

THE CHURCH OF IRELAND SINCE HER DIS- ESTABLISHMENT AND DISENDOWMENT.

TO English Churchmen, in the increasingly probable prospect of Disestablishment and Disendowment, there is no more interesting and suggestive subject than that of the history and present position of the Disestablished Church of Ireland. Any unprejudiced person who, like the writer, has worked for even a few months in Dublin, and so become in a measure acquainted with Church life there, and from it as a centre has gleaned some information about the condition and working of that Church throughout the rest of Ireland, can scarcely fail to regard with thankfulness and wonder the tokens of God's good hand over her in spite of all her peculiar difficulties. It would indeed be most unwise and rash, as we shall endeavour to show at the close of this paper, to build on such facts any conclusions as to the advisability of a similar treatment of our own beloved National Church. Our special purpose is to present to our English readers a résumé of the principal features, financial, ecclesiastical, doctrinal, and spiritual, of the reformed Church of Ireland in the present day.

First, then, as regards finance. It reflects the highest credit on our Irish brethren that since 1869, when their Church was disestablished and stripped of most of its endowments, they have contributed (in round numbers) the sum of five millions sterling towards the maintenance of their clergy. During that period of thirty-five years they have built two cathedrals, one in Cork, the other in Belfast; erected a large number of new churches and restored others; built many glebe or parsonage houses and other parochial buildings; and raised for the foreign missions of the C.M.S., S.P.G., and other societies an annual sum, constantly, of about £43,000. All this, and more, has been done without any substantial help from England or elsewhere. The amount collected by the Misses Nugent in this country for the help of poor parishes in Ireland is only on an average £1,000 a year. All the rest has been raised within that Church's own pale, and those figures attest in the most satisfactory manner the devotion and liberality of Irish Churchmen, only a few of whom are possessed of any large share of wealth. In addition to all this, very recently an appeal has been made to meet an urgent and unexpected difficulty by raising an auxiliary fund of £250,000 in five years. The necessity for this has not arisen from any falling off of the ordinary sources of income. It has rather been occasioned by two facts stated in that appeal: (1) The Land Act of 1903 for the sale of estates, however

generally beneficial to the country, has threatened to seriously cripple the resources of the Church. It appears that the reinvestment of her remaining capital, which had been invested at about $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. in mortgages on Irish land, can now yield only 3 per cent. (or 25 per cent. less), and would entail a loss in the aggregate of not less than £30,000 a year. (2) Moreover, the changed position of landlords will, it is feared, cause the removal of many of them from Ireland, and the very serious loss of their subscriptions. This appeal from the Archbishops and Bishops has been already most generously responded to not only by the wealthier classes, but by the poorer members. Early in the present year £66,010 was lodged with the Representative Body by the several dioceses. Of this £28,356 8s. 7d. was contributed by the Metropolitan diocese. From the whole Church about £200,000 towards the required sum has been already either paid or promised. It had been found that these anticipated losses could not have been averted by a reduction of the stipend of the clergy, since as many as 300 of the 1,500 incumbents, besides the curates, were receiving less than £200 a year, barely a living wage, which obviously did not admit of curtailment. And yet, if no special effort had been made, a general proportionate cutting down of salaries would have been inevitable. Indeed, already its poorer incumbents had begun to suffer, for it had been necessary to reduce by one-half a payment of £10 a year made to them in lieu of glebe rents. Nor, again, could an amalgamation of parishes beyond certain limits have been effected without injury to the Church in rural and scattered districts. For these reasons this appeal has been addressed to landed proprietors, farmers, the professional and commercial classes, as well as to persons of more limited means, and all have been urged, according to their ability, to "recognise more fully the duty of making adequate provision for the permanent maintenance of the Church of their fathers." One circumstance will, it is hoped, enable landlords, before parting with their property and leaving Ireland, to substitute a capital sum by way of endowment for the subscriptions which they have hitherto paid. The provision made by the Act of a bonus payable to the tenant for life makes this possible. It is surprising to hear that the stipend capital now belonging to the Church amounts to about £8,000,000, representing not only the original sum paid over by the State in 1871, but chiefly accumulations during the lives of the annuitant clergy in the intervening years, resulting from the gifts of Churchmen having been used to replace the commutation capital as fast as it was eaten up by the annuities charged upon it. In addition to all these heavy charges, two

other urgent calls are being made on the members of the Church of great importance to the wellbeing of the clergy and of the whole corporate body.

