, which I have mentioned, yet, in the infancy of the English-Saxon Church, he (Augustin) and his clergy would do most wisely by living together, and imitating as far as they could the community of all things which was practised under the Apostles.

It was a consequence of the voluntary origin and character of the obligation to pay tithes, before custom had acquired the force of law, that those who acknowledged that obligation, and had made no permanent gift of the tithes arising from their own property to particular churches, retained the right to pay them where, and to whom they would, according to their own choice. They were, therefore, able, when parishes were formed, to appropriate them, as a permanent endowment, to the minister of the parish church; and it became so general a practice for the founders of parish churches to do this, that the law of the Church, and the common law of England in later times, presumed tithes to be so payable when the contrary did not appear. But there never was in England any general Act of the State by which parishes were formed, or parish churches founded, or tithes or any other endowments assigned to them; nor was there ever, at any time, any endowment of the Church of England as a whole. Landowners, each dealing separately with that which was his own, built and endowed churches upon, and out of, their own estates. Kings, where they had in their own hands lands not granted out to any subject, did this, as well as other landowners—William the Conqueror, for example, having in his own hands the manor of Selborne, exactly 800 years ago, founded and gave, out of the lands of that manor, the church of Selborne, with half a “hide” of land—a quantity less than fifty acres; perhaps very much less, for the present glebe of Selborne is only seventeen acres. Most of the land of the kingdom was then, as

it has been since, in private hands ; and the founders of our old parish churches were generally private persons. As each church was built, the Bishop of the diocese was applied to, to consecrate it, and to give his consent to its being established as the church for that particular district or "parish" which the founder was desirous of having assigned to it ; and this the Bishop did, upon being satisfied that the building was suitable, and was granted and secured for ever for the purposes of Divine worship, to be conducted according to the laws of the Church by a resident clergyman of the diocese (a churchyard being usually attached to it for the burial of the dead) ; and that a proper "manse" (or parsonage-house, —the word "manse" is still used in Scotland), with a glebe, was in like manner granted and made secure for the clergyman's residence and use ; and that due provision was made for his maintenance ; which was done in almost every parish by the assignment for that purpose of the tithes arising from the founder's land within the parish. In this way, each parish church came, generally, to be endowed with property of four kinds : (1) The fabric, or building, of the church itself and the consecrated enclosure within which it was erected ; (2) the parsonage-house ; (3) the glebe ; and (4) the tithe. These are, to this day, the parochial endowments of the Church of England ; the difference, in that respect, between old and new parishes being, that "new parishes" are seldom endowed with glebe or tithe ; but stipends are usually in some other way provided for their ministers.

Upon this subject, it may be well that I should read to you a short extract from a book written in the reign of King Charles the First, by one of the most learned men and best lawyers and statesmen of that time,—a very liberal thinker also, who took part with the Parliament against the King, and had no prejudice in favour of the Church :—John Selden, whose statue may be seen in the entrance hall to our Houses of Parliament. The book I refer to is

his "History of Tithes." He says that the origin of our parishes was from the devotion "of most laymen of fair estate, who desired to have chaplains always resident and ready for Christian instruction among them, their families, and their adjoining tenants;" and who built churches, which, "being hallowed by the Bishop, were endowed with peculiar maintenance from the founders for the incumbents":—and that "the lay-founder, according to the territory of his demesnes, lands, or neighbouring possessions, made and assigned both the limits within which the holy function" (that is, the clergyman's duty) "was to be exercised, and appointed the persons that should repair to the church and offer there, and also provided a special salary for the performance;" for which reason, the revenue so provided became perpetually annexed to the church of the clergyman who received it, and ceased to be paid into the common treasury of the diocese. "Out of these foundations" (he adds) "chiefly, doubtless came those kinds of parishes which are at this day in every diocese: their differences in quantity being originally out of the difference of the several circuits of the demesnes or territories possessed by the founders."

When tithes had been thus appropriated, the landowner, if he kept the land in his own hands, retained nine-tenths of the fruits or profits for himself, and had to pay or render the other tenth, or "tithe," to the clergyman to whom it had been perpetually granted. If he let the land to a tenant, the tenant had to pay or render to the clergyman the tithe, over which the landlord had so ceased to have power, and which he must have paid or rendered himself if he had kept the land in his own hands. The rent agreed to be paid by the tenant to the landlord was less, by the estimated yearly value of the tithe, than it would have been if the land had been let tithe-free; and such land as is, at the present day, tithe-free, is let, as a matter of course, at a

proportionally higher rent. If the tithe were simply abolished, the landowner, and not the tenant-farmer or the labourer, would receive the whole benefit. This is what actually happened, under the first French Revolution, in France.

What is called "lay-patronage" in the Church arose out of the foundation and endowment of parish churches, in the manner which I have described. The Founder of the parish church might either give to others (as, for example, to the Bishop) the right of nominating a fit person, on every vacancy, to the office of Minister of the church which he had founded; or he might reserve that right (as he generally did) to himself and his heirs, or those who might succeed him in his estate.

The clergymen of our old parish churches are sometimes called "Rectors," sometimes "Vicars." I will try to explain to you the meaning, and the history, of that difference of title. The word "Rector" properly signified Ruler or Governor: the Rector of a church was so called because he was the principal person entrusted with the care, or "cure," of the souls of those members of the Church who were his parishioners; nobody else, except the Bishop, was set over him; he was, in the view of the law, the "parson," or personal representative of the Church in his parish; and he was entitled to all the tithes and other fruits of its whole endowment. So it continues to be, to this day, in the case of those clergy who are still called Rectors of parishes; as (to take examples in our own neighbourhood) the Rectors of Greatham, of Headley, of Bramshott, and of Liss. But the incumbents of Selborne, and Alton, and of many other old parishes, are Vicars, not Rectors. The whole number of old Vicarages is 3,469; and there are 4,998 old Rectories. Until a very few years ago, the clergymen of new parishes (such as Blackmoor) were called "Perpetual Curates," and not Rectors or Vicars; but, under a recent Act of Parliament, most of them are now called Vicars. There are also

a few new Rectories, so called under other Acts of Parliament, in London and other large towns.

