

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE
CHURCHMAN

JULY, 1883.

ART. I.—THE CHURCH OF IRELAND.

THREE years have now elapsed since the “new departure” in Irish policy was initiated by the present Government. More than thirteen have passed away since Mr. Gladstone tried his first experiment on the Irish Church. Ample time has therefore been given to test the results of measures which, whether for good or for evil, have affected so materially the social condition of the sister island. So far as the Land Laws are concerned, the original changes were, by the confession of their authors, crude and imperfect, inasmuch as within ten years they felt themselves compelled to execute a change of front. But, apart from political considerations, the time has now arrived to “take stock” of the net results of the so-called policy of conciliation, and to examine what has been the true effect of the “healing measures” which were tendered as an Eirenicon by the Prime Minister and his colleagues.

The time is not yet come when it is possible to speak impartially of the attitude assumed by the Irish Irreconcilables, or of the wisdom of such measures as the Protection of Life and Property and the Crimes Act. No one would assert that the existing temper of the Irish masses is satisfactory, or that the attitude of the Nationalists is consistent with the flimsiest pretence of loyalty to their sovereign. Ministers themselves would confess readily enough to disappointment in these respects. What is desirable is to take a retrospect of the position of the Protestant Church in Ireland now, as compared with that which it occupied in 1868, and to see how it has been affected, not only directly by disestablishment and disendowment, but also indirectly by the successive measures which have dealt with the tenure of land in Ireland.

Those who have read the comments of the late Bishop

Wilberforce on the state of the Irish Church on the occasion of more than one "progress" which he made through that country, will have noticed the critical tone in which he speaks of its clergy and organization. Sometimes, indeed, he has done scant justice either to individuals or to the system. But, in the main, the difficulties under which it laboured are clearly pointed out, and the blots hit which were inherent in its somewhat anomalous position. As the Primate observed on one occasion, the Irish Nation, up to 1830, meant the Protestants of Ireland; now it means the numerical majority of Ireland, who are undoubtedly Roman Catholics. In the ownership of land, in all the liberal professions, and in most positions of trust and control, they are a minority. Counting heads, they probably outnumber all other denominations in the ratio of about three to one. Curiously enough, one of the reforms introduced to strike at the root of nepotism and pluralism in the Established Church of Ireland, had really operated in an opposite direction to that intended. The old "unions" of parishes, which grouped localities in which the Protestant population was sparse, were gradually broken up during the last half century of the existence of the Church. The change was made with a laudable object. Its real effect was to reduce the influence of many able men to a minimum, by allotting to them cures without congregations, and confining them to a limited area, instead of placing them in a position to superintend and organize the labour of others. Thus it happened that the number of the Protestant clergy of Ireland was in many districts out of all proportion to that of their congregations. No doubt