The first of these is for the Superannuation Fund for clergy permanently disabled by age or infirmity. A Bill for this purpose was enacted by the General Synod in the present year. Applicants for retiring allowances must be not less than seventy years of age, and have served for at least forty years in the Church of Ireland. These will receive annuities of £200 or under, according to their income. But if they have served at least twenty years and become permanently disabled, they will receive a proportionately smaller annuity. Recipients of such pensions may not undertake or discharge any paid ministerial duty in Ireland or elsewhere, not being occasional or private duty undertaken with the consent of the Representative Body. To the fund for this purpose every diocese has to contribute a sum equal to 3.75 over the total amount of the ecclesiastical incomes of the clergy of the diocese. The pension is not to exceed in each case two-thirds of that amount or of the recipient's ecclesiastical income, whichever is the smaller, the maximum being £200 per annum, or one-sixtieth for each year of service. This certainly appears to be an excellent arrangement, and might well be adopted, *mutatis mutandis*, in our own Church. Then there is the Widows and Orphans' Fund, which must be a source of very great advantage to the married clergy, through the provision which it makes to their families. It is derived chiefly from the annual contributions of the clergy who receive stipends from the Representative Body and are not more than forty years of age. Those who remain unmarried, or widowers without children, are required to pay £6 a year to the fund. Others, being married and above forty years of age, are admitted as contributors upon such terms as the Board, with the advice of an actuary, may determine. It is the complaint of some that these arrangements act as a premium on marriage, and inflict hardship upon celibates who remain such, by compelling them to contribute to the support of the families of their married brethren. How this part of the system works out we are not prepared to say; but it is an excellent idea to remove from the minds of the clergy much painful anxiety about the future of those most dear to them in the event of their own death. It may indeed be open to question whether our own Clergy Mutual Assurance Society has not put this matter on a freer and firmer footing. Still, we must admit that the Irish Church is far more careful

than our own in providing for the temporal wants of the clergy and their families.

Passing from this part of our subject, we will now briefly notice the methods employed for the maintenance of the churches and of the glebe-houses. The former obligation rests with the select vestry, who are to provide from the funds at their disposal the requisites of Divine service, and for the upkeep of the churches and of other parochial buildings. As to the glebes, or glebe, that is, parsonage houses, the incumbent at his appointment has to execute and accept a lease of the property, and to hand over to the Representative Body the annual sum payable for the glebe, without any deductions for rates, taxes, etc.; whilst that body undertakes all landlord's—that is, external—repairs and those of a permanent character, and to paint the house externally as often as they consider necessary, and to keep it insured. In the cases of incumbents for whom no residence is provided, the sum of £10 is added to their stipends in aid of house-rent. When repairs of glebe-houses are needed, the Representative Body informs the select vestry, and inquires whether they can, on behalf of the parish, provide all or any portion of the required sum, or the interest on that sum, so as to relieve the incumbent from the charge. In these and other ways, which we will not minutely describe, the burden of dilapidations, which presses so heavily on our clergy or their heirs, is in great measure borne by the general Church body or the select vestry of the parish. The incumbent receives nothing from the glebe, but, on the other hand, is not liable for the most serious repairs.

We will now pass from the secular side of Irish Church work to glance at the chief features of its minor operations and organization. Anyone who will take the trouble to study the constitution of that Church as framed by the General Convention of 1871 can scarcely fail to be impressed with the remarkable wisdom, soundness of judgment, and spiritual power given at that most trying crisis to the leaders, lay and clerical alike. Set free from State trammels, they applied themselves to reorganize, not to revolutionize, their Church polity and government. The Church, whilst she reverently and devoutly acknowledged her dependence on Christ, her Divine head, declared the General Synod, composed of Bishops, other clergy, and laymen from all her dioceses, to have the chief legislative power therein. This Synod consists of the House of Bishops, 208 representatives of the clergy, and 416 of the laity. The Bishops have the right to vote separately from the representatives, and no question can be decided unless with a majority of the Bishops and a majority of the

representatives voting conjointly or by orders. It is, however, remarkable that a separate voting by Houses very seldom occurs, and has not been taken for the last ten years at least. The power to call for a vote by orders was evidently reserved as a remedy for any difficulty that might arise from the number of the laity. From an English Churchman's point of view it would seem, to say the least, a very doubtful arrangement that the laity should outnumber the clergy in the relation of two to one.