The word "Vicar" properly means a deputy, or a man who does another person's duty for him; and the way in which it came to be applied to the clergy of so many old parishes was this. There were, in the Middle Ages, particularly after the Norman Conquest of England, many colleges or bodies of clergy, or of monks, bound by vows to a religious profession, living together in Abbeys, Priors, and other Monasteries or Religious Houses. All these were considered in law "spiritual" or Church Corporations, capable of undertaking spiritual duties, such as the service of parish churches. By the act, or with the consent, of the "patron," or representative of the Founder, and by the allowance of the Bishop and some other authorities—Pope or King, or both—the "Rectory" of such a church might be, and often was, perpetually annexed and united ("appropriated," the word was) to one of those Monasteries or other Bodies; sometimes to a Bishopric. When this was done, that Corporation became entitled to the tithes and other endowments of the parish church, of which it was so made perpetual Rector, on condition of providing for the spiritual duty and service of the church; which it did by means of clergymen, whom it appointed as its "Vicars" or Representatives to do that duty. The Vicar, in all such cases, became the resident parish clergyman, with a right to hold that office as long as he did its duties; and the tithes of some particular kinds of produce, called "small tithes," were permanently assigned for his maintenance. The Abbey, Monastery, or other Corporation, to which the Rectory was annexed, kept for its own use all the rest—generally the largest and most valuable part. In this way the tithes of many parishes, in every diocese, became divided into "great" or "Rectorial" tithes, and "small" or "Vicarial" tithes. Whenever the clergyman of an old

parish was a Vicar, and not a Rector, there were these two separate rights to these two kinds of tithe. This was, no doubt, an abuse; for the Monasteries, and other Religious houses of the same kind, were (even when most might be said for them) an artificial out-growth upon the Church system, and not an original or a necessary part of it; and they did nothing, generally, for the parishes whose Rectories were annexed to them, except through the Vicars whom they appointed. The Rectory of Selborne was appropriated in this manner to a "Priory," founded in the reign of King Henry the Third, which stood in the valley between Selborne and Oakhanger, where the Priory Farm now is; and when that Corporation became extinct, in the time of King Henry the Sixth, its possessions, including that Rectory, were transferred to Magdalen College, at Oxford. By that "appropriation" the parish church of Selborne became a Vicarage.

At the time of the Reformation under King Henry the Eighth, all the Abbeys, Monasteries, and other Religious Houses then in England (except Cathedrals and a few other collegiate establishments, and Colleges of learning in the Universities), were dissolved and abolished; and all their possessions were seized by that King, whose Parliaments readily granted him all that he desired. Among the rest, he seized all their Rectorial tithes. Perhaps there may be some people simple enough to imagine that, if the tithes still left to the Church were now taken from it by Act of Parliament, they would cease to be paid by those who now pay them. To that idea, what was done under King Henry the Eighth* certainly gives no encouragement. Parliament gave the tithes which had belonged to the Monasteries to the King; and King Henry the Eighth, with the prodigality which generally follows any violent interference with property, squandered the greater part of them among his courtiers and

* I might have added: or what has lately been done in Ireland

favourites. Most of the large landowners of the kingdom became, in this way, possessors (in place of the dissolved monasteries) of what have been since called "lay rectories" and "lay tithes." From the tithe-payer, every penny's worth of those tithes continued to be, and is still, exacted as strictly as when they were in the hands of the Church. I will give you two or three examples from parishes in this diocese of Winchester. The tithe, as you all know, has been "commuted," or changed by law, into a rent-charge, varying in amount, according to the value over a series of years of certain descriptions of agricultural produce. The rectorial tithes of Selborne, which belong (as I have said) to a college at Oxford, were in 1882 £447; the vicarial tithes, which alone belong of right to the Vicar of Selborne, were £336. The rectorial or lay tithes of two parishes at Basingstoke, also belonging to a college or colleges at Oxford, were in the same year £1,617. A lady received the rectorial tithes of Bishop's Sutton, amounting to £1,431; and one of the London Companies those of Chertsey, amounting to £1,112.

I do not know whether any one looks upon the dissolution of the monasteries and the seizure of their property by King Henry the Eighth as an example to be followed on a larger scale with respect to all Church property. So far as it was an act of rapine and violence, it might of course be made a precedent by those who might have the power, and who might be as little troubled by scruples as that King. But, to the minds of reasonable men, there are at least two plain differences which make it no precedent. The monasteries were at that time judged by the King and Parliament, (not without the form of a previous inquiry into their state and condition), to have become so corrupt as to make their continued existence not only unprofitable, but mischievous to the country. It will require a large measure, not of the spirit of violence and rapine only, but of blind fanatical animosity too, before any one can seriously propose, on

such a ground as this, to suppress the organisation of the Church of England, as the monasteries were suppressed by King Henry. And, secondly, when the monastic corporations were dissolved by law, and when the particular persons who belonged to them at that time were dead, there was an end of them altogether: there was nobody left, and no persons could afterwards come into existence, who could claim any benefit from their property, or who would be losers by its being taken away. But nobody can believe, that if all that Parliament could do to disestablish and disendow the Church of England were done to the uttermost, there would be an end of the Church; or that there would not still be, in all its dioceses and parishes, multitudes of people professing the same religion, and having the same spiritual and other wants, to provide for which (and for that purpose only) the present organisation and endowments of the Church of England exist.

I have spoken of what was done as to the monasteries at the time of the Reformation. That was the only interference which then took place with any endowment of the Church of England. I know that some people are to be found who pretend that a new Church of England was set up at that time, and the old Church cast out; and that all the churches, parsonages, glebes, remaining church-tithes, and other endowments of which I have been speaking, were then taken from the Roman Catholic, and given by the State to a new Protestant Church. For that pretence there is no foundation, in law or in fact. A church does not lose its identity, or sameness, as an organised Institution, by changes in form or ceremony, or in laws of discipline, or by reforming itself from what it regards as abuses or corruptions. Dr. Hook, the late Dean of Chichester, put this in a very clear way when he said, "that a man whose face has got dirty, and "who washes the dirt off, is the same man after he has

“washed his face that he was before.” In the English Reformation, the organisation of the Church, as the Church of England, was not displaced or broken at any single point ; nothing of importance was done, as to its doctrine, worship, government, or discipline, except by the action or with the concurrence of the Church itself as an organised Institution, though all that was done had also the concurrence of the Civil Power ; and, in matters which directly affected the Temporal State, it was prompted and influenced by that authority. And I think it right to add (though it is not my object to enter at all into theological questions), that nothing was then done which made the Church of England really different, in any point of substance affecting religious faith or practice, from what it had originally been in the days of Augustin, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, before the beginning of divisions in Christendom.

The principal points of the reforms then made may be summed up under four heads. First, the rejection of foreign interference by the Pope, an Italian Bishop, in the affairs of the Church of England ; and the establishment of the supremacy of the British Crown over the clergy of the realm, as well as over all its other subjects. The corrupt Papal system of that day, and the power over kings and kingdoms then claimed by the Popes, were entirely different from anything known or thought of in Augustin’s time. Our kings and Parliaments had often before resisted and passed laws against them, especially in the reign of King Edward the First ; though they were not entirely got rid of till the year 1531.

Next, there was the restoration to the clergy and lay people of certain rights and liberties, of which they had been unwisely and oppressively deprived ; such, for example, as the right of the clergy to marry, which was restored to them in 1547. Let nobody suppose that the marriage of the clergy was then a new thing. In one-half of the

Catholic Church, (that is, in all the Churches of the Eastern or Greek Communion, and of Russia,) it had been from very early times, and is still, the practice, not only to allow the parochial clergy to marry, but to require them to be married. Their Bishops, indeed, are not married; but that is because they are always chosen from among monks who have taken vows to lead a single life. In the Western Churches, the rule of living single was first imposed upon Bishops by a law of the Roman Church about a hundred years after Augustin's time. That law was strongly resisted in England till the time of Dunstan, who was Archbishop of Canterbury between the years A.D. 959 and 988, and who at last succeeded in enforcing it. This prohibition of marriage was not extended to, or at all events not enforced against, the clergy generally, till the time of William the Conqueror; when Pope Gregory the Seventh made decrees for that purpose.

