





LIBRARY  
OF THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF ILLINOIS





# THE NATIONAL CHURCH REFORM UNION.

1 ADAM STREET, ADELPHI, W.C.

---

---

*Why should you support the Church Reform Union?*

Because it is probable that the National Church of England will before long be *destroyed* unless it is *reformed*, and it cannot be reformed except by the influence of public opinion, and public opinion cannot be properly roused and guided except by an organization.

Without being either excited or frightened, we may refuse to shut our eyes any longer to the fact that the fate of the Church of England as a National Church will soon have to be settled. One after another all our great institutions are being brought up for judgment, and the turn of the Church will soon be here. While those who wish for Disestablishment are daily growing more vehement and pressing\*, the Union maintains that *Christian needs will be better satisfied with the preservation than with the destruction of the Church Establishment.*

*This preservation cannot be secured without reform*; for the coming struggle will be such that the Church will not be able to survive it, unless helped beforehand to lay aside every weight and the sins that most easily beset such institutions. We must weaken the attack by removing the faults which provoke it, and we must strengthen the defence by increasing the effectiveness of the Church.

*And no time must be lost.* Should this question once be made the war-cry of political parties the prospect of discreet settlement would be small. For our political arrangements have handed the ultimate decision of such matters chiefly to those who form swift and sweeping judgments,—men who will give their verdict against us in a moment, unless they can be brought to understand, not only that a National Church is a desirable Institution, but that the existing Church of England is in the main what such a Church should be. The Union intends to work on both these lines; firstly, to spread throughout the land a true appreciation of the principles upon which our National Church is to be upheld, and, secondly, to remove all hindrances to its effectiveness by Reform.

\* Nearly *fourteen thousand pounds* were raised last year to spend upon the agitation for the Disestablishment of the Church which is being urged on by the Liberation Society.

*But even if the National Church of England were in no danger of destruction, this Union would still claim your adhesion and support.*

For if the Church is not going to be disestablished, there is the more reason why it should be improved. No patriot can be contented with the present condition of his countrymen, and no Christian can doubt that to religion we must chiefly look for any real improvement. This religion must not be left to the chance and partial efforts of private societies, but must be systematically brought to bear so as to tell upon national character. This can only be done by a Church which is national in reality as well as name, and the Union wishes to remove whatever hinders the Church of England from being fully so. Therefore this Union invites the earnest support, not only of those who wish to have the National Church preserved, but also of all who long to see the national life purified.

The system of the Church, when set free from drawbacks which form no essential part of its constitution and strengthened by the comprehension of all that naturally belongs to it, will commend itself to the masses of the people as that most favorable to religious activity and religious freedom. No revolutionary measures are needed. In effecting each needed reform the Union relies solely on those methods of legislation to which the Church of England has been indebted for its advance from the Reformation to the present time. Its immediate objects are to strengthen the Church by giving the laity more power, and therefore more interest, in its administration, and by removing those abuses, especially the sale of patronage, which are the frequent causes of scandal, and therefore of weakness. It proposes to free the clergy from such restrictions as are now unnecessary, to diminish their secular anxieties by a system of superannuation, and to utilize the resources of the Church by a readjustment of incomes.

But the Union is not formed merely to carry certain specific measures. It is intended to be a Society generally to promote growth and progress within the National Church. All members will have an influence in its guidance, so that its efforts may, from time to time, be directed to the removal of whatever is deemed a hindrance, and the establishment of whatever may be thought a help, to the work of the Church of England.

The Council invites all who sympathize with these objects to communicate with them, so that they may know who and where are the friends upon whom they can rely.







