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Discussions.

[The contributions contained under this heading are comments on articles in the previous number of the CHURCHMAN. The writer of the article criticized may reply in the next issue of the magazine; then the discussion in each case terminates. Contributions to the "Discussions" must reach the Editors before the 12th of the month.]

"TITHES AND THE POOR."

(The "Churchman," April, 1913, p. 267.)

DR. CHADWICK, in the fourth of his very interesting articles on "The Church and the Poor," says: "What seems quite clear is that in the ninth and tenth centuries (with one important exception) the system of poor relief associated with the name of Charlemagne was that which was generally in force in our own country. The exception to which I refer is that in England a *third*, and not, as in France, a fourth, of the tithe was devoted to the relief of the poor." In support of this statement he quotes the "Canons of Ælfric." But Lord Selborne, in "A Defence of the Church of England," concludes his examination of these Canons (who Ælfric was is a subject of dispute) and two other "authorities" which have been quoted for the view put forth by Dr. Chadwick, by asserting they are of no value in this respect, and adds: "It would be too long a digression if I were to say more about these documents. They constitute the whole and sole evidence in support of the opinion that either a fourfold or a threefold division of tithes was ever the law or customs of this kingdom, or any part of it. Well might Mr. Soames say: 'To build arguments affecting the characters of past clergymen and the interests of present upon obscure compilations by unknown authors is hardly reasonable.'"

In the present contention with regard to the disendowment of the Church in Wales, as also in regard to tithes and their possession and use generally, this point is of vital importance, and I should be glad to know on what grounds Dr. Chadwick takes a position which Lord Selborne seems to show is untenable.

W. J. PRICE.