There were (in the third place) certain changes of forms and ceremonies, and the publication, in 1549, of one Book of Common Prayer, in the English tongue, for all England, which was several times afterwards slightly altered. But nothing new in any matter of substance was then, or afterwards, introduced into the worship of the Church; almost everything in the Book of Common Prayer is ancient, and is taken from the devotions of the purest days of the Christian Church. Nobody, I suppose, would deny to any independent church the power to make changes like these. We have ourselves had a new Table of Lessons, and some other changes in the order of Divine service, introduced of late years; but nobody supposes the Church of England itself to have been therefore changed.

The last head of reform consisted in the abolition of some practices deemed to be superstitious, and in the declarations as to doctrine contained in the Thirty-nine Articles of the year 1563. These were, no doubt, of much importance;

but none of the doctrines or practices which the Church of England then cast off as errors and corruptions had been imposed, even by the Church of Rome itself, upon clergy or laity as matters of faith, or as terms of communion, or even (so far as I know) as tests for the ministry, before the Council of Constance, which was more than 800 years after the time of Augustin; and by far the greater part of them were not so imposed until the Council of Trent, which was held at the very time while the English Reformation was going on, and was not concluded till 1563. If those doctrines and practices could not be rejected in England without making a new Church, it would seem, that Pope Pius the Fifth must also have made a new Church of Rome, when he issued a new creed (as he did) embodying the points newly decreed by the Council of Trent as Articles of Faith; to which every member of the Church of Rome was, from that time forward, to be bound in a way that he had not been before.

Those who disliked the changes made by the Church of England at that time, and who preferred the Papal system, did not break off or separate themselves from the communion of the Reformed Church of England till the eleventh year of Queen Elizabeth (A.D. 1569); when the same Pope, Pius the Fifth, ordered them to do so by a "Bull," or Papal decree, in which he took upon himself, not only to denounce the Reformation as heretical, but to deprive the Queen of her Crown, to absolve her subjects from their allegiance, and to give her kingdom to the King of Spain. Those who then separated themselves from the Church of England, and adhered to the Pope, were (in comparison with those who remained in the communion of our Church) few and insignificant in number; as they have, ever since, continued to be.

I will read to you about this matter some words of a learned historian of our own day, Mr. Freeman, a

strong Liberal in politics, who was lately appointed, on Mr. Gladstone's advice, to be the Queen's Professor of Modern History in the University of Oxford. This is what he says :
“The ecclesiastical endowments of England have grown up,
“like everything else in England, bit by bit. A number of
“ecclesiastical corporations have been endowed, at all manner
“of times, and in all manner of ways ; but there was no one
“particular moment when the State of England determined
“to endow one general religious Body, called the Church of
“England. And, if there was no one particular moment
“when, as many people fancy, the State endowed the Church
“by a deliberate act, still less was there any moment when
“the State, as many people fancy, took the Church property
“from one religious Body and gave it to another. . . .
“The facts of history compel us to assume the absolute
“identity of the Church of England after the Reformation
“with the Church of England before the Reformation. . . .
“As a matter of law and history, as a matter of plain fact,
“there was no taking away from one religious Body and
“giving to another. We must remember, that there was
“not in England, as some people seem to think, and as there
“really was in some foreign countries, some one act done at
“a definite time called the Reformation. Under the name
“of the Reformation, we jumble together a great number of
“changes, spread over many years. . . . As a matter of fact,
“they were acts done by different people at different times ;
“and those who, at any stage, wrought one change, had no
“thought that the others would follow. The final result
“might be, that theological continuity was broken ; but no
“act was done by which legal and historical continuity was
“broken. . . . In the sixteenth century, as at several times
“before and since, laws were made to which the holders of
“ecclesiastical benefices had to conform under pain of losing
“those benefices. As a matter of fact, the great mass of
“their holders did conform, through all changes. There was

“much less than people commonly think, even of taking from one person and giving to another : and the general taking from one religious Body and giving to another, which many people fancy took place under Henry the Eighth or Elizabeth, simply never happened at all.”

I have not thought it necessary, or convenient, within the limited time at my disposal, to go into any particular account of the endowments of our bishoprics and cathedrals. They were originally given at different times by particular acts of particular persons, as the parochial endowments were, and not by any general public Act or law of the State. Some of them came from private donors or benefactors, others from the appropriation of the rectories of parish churches to the bishoprics, or to the deans and chapters, in the way which I have already described. The bishoprics established in King Henry the Eighth's time (except Sodor and Man, which stands apart), and their chapters, were endowed out of the estates of certain abbeys, whose churches then became cathedrals ; and about the same time other monasteries, which had previously been connected with Canterbury, Durham, Winchester, and several other old cathedrals, were converted into deans and chapters, retaining under those altered names and conditions the previous monastic endowments. Those changes were, no doubt, made by royal and Parliamentary authority ; but the endowments were old and were already Church property, though the manner of their use for Church purposes was changed.

I now come to later times, from the Reformation till our own day. During all that period private gifts for the purposes of the Church have continued to be made, of the greater number of which there is no general public record. Two funds have also been created under Acts of Parliament, passed in the last and in the present century, for the improvement of poor church livings, and for aiding in the endowment of new parishes. The older of those funds

(the smaller in amount) is called "Queen Anne's Bounty." It was established A.D. 1704, out of the "tenths" and "first-fruits" paid by all the beneficed clergy of England from their livings to the Pope before the Reformation, which at the time of the Reformation were taken from the Pope and given by Act of Parliament to the King. Queen Anne thought that it would be more suitable and just to apply the produce of these exactions from the clergy towards the improvement of poor livings insufficiently provided for (of which the number was found to be large), than to retain them as part of the Royal Revenue. The Parliament of 1704 agreed with her; and so the fund, called Queen Anne's Bounty, was established.

The other fund is that of the "Ecclesiastical Commissioners," first established by law in 1836. This consists entirely of savings out of what was already Church property, obtained by the better management and more equitable distribution of the produce of the estates and endowments of bishops, and cathedrals, and collegiate churches. The incomes of the bishops and cathedral clergy were before that time extremely unequal, and many of them had become excessive in amount. The establishments, also, of the cathedral and collegiate churches were considered to be on too large a scale; and, as great part of their revenues was derived from parochial tithes, no application of any surplus arising from them could be more reasonable and just than towards a better provision for the poorer parishes, having regard, in the first place, to the reasonable wants of those places from which the tithes were received. The incomes, therefore, of the bishops, and of such a number of cathedral and collegiate clergy as it was thought proper to retain for the services of the cathedrals and collegiate churches, were regulated, and fixed at their present amounts; and the surplus was brought into a common fund, and employed in the way which I have mentioned. This was done upon the

advice, and with the full concurrence, of the principal authorities of the Church.