In the Life of Archbishop Magee—who, as previously an Irish clergyman and Dean of Cork and Dean of the Chapel Royal, was deeply interested in the welfare of the Church of his baptism, and was assigned a prominent part in its reorganization—we find from a letter to a friend that he foresaw “three rocks coming over the surface already.” They were (1) liturgical revision, (2) lay tyranny, and (3) schism between the North and the South. And he then wrote: “Still, I think you will weather them all; but the second is your greatest danger.” So it might well have appeared to such a cautious and statesmanlike Prelate as he. But the event has wonderfully modified—if it has not wholly removed—the grounds of his fears. His masterly speech in the House of Lords against the passing of the Bill for Disestablishment, though it did not arrest the blow dealt against the Irish Church by Mr. Gladstone and his Ministry, probably had the effect of mitigating its force and of obtaining better terms for the despoiled Church. With respect to the prominence given to the laity in the General Synod, it may be well to add that an important member of that Synod, thoroughly conversant with the situation past and present, explained to the writer that it was thought likely that laymen, with their many claims on their time and thoughts, would oftener than the clergy be unable to attend the Synod, and that therefore it would be safer to elect a double number of them, in order that their voice might be duly and proportionately heard in its deliberations. Such has proved to be the case, and we are told by those best acquainted with the proceedings that, especially in recent years, they have been singularly free from friction and bitterness of spirit. This in an assembly of impulsive and warm-hearted Irishmen is not a little remarkable. It should be understood that the numbers of representatives for the various dioceses are proportioned to the Church population and importance of each; in fact, both the General and Diocesan Synods are far more truly representative than our own Houses of Convocation. The qualifications of a lay representative are that he should be at least of the age of twenty-one, a member of the Church of Ireland, a com-

municant, and should have signed a declaration to that effect. All such are eligible for election in any diocese. There are, therefore, no requirements about social status, as to being a ratepayer and the like, as with us. No place in the constitution seems as yet to be found for women. They are not even eligible for churchwardenships, as in our Church. As to the appointment to "livings," none are absolutely in the gift of Bishops, and, except in a few cases, of individuals. Each Diocesan Synod elects one layman and two clergymen from its members to form, with its Bishop, a committee of patronage for the diocese. In addition to these the registered vestrymen of each parish elect three persons, who are ready to act with the committee in the appointment of an incumbent for their own parish when a vacancy may occur. In this way the parishioners have a voice in the selection of their own clergyman, whilst their influence is counterbalanced by the wider experience and riper judgment of the Bishop and of the nominees of the whole diocese. There would seem to be much wisdom in this arrangement. No room is left for the discretion or indiscretion of a single patron. Again, the laity are assigned considerable power in the parish vestries. All male parishioners of twenty-one years of age who have signed a declaration of their belonging to the Church of Ireland are entitled to become registered vestrymen and to vote at the Easter vestry, etc. The select vestry consists of the incumbent, his curates, the churchwardens, and not more than twelve persons appointed from and by the Easter vestry. It has the control and charge of all parochial charities and church funds, provides from the funds at its disposal the requirements for Divine service, is bound to keep the church and parochial buildings in repair, and has the appointment and control of all church and parish officials and servants. The churchwardens are appointed, as with us, one by the incumbent, the other by the Easter vestry. The only difference is that both must be taken from the registered vestrymen, and not from outside the pale of the Church. In this and other ways ample scope is given to laymen, if they are disposed to rise to their opportunities. This would appear to have in many cases the effect of interesting them practically in their Church's work, and so of stimulating their liberality and their zeal in cooperating with their ministers in the service of God.