It is by means of grants from these two funds, together with private contributions and benefactions, that a better provision has been made of late years for the spiritual wants of some old parishes, and that many new parishes have been moderately endowed. Queen Anne's "Bounty" Fund has been chiefly employed in loans (repayable out of the incomes of the clergy thereby assisted, by instalments extending over a series of years,) to enable the parochial clergy to build, rebuild, or improve their residence houses or other buildings necessary for the cultivation of their glebes. It has also, to some extent, aided in the increase of the endowments of poor livings; to which last purpose the common fund of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners has been entirely devoted. And it is important to observe that the grants which have been made out of these two funds towards the endowment of the churches of new parishes have been conditional, as a general rule, upon an equal or larger amount being found for the same purpose by private gift or contribution. In these cases, therefore, the grant out of the "Bounty" Fund, or by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, has not been gratuitous; money, often of larger amount, has been paid and contributed by private persons upon the faith of those grants and of their continuance. And the same has been the case with respect to assistance given by the societies which, in this and other dioceses, have been established and maintained by voluntary subscription for similar purposes. The endowment of our own church of Blackmoor, of which the total amount is only too small, is an example. The greater part of it has been provided by private gift, the rest by contributions (in consideration and upon condition of what was so provided by private gift) from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, from Queen Anne's Bounty, and from the Winchester Diocesan Church Society.

I am not aware of money having ever been voted by Parliament for any general Church purposes, except two sums amounting together to £1,500,000, which were granted rather more than sixty years ago, in the time of King George the Fourth, for the building of additional churches, chiefly in London.

I must now tell you something about modern gifts for Church purposes of private persons, not going back beyond the last forty-five years. Much, beyond doubt, was done earlier, as to which I have no exact information. But in the year 1875 an account was laid before Parliament of sums expended since 1840 in the building and restoration of churches only. It did not include any case in which the total amount expended was less than £500; it did not include the value of any lands, rent-charges, or money endowments given during the same period of time. The whole expenditure included in that account is £24,403,261. In most dioceses, the sources of that expenditure were accurately distinguished, so as to show the exact amount which arose from private voluntary gifts and contributions; but in some they were not. Taking the proportions to be generally the same, the total amount of the private voluntary gifts and contributions, which enter into that sum of above twenty-four millions, is certainly not less than twenty-three millions of pounds. That account stops with the year 1874. As to what has been since done, I hold in my hand a letter which appeared the other day (7th January, 1886) in the *Times* newspaper, from Mr. Burnside, the secretary to a committee by whom a publication, called the "Official Year-Book of the Church of England," is edited. That committee ascertained, by careful inquiry, the amount contributed from private sources only, in one year, 1884, throughout England, for the building and restoration of churches, the endowment of benefices, the building and enlargement of parsonage houses, and additions to church burial-grounds; compre-

hending (as you will have observed) objects not included in the Parliamentary Returns of 1875. The total amount of those private contributions for those Church purposes in the year 1884 was £1,455,839—in round numbers, about a million and a half. Multiply that by the ten years from 1874 to 1884, and you get, in addition to the former sum, about fifteen millions more. Add the two sums, £23,000,000 and £15,000,000, together, and you have a total of £38,000,000. It is not likely, when we consider the threats of Disestablishment which have been in the air, that these private contributions would have been greater in 1884 than upon the average of the nine preceding years; and it must also not be forgotten, that the contributions for the endowment of benefices, and other things omitted from the Parliamentary Returns of 1875, must have amounted, during the thirty-four years covered by those returns, to a large additional sum.

I think you will now be able to judge of the life, the activity, the zeal, and attachment to the Church, which there is among the members of the Church of England at the present time; and to say whether it is to be endured, that at such a time, when so much is being done, and when the enemies of Christianity and of all religion spare no efforts on the contrary side, an attempt should be made to pull down and cripple the resources of the Church of England. And you will also be able to judge whether it is reasonable, in those who care at all for religion, to think of taking away from the Church what it already possesses, when there is such a constant, growing, and practically recognised want, not of less means than the Church already has, but of more, to enable its spiritual work to be properly done. Some other things, of which I have not yet particularly spoken, have happened with respect to bishoprics, to which I should like now to direct your attention, as indications of what is the real feeling of the English people upon this subject, when

left to express itself in natural ways, without the interference of sectarian or political agitation.

I will mention, first, what happened with respect to the Bishoprics of Bangor and Bristol. In the reign of King William the Fourth, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners (not the present Board of Commissioners, but Commissioners of Inquiry, who preceded them) recommended the foundation (out of the surplus revenues of existing sees) of two new bishoprics in two of our most populous districts, at Ripon and Manchester ; and those new bishoprics were founded accordingly. The same Commissioners also proposed, in order to avoid any increase of the total number of bishops that the See of Bristol (one of those founded at the time of the Reformation) should be united, as soon as it might become vacant, to that of Gloucester, and the See of Bangor (which is older than the Conquest) to that of St. Asaph. An Act of Parliament was passed enabling this to be done by order of the Queen in Council ; and in 1836 the Bishopric of Bristol, being vacant, was actually united to that of Gloucester, which union still continues.

The Bishopric of Bangor did not become vacant for many years afterwards ; but, in the meantime, an Order in Council was made in 1838 for uniting it to St. Asaph, whenever that event should happen. Bangor is a Welsh bishopric ; the Nonconformists are strong in Wales ; and it might be supposed, from what we sometimes hear about the unpopularity of the Church in Wales, that the Welsh people would have been glad to see one of their bishoprics in this way disestablished, or suppressed. But it was not so. The proposal proved to be decidedly unacceptable to the Welsh people ; the expression of Welsh opinion against it was very strong, and (to the best of my recollection and belief) was general and unanimous ; and, out of deference to it, the Act of Parliament and Order in Council for the union of the See of Bangor to that of St.

Asaph were repealed in 1847, under a Liberal Ministry ; and Bangor continues to be a separate bishopric to this day.

I return now to Bristol. The Bishopric of Bristol has been united to Gloucester for fifty years. But in that great commercial city (where the Nonconformists are certainly not weak), a desire has quite lately arisen to have their separate bishopric restored ; and an Act of Parliament was passed under Mr. Gladstone's Ministry in 1884 to enable this to be done, as soon as the amount judged necessary for its proper endowment should be raised by voluntary subscription, the Bishop of Gloucester giving up towards it a certain part of his income. A subscription for that purpose, to which many leading citizens of Bristol have contributed, is now in progress.

Of the seven new English bishoprics founded in our own time, the greater number (especially three established within the last six years—those of Liverpool, Newcastle, and Southwell) have had their endowments (required by Parliament to be on a liberal scale, though not equal to those of the older bishoprics) provided chiefly by private gifts and voluntary contributions ; and a subscription is at this moment going on for the foundation of another, or eighth, new bishopric at Wakefield in Yorkshire.

As to the Bishopric of Newcastle, to which a distinguished son of our own late Bishop Wilberforce was appointed, it gives me pleasure to mention one more fact, which is an instance of the kindly and generous feeling, towards the Church of England and its work, of some liberal-minded members of the Nonconformist bodies. The bishop's residence, a large and convenient house, with suitable grounds, was the gift of Sir Joseph Pease, an eminent member of the Society of Friends, or Quakers.

I have said enough to show that the superintendence of a sufficient number of bishops, with adequate provision for their proper endowment, is as generally understood to be

necessary to the well-being of the Church, and useful in its practical results, as the ministrations even of the parochial clergy.

Having heard so much about the endowments of the Church of England, and the sources from which they have been at different times derived or increased, you may, naturally, wish to have the best information which I can give you as to their total amount. To be quite exact upon that point is not possible, for their amount is liable to continual variation, and is at the present time lower (probably) than it has ever been before during this century, owing to the general depression of agriculture, and the decline which has been long going on, and which seems to be still progressive, in the prices of agricultural produce—causes which directly affect the incomes of the clergy, both from tithe rent-charges and from glebes. It will be enough (and it is all that I can do) to give you the total amount of the fixed stipends of the bishops and the cathedral and collegiate clergy (which, in some cases, there have not lately been sufficient funds to pay), and of the whole incomes of the parochial clergy, as I have cast them up from the figures given in the publication called the “Clergy List” for 1884. Having in that and some former years been in a position to know something officially about the actual situation in point of income of a considerable number of Church livings, I can state, with confidence, that the figures given in the “Clergy List” for 1884 are much more likely to be above than under the mark at the present time—to say nothing of the deductions for rates and for payment of curates, to which the incomes of the beneficed clergy of the Church of England are subject. For it must be remembered that, besides the beneficed clergy of the Church of England themselves, the number of curates by whom those clergy are assisted in their ministrations, and whose assistance is in most cases neces-

sary, is extremely large, and the stipends of these curates have (generally) to be paid by the parochial clergy, out of the income from endowments which they receive.

The total amount, as I have reckoned it up from the figures in the "Clergy List" of 1884, of the fixed stipends of the bishops and the cathedral and collegiate clergy is £342,237. The total amount, as I have reckoned it up from the same source of information, of the incomes of the parochial clergy from their endowments, is £4,457,782. The aggregate amount of both together is, in round numbers, £4,800,000. I dare say some of you may have seen it stated at a larger figure; but I am confident that this sum of £4,800,000 is really more than the annual value of the whole at the present time. Taking the whole incomes of the parish clergy from endowments at £4,457,782, they would give, if equally divided among all the incumbents of all the parishes in England, less than £330 to each. No doubt they are not so equally divided; and although absolute equality is neither necessary nor desirable, (for the capacities and gifts of all men and the wants of all parishes are not the same,) it may be quite a right thing to consider whether parishes of which the endowment is excessive may not properly be made to contribute to the wants of others, especially of neighbouring parishes, in which it is too small. The greater number are less—too many are much less—than the average amount of about £330 per annum, which might be produced by a perfect equality of distribution. But, on the other hand, I find, after a careful examination, that the number of benefices of which the endowment may be considerably in excess of the wants of the parish (having regard to population and other circumstances) is by no means large. Of the parish clergy, with those few exceptions, it may truly be said that they receive less, generally, than clerks of the middle and higher classes in our public offices and large houses of business; and

that, in comparison with those who succeed even moderately well in other professions, or in mercantile pursuits, they are so poor, that nothing but higher than worldly motives could explain the dedication of their lives to a clergyman's work by so many men of high character, education, and intelligence. No doubt there are among them many and various degrees of ability, and inequalities of character. Some—not a few—come up to the highest possible standard of human excellence; the great majority are good, sincere, charitable, diligent, efficient, and useful men, according to the various measures of their gifts and powers; those who are not kept, by a sense of duty, and by the natural and proper motives of so high a calling, upon a moral level sufficiently high to make their influence upon those around them wholesome and good, are (I trust and believe) a very small proportion indeed of the whole number. Of course there never has been, and there never will be, any church or religious society in the world without some indifferent and some bad ministers. But, speaking of the parish clergy of England generally, with reference to the endowments provided for their support, my own observation and experience is, that there is no class of men in the country who make such moderate means go so far, or who do the same amount of good with them. Not only in religious, but in temporal good works and charities, they set an example which may well put richer men to shame. And to our bishops no less, whose incomes are larger, a like testimony is justly due. The scale of their incomes was fixed by law, after much consideration, within the last fifty years. Only one of them, the Primate of all England, receives more than the highest of our judges; two others only, the Northern Primate and the Bishop of London, receive as much. Most of them receive stipends either just equal to, or less than, those of the ordinary judges of the Supreme Court. The demands upon their means are

far larger than those which are made upon judges, not merely for the constant travelling and other expenses, and becoming hospitalities, of their office, but for contributions to all sorts of church and diocesan, public and private, charities, in which they are expected, and are accustomed, to take the lead. As I said of the parochial clergy that they manage and use their means, small as they are, better (generally) than any other class of men whom I know—so I say of our bishops, that I am astonished at their having the power to be so generous, public-spirited, and open-handed as they generally are; when I know how soon, and how easily, incomes of greater amount among laymen are exhausted in the management of their properties, in their domestic establishments, and in taxes and other public burdens.

The “Disendowment” of the Church of England means taking away from it—if the process should be total and absolute—everything; all its churches, parsonage-houses, glebes, tithes, and other endowments of every kind; if it is not total and absolute, at all events (subject to some regard, more or less, for the vested rights of individual living clergymen) it means the taking away from the Church, and from its members generally, by far the greater part of all these things. What exceptions might be made, if any were made at all, nobody can, at present, with confidence say. I do not understand those who most loudly call out for “Disestablishment” to acknowledge the *right* of Churchmen to have *anything* left to them. I understand them, clearly, to be *against* leaving to the Church of England even as much as was left to the Irish Church. The Society, from which the cry mainly proceeds, has suggested a plan, by which it is proposed not to leave anything at all to the Church itself; but in cases in which all has been given by a private person, who may happen to be alive at the time of Disestablishment, (only if he is then alive,) to let him have his own gift

back again ; and to let new churches recently built by the contributions of a number of Churchmen be disposed of as they please by "the congregations" (whatever that may mean), who may happen at the time to be using them for public worship. I have not seen that it is proposed to except from the spoil any cathedrals or old parish churches, whatever sums may have been spent upon their restoration and improvement by Churchmen, or however recently that expenditure may have been made. With or without particular exceptions, what is proposed is, to take away from the Church of England the general mass of its property.

Now, who are those whom it is thus proposed to deprive of all this property? Are they a small or insignificant body of persons? If you take the professed members of the Church of England they are probably not less than half—some impartial men think they are much more than half—of the whole people. There can be no reasonable doubt that they considerably outnumber the members of all the other Churches and denominations in the country put together. Others, also, besides the professed members of the Church of England, do beyond all question derive great benefits from the ministrations of the Church, and would suffer greatly by their loss.

Can it be said that those, whom it is thus proposed to deprive of the provision, made by themselves or by their forefathers for the service of their religion, have committed any fault against the State to require or justify that forfeiture? On the contrary, the State has had no more loyal subjects and citizens: none who have served it better in the general education of the people, and in training them up to lead virtuous, moral, law-abiding lives.

Has there been any notice or warning to those whose gifts created these endowments, that the authorities of the State looked at them with a jealous eye, and were lying in wait for an opportunity to take them away? So far from it, the

law of the land permitted and encouraged them to be given for the purposes for which they were given—for the religious uses of the Church of England. No doubt they were given for these uses, absolutely, out and out. No doubt, while they continue to be so used, they are, and must be, subject to such powers of public superintendence and regulation, as are reasonably consistent with the purposes for which they were given. But that is a different thing from taking them away from those purposes, and treating them as State property.