In conclusion, it may be well to recapitulate the principal changes which were introduced in 1871, and have been since retained, as to the ordering of Divine worship and the administration of the Sacraments. In the first place, all the unhappy disputes occasioned amongst ourselves by the am-

biguous Ornaments Rubric have been summarily ended by its removal. By Canon IV., Chap. IX., it is distinctly laid down that, "Every Archbishop and Bishop shall use the customary ecclesiastical apparel of his Order, and every Presbyter and Deacon shall wear a plain white surplice with sleeves, and may wear bands, the customary scarf, and, being graduates of a University, the hood of their degree." A plain black gown for preaching is also permitted. With these explicit directions no place is left for ritualistic vestments. Lighted candles on the Communion Table, except for the purpose of giving light, incense or any substitution (*sic*), crosses on or behind the Table, processions with a cross, banner, or picture through a church in any religious service, are all strictly forbidden. It is also prescribed that the "Table" itself shall be a movable table of wood, with such a covering as the Ordinary shall approve of. The "north side" of the Holy Table is defined to be "that side or end which in churches lying east and west is towards the north." This precludes an "eastward position." No sign of the cross is to be used, except when prescribed by the rubric. Bowing or acts of obeisance to the Lord's Table, or anything there or thereon, and the ringing of a bell during Divine service, can have no place. One more very important alteration in the Irish Prayer-Book must not be omitted. It relates to the Athanasian Creed. That ancient and invaluable symbol of the Catholic faith is retained in the Liturgy without any change or diminution in its clear and forcible statement of the faith; but the rubric enjoining its public recital has been removed, as being inexpedient in some, if not in all, cases, and since the Creed is so liable to be misunderstood. The appeal to it in the Thirty-nine Articles remains as it always has been. This was surely a wiser course than that adopted by the American Episcopal Church, in expunging the Creed itself and its endorsement from the Prayer-Book and the Articles of faith. If the action of our Irish brethren in this matter were followed with authority in our own Liturgy, many painful scruples would be relieved, and the hearts of probably a majority of loyal Churchmen would rejoice.

As regards the whole question of Disestablishment, its gains and losses, we may quote from an excellent pamphlet by Dr. Bernard, now Dean of St. Patrick's, on the present position of the Irish Church. He there wrote: "Disestablishment has not, of course, been an unmixed blessing. But two great advantages at least it has secured for the Church: (1) Autonomy, the freedom to legislate for herself in correspondence with her need; and (2) it has brought about the hearty cooperation of the laity with the clergy in the work of

the Church. This last is a matter of great importance. Nothing has done so much to attach the laity to the Church in Ireland as the work which has been given them to do." But if all these gains should be used as an argument for a similar treatment of our own Church, not by a stalwart High Churchman like Mr. Gladstone, but by a Radical and anti-religious Government, we may quote a humorous appendix to the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is attributed to the late Dr. Salmon. The narrative leaves the wounded man at the inn; but the apocryphal story proceeds to tell us that when the patient was convalescent some visitors called to see him. He thought that their faces were familiar, but was not sure of them until they began to speak. Then they proved to be the robbers who had caused his misfortunes. "How are you, my good friend?" they came in with outstretched hands. "We are so glad to see you so much better. Now, did we not really do you a good turn that day when we interrupted your journey and relieved you of your superfluous cash? You were a little hurt for the moment, but it was nothing. We are so glad to see that you have got all that you want for your frugal requirements! Do take care of yourself in future! We shall always be glad to hear of your welfare!" May we not as English Churchmen apply the parable by anticipation to ourselves when threatened with even worse treatment?

"De te fabula narratur."

WILLIAM BURNET.

THE JEWISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE HIGHER CRITICISM.

IN his article in the July number of *THE CHURCHMAN* on "Our Position in Reference to Biblical Criticism," the Dean of Canterbury touches on the attitude of the Jews towards the contentions of the Wellhausen school of criticism.¹ No fair-minded Jew could regard Dr. Wace's

¹ No. 226, p. 502: "It is striking to notice the attitude of the Jews themselves towards the critical position represented by the school of Wellhausen. The contentions of that school appear to me to be incompatible with the Christian faith, but they are beyond question absolutely destructive of the Jewish faith; and I ventured to say as much to an eminent Jewish scholar, and to ask him why no great effort appeared to have been made by Jews to reply to the Wellhausen school. He made a gesture of something like impatience, and said that there were some things too absurd to be answered, and that he and his friends were content to wait 'until this tyranny be overpast.'"