Let us think for a moment of such a case as our own, here at Blackmoor. Our church was built and consecrated in 1869; and its minister was endowed with a small rent-charge on land. The site, the cost of the building and its furniture, and the rent-charge, were entirely provided out of private property; some aid towards its further endowment being also given by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and otherwise, as I have mentioned.

The church was, by a solemn deed, and a solemn religious service, dedicated and devoted for ever to the worship and service of Almighty God, according to the system and principles of the Church of England. The provision made for the clergyman was in order that he might perform here the services of the Church of England, teach here the doctrines of the Church of England, and be a minister for good to the people of this place, in all pastoral works of piety, charity, and good will, in the name and as the Representative of the Church of England; and for no other object whatever. Is there any man so dead to all sense of justice, as not to revolt against the idea of taking this away, and applying it, as Parliament may choose, towards all or any of the purposes to which Crown lands, or the public taxes and rates, may properly be applied?

But, if this would be unjust with respect to property given sixteen years ago, how is it just with respect to property

given in like manner, and for like purposes, a hundred, or even a thousand, years ago? It is a principle, not of law only but of reason and of good sense, that length of possession confirms and strengthens, rather than weakens, the titles of men, and of classes of men, to property of which they are in the actual enjoyment. This was the principle of the "Dissenters' Chapels Bill," to which I shall presently refer. The man who gave an endowment to the Church a thousand or a hundred years ago has (of course) been long dead: but the purpose is not dead. The man who gave it sixteen years ago may be dead also. In both cases alike, it ceased to belong to the giver as soon as it was given. But, in both cases, it was devoted and dedicated to a purpose which did not die with him—a purpose, in which the living men of the particular place, for the benefit of whose souls and for the help of whose lives it was provided, have continued, and still continue, and will continue for generation after generation, to have a permanent interest—the highest, indeed, and the most sacred interest, which any body or class of men can have in anything. They, for those uses, were the true objects of the gift; it was given, not to any particular clergyman who might for his own life only serve the Church, but for the people to be served by his and his successors' ministrations for ever.

There are persons who talk as if all this might be taken away, and yet nobody lose anything—who pretend to think that it might be better for the Church to be stripped of all its temporal endowments; who even accuse those Churchmen who wish to keep what is their own, and who repel with indignation schemes for taking it away, of want of faith in their Church as a spiritual institution. A great Englishman of the last century, Edmund Burke, had very little patience with language of this sort, then used by the promoters of revolution in another country: he called it "the language of fraud"—"the cant and gibberish

of hypocrisy." I will use milder forms of speech ; I will only say, that it is difficult to think such talk quite honest and sincere, though doubtless some persons may repeat it who do not perceive how very hollow and unreasonable it is. Is there any man who really supposes that the work of a Church, any more than other kinds of work, can be carried on all over the kingdom, or indeed in any place, without means ? Did not an Apostle say (and he said it was the Lord's ordinance), that "they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel ?" Do Nonconformists carry on their work without buildings of their own, appropriated to that purpose, or without a settled ministry ? Can either of them be maintained without money ? Have they not also their own endowments ? and do not they also wish to keep what they have got ? It is not so many years ago* that a powerful Nonconformist body (one of those most hostile to the Church of England) went to Parliament to be confirmed and quieted in their possession of a considerable number of chapels and other endowments, to which their titles had been found to be more than doubtful in law. They had deviated, in points of the first importance, from the doctrines held by their founders ; but Parliament, by the Dissenters' Chapels Act, gave them what they asked.

I wonder what those who talk in this way suppose would happen to members of the Church of England, rich and poor, if they were deprived of the means already provided for the maintenance of their ministry, and of their religious services, throughout the land. Take the case of this diocese of Winchester. I reckon the total amount of the endowments of the parish churches in this diocese (exclusive of the Channel Islands) to be £162,137 a year ; not quite £317 apiece, if equally divided, for the ministers of its 512 parishes. A settled ministry, in each of those parishes, could not be kept up for very much less. If, then, all the

* 1844.

existing endowments, by which this settled ministry is now kept up through the gifts of the present and former generations of Churchmen in all those parishes, were taken away, such Churchmen as may have the means and the will must find that £162,137 a year, or something like it, over again, out of their own pockets; or else the Churchmen of those parishes must be left, to a greater or less extent, without a settled ministry. Supposing there were Churchmen who could and who would do it, the effect of "Disendowment" would be, in plain English, to impose upon those Churchmen in this diocese of Winchester a pecuniary penalty or fine of something like £162,137 a year, though they are as good and loyal citizens as any in the realm, and have committed no fault against the State. The same thing would be equally true of all the other dioceses in England. The total fine (without reckoning Bishops or Chapters), would be about four millions, or more, a year. Does anybody think, that a burden of that kind, and of that magnitude, could be thrown upon the Churchmen of one generation who might be found willing to make the needful sacrifices, without crippling their means of doing good, and of meeting the other social and private demands on them, in a multitude of ways; or that it could be endured without a burning sense of injustice and wrong? If the want were *not* adequately supplied (and it cannot be expected that it *would* be adequately supplied, all at once all over the kingdom, after so violent a revolution, likely enough to bring other revolutionary changes in its train), then both rich and poor Churchmen would, in varying degrees, be sufferers: the rich, as far as they might actually bear the burden, and contribute to supply the want; the poor, in those places where the benefits of a settled ministry might be for the time altogether lost, or materially reduced; which would usually be the poorest places, where the resident clergyman may have been almost the only civilising and moralising

influence, and the chief, if not the only dispenser of the ordinary charities of life. You may depend upon it, whatever some who make evil-speaking their business may endeavour to persuade men to the contrary, the presence in every parish of a man whose duty and calling it is to be the friend and helper of all, and especially of those who cannot help themselves, in things spiritual, and so far as he can in temporal things also, is a benefit, the loss of which nothing else could ever supply to the poor. They are, of all others, the class most interested in the maintenance of that institution; even if its duties may be, in some places, and by some few of the men who are called to them, imperfectly performed.

On what pretence is it proposed to do this? I only know one which deserves to be so much as mentioned: The pretence is, that all these endowments are "national property," misapplied (as is said) for the benefit of a part of the nation, when they ought to be brought into the public treasury, and applied for the benefit of the whole.

I stop for a moment, to observe, that this argument would not be good, even if the endowments of the Church *were* national property (in the sense which it assumes), unless the Church, with its parochial ministry, were an Institution not beneficial to the nation as a whole. The presence in every place of a settled ministry, acceptable in most places to the mass, and always to great numbers of the people, and in the benefit of which those who, of their own choice, decline its ministrations, may and do, to a very large extent, participate—a ministry, devoted by its profession to all good works, and to the promotion of religion and virtue—is really beneficial, and that in a very high degree, to the whole nation. There is no public use or application, that I am aware of, of any kind of national property, more really useful to the State; none in which individual members of the nation participate, even directly and numerically, to so large an extent as they do in this.

Upon that point, however, I do not dwell, because it is *not* true that the endowments of the Church of England are, or ever were, "national property," in the sense assumed by this argument against them.

Nothing in the world is easier than to suggest false conclusions by the abuse of words. Words are often used in various senses; and to confound one of those senses with another is a very common error of those who are unconsciously misled, and (I am afraid) a not less common artifice of those who do not scruple to mislead.

The word "National" is a good example of this. National interests and National relations exist as to many things in which the nation has no proprietary right. Some people speak of all the land in England as "National;" not (I suppose) meaning that the State could, without doing wrong, treat all that land as its own. It is very common to talk of the "National wealth;" by which is meant the sum total of all the property of every kind in the nation. I have not yet heard that anybody thinks that property misapplied because it is left in the hands of its owners. There is a true sense (perhaps more than one) in which the Church of England may be called a "National Institution;" the Church of England has filled a great space, and has been a great power, in the National history; and, both as representing in various public ways the religion of the country, and as being connected with the State by those definite relations which are summed up in the word "Establishment," it has a just title to be spoken of as the "National Church." It is easy to get into a way of speaking of that which belongs to an Institution capable of being described as National, as in itself National also; but to infer, therefore, that the property of the Church of England belongs to the whole nation, as distinguished from the Church, is plainly most false reasoning.

The State, represented by the supreme legislative

power, is, of course, able to interfere with and take away the property, either of any private men, or of any Institution, or class of men, in this country. If it had not that power, I should not be here to-night, talking to you about schemes of "Disendowment." To some extent, and for some purposes, that power may rightfully be used; as, for instance, to correct any serious public mischief; or to promote (on terms of fair compensation) some public improvement; or to provide, by taxation, for the ordinary expenses of government. But it is not less certain, that States, and Parliaments, and Governments, may use their powers so as to do injustice and wrong. There is such a thing as public, as well as private, robbery; if it were otherwise, there would be no meaning in the words "oppression" and "tyranny," as applied to legislative acts of any Supreme Government in the world.

I read to you just now, on another point, some words of a very eminent living historian, Mr. Freeman. On this point also what he has written is so much to the purpose, that, after the account which I have given you of the origin and history of our Church endowments, I need do no more than just quote it to you. "Church property" (he says), "is not National property, except in the same sense in which all property is National property. It is not National property in the only strict sense of those words. It is not property of which the State is not only Sovereign, but landlord." . . . "The local bodies, which hold what we call Church property, hold estates which have been acquired at sundry times and in divers manners, from the first preaching of Christianity in England till now." . . . "But all this does not make the property of these corporations National property, in the sense in which the Crown lands, and the money which comes in from the taxes, is National property. Nor (as we have before now seen it put) is the Church

“‘trustee for the nation’—surely the oddest notion of ‘a
“‘trusteeship*’ to be found anywhere. The ecclesiastical
“corporations hold their property by the same right as any
“other holders of property.”

These words of Mr. Freeman are the more weighty because he writes impartially, and not either against or for Disestablishment or Disendowment. He says (what nobody can deny), that a law might be passed which would make Disendowment lawful. “Every act of the supreme
“power is in its own nature lawful.” . . . “In this sense,
“the State may do anything, and deal with anything; and,
“as it may deal with anything, so it may deal with Churches,
“and with all that belongs to them. Disestablishment and
“Disendowment are therefore acts, which may be either
“just or unjust. If they cannot be shown to be for the
“common good of the nation, they are unjust acts: but
“they are acts which, if done by the supreme power, are
“perfectly lawful.” I do not understand Mr. Freeman to think, that such acts would be shown to be for the common good of the nation, and therefore just, merely because they might bring in so many pounds a year to the public revenue, which could be applied in paying the Army or Navy, or the interest of the National Debt, or anything else, which Parliament might determine.

I have finished what I wished to say to you on the subject of “Endowment” and “Disendowment.” The endowments of the Church are not effects or consequences of those relations of the Church of England to the State, which are denoted by the word “Establishment.” The legal forms under which they have been held by and secured to

* I have substituted, that I might be better understood, the word “trusteeship” for the technical term of law, “*cestui que trust*”; which is used by Mr. Freeman, and which signifies a person for whom property is held in trust by another.

the Church, and the Acts of the Supreme Legislature passed, at various times, for their better protection and regulation, have (no doubt) been influenced by those special relations of the Church to the State. But the protection of the Church by the law of the land in the possession of its property is not itself one of those relations:—Nonconformists are also protected by the law of the land in the possession of property held by them on perpetual trusts for the purposes of their religion, although those trusts may be less ancient, and of less value and amount. Nor is there anything which affects the substance of the case in the difference between the forms of those trusts, and the form under which the property of the Church of England is generally held—the perpetual succession of its Bishops and parochial clergy, as immemorial corporations, in whom that property is vested. A Nonconformist body might obtain charters from the Crown, incorporating the trustees of any of its endowments, with perpetual succession; or it might obtain their incorporation under the provisions of public Acts of Parliament (such as the Companies Acts); or it might cause any of those endowments to be vested in the Public Official Trustee of Charities, under the Charitable Trusts Acts; but it would not thereby, or for any such reason, become an “Established” Church. And although the number and the character of the Acts of Parliament relating to the Church of England and to its property has, undoubtedly, been affected by its special relations to the State, it is not one of those special relations, or any peculiarity of the Church of England, that it should be subject in temporal matters to regulation and control by the supreme legislature. Parliament has passed Acts (not indeed so many, nor of the same character in all respects), and it may again pass others, as to Nonconformist bodies and their property; as in the instance, to which I have more than once referred, of the “Dissenters’” Chapels Act of

1844. The property held in trust for the religious purposes of Nonconformists is equally subject with that held in trust for the Church to public superintendence and regulation by the Charity Commissioners, and by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice.

Of the peculiar relations of the Church of England to the State, which make the difference between it as an "Established" Church and other religious bodies as "un-established," it remains for me to say something, but what I say shall not be long.

Those relations (whatever appearance some of them may wear) will be found, when examined, to be in their real nature securities taken by the State against possible excesses of uncontrolled ecclesiastical power, rather than privileges conferred upon the Church by the State. The power and influence, in any country, of a great Church (such as the Church of England is now, and would not cease to be, even if it were disestablished and disendowed) is and must be great. It is a thing necessarily to be taken account of by the rulers of any nation. We are not without experience, very near home, of the disturbance of social and political systems, which may be caused or fomented by such a power, if its spirit is hostile to the State; which, through human infirmity, a policy hostile to itself on the part of the State may easily make it. In times when there was no balance to the power of the Church of England from any opposing forces of Nonconformity, and when its use of that power was liable to be affected by its foreign connections, the State had reasons for treating its laws and institutions as matters to be recognised, and to some extent regulated and controlled, by the public law of the land, stronger, perhaps, than those which still exist. Historically, and as a matter of fact, that result came to pass without any formal conflict, compact, or definite scheme of policy; it arose, naturally and imperceptibly, out of the mutual action of the civil or

political power on the religious, and of the religious power on the civil.

The essence of "Establishment" (in my view) consists in the recognition of ecclesiastical or Church law as (within its own limits) part of the public law of the realm. In consequence of that recognition, the courts in which it is administered are regarded as public courts, directly controllable (when they exceed their proper jurisdiction) by the Queen's Supreme Court of Justice ; and subject (since the Reformation) to a right of appeal, when they act within their jurisdiction, to a Royal Court. For the same reason, all legislation, by which that ecclesiastical law may be from time to time altered, or by which any new means of enforcing it may be provided, now requires the consent of the State, by its proper constitutional authorities—the Queen, for some purposes ; for others, the Queen and Parliament.

The difference, in this respect, between the Church of England and Nonconformists is, not that Nonconformists are exempt from State authority and control as to their laws, or as to the voluntary tribunals by which they enforce them ; but that the powers of the State over them are exercised under different forms, and (in practice) to a more limited extent. If any of them should have, or should happen to make for themselves, any laws contrary to the general laws of the State, the courts of the realm would as surely deny efficacy and authority to those laws as to any canons of the Church of England made without the assent of the Crown, or (if made with that assent) inconsistent with Acts of Parliament. The voluntary tribunals of Nonconformists stand upon the footing of mutual agreement among their members, and are not recognised as public courts ; they are, therefore, not subject to "prohibition," or to a direct appeal to any Royal Court. But, if the validity of any of their sentences, affecting pulpits, chapels, or the interest of any minister or other person in any of their endowments, is

disputed, they can only be enforced by the Queen's authority, as exercised in the ordinary courts of the realm ; and any person who thinks himself aggrieved by any such sentence may seek redress in those courts. In any such case, it is for those courts to decide, whether, in the procedure which has led to the disputed sentence, there has been any departure from the essential principles of justice ; and, if not, whether the tribunal which pronounced the sentence had authority to do so as to the matter in question, consistently with the general laws of the realm, and also with the laws, doctrines, and discipline of the religious body concerned, and with the terms of any particular deed of trust which may affect the case.

Of the existing terms and conditions or political incidents of the "Establishment" of the Church of England, one—the presence of Bishops as "Lords Spiritual" in the House of Lords—is as old as the beginning of our Parliamentary system, of which taxation was at first the main object. The Bishops and the heads of the greater abbeys (who were then also summoned to Parliament) stood towards Church lands in much the same position as the great barons who held their estates directly from the Crown stood towards the general body of other lay landowners. The chief motive for originally calling them to meet the King in Parliament was in the one case lay, and in the other ecclesiastical, taxation. And the assemblies of the clergy of the Church of England in their Convocations summoned by the Archbishops under the Queen's Writ as often as a new Parliament is elected, and dissolved simultaneously with the dissolution of every Parliament, had also a similar origin.

Laws affecting the Establishment of the Church, in some very material points, were made at the time of the Reformation ; but to say that its "Establishment" consists in, or was originated by, those laws, is a plain historical error. The most important of these were the laws by which the clergy

were prevented from holding Convocations without the King's writ, and from enacting or putting in force any canons without the permission of the Crown—by which the right of nominating all English Bishops was secured to the Crown—and by which appeals to Rome in ecclesiastical causes were prohibited, and that Royal Court of Appeal from the sentences of Church courts established, which continued till about fifty years ago, when its jurisdiction was transferred to a new court, then in like manner established by Parliament.

These statutes were all limitations and restraints by the State, in its own interest, and on grounds of public policy, upon the powers of the Church. There are, probably, Churchmen, to whom "Disestablishment," if it meant only the abolition of such limitations and restraints as these, might be more or less acceptable. If the authorities of the State should consider that these terms and conditions of "Establishment," or any of them, had ceased to be necessary or useful, and if a proposal were made to remove or relax them without stripping the Church of its endowments, it would hardly be from the clergy that the chief opposition to such a proposal might be expected to come. But, as that is a proposal which is not likely to be made, it may be well for the clergy, and for all laymen to whom it might be attractive, to remember that our fathers, for above three centuries, endured without any impatience those terms and conditions; that they have not prevented the Church of England from doing efficiently and well, upon the whole, its proper work, nor from continually renewing and extending its spiritual life, energy, and usefulness; and that the extent to which, and the manner in which, the civil power might interfere with the external rights and forms of action, even of a disestablished, but still powerful, Church, must always, and necessarily, depend on the will of the supreme Legislative Power of the State.

I wish, before concluding, to refer, for the assistance of your judgment on this question of "Disestablishment" and "Disendowment," to the testimony of a very remarkable man upon the Continent of Europe; a man of great age, virtue, and learning, and also of great opportunities of observation and knowledge of the present condition of the Church and the world; a man, too, whose own ecclesiastical position is so peculiar, as to give the weight of complete impartiality to his opinion. I mean Dr. Döllinger, the famous leader of the "Old Catholics," who separated themselves a few years ago from the Roman Catholic Church on account of the decree made by the Vatican Council at Rome for establishing the Infallibility of the Pope as an article of faith. A distinguished clergyman of the Church of England (Canon Liddon) visited Dr. Döllinger, in Bavaria, last year, at the time when Mr. Gladstone's Address to the Electors of Midlothian appeared. There was a paragraph in it relating to the question of Disestablishment, as one which this country might possibly have to decide at some future time. Dr. Döllinger said, with respect to that paragraph:—"For my part, I think that any such measure should be firmly resisted. It would be a blow to Christianity, not only in England, but throughout Europe." He repeated his words with increased emphasis. "Without maintaining that intimate association with the civil power had always been an advantage to religion, or that the existing relations of Church and State in England are of an ideal description, or that, if disestablished and disendowed, the Church of England would perish as a religious body, or that she might not, after an interval, enjoy a more vigorous life than now, at least in some respects—he yet held that the broadest and most serious aspect of such a catastrophe would be that of a blow to the cause of religion throughout Christendom. If such a measure were adopted by a country with a history like

“that of England, there could be no mistake as to its
“significance. It would be well understood, alike by the
“friends and by the foes of Christianity; in Germany, in
“France—throughout the civilised world.”

Canon Liddon made this conversation public, in a letter which appeared in the *Times* newspaper, of the 17th October last, adding these observations :

“Dr. Döllinger is 86 years old. There is nothing to
“engage his sympathies on either side in English politics,
“unless it be his long friendship with and sincere regard
“for Mr. Gladstone. But he probably knows more of the
“history of Christendom than any other living man ; and
“few there are, if any, who can review, with a survey so
“comprehensive and so equitable, the various influences
“which, from without or from within, affect, in whatever
“sense, the Christianity of our day. Dr. Döllinger’s
“opinions partake of the moral elevation and disinterested-
“ness which is illustrated by his whole career. His
“judgment in the present matter will not weigh with those
“who have persuaded themselves that the Christian creed
“is untrue, or that the practical influence of Christianity is
“mischievous. But such a judgment will not be wholly
“disregarded by any Christians, whether within or without
“the pale of the Church of England, who can understand
“the claims of high character and wide knowledge to
“pronounce upon a question, the more important bearings
“of which are apt to be lost sight of among our more
“confined horizons, and especially in the heat and dust of
“political conflict.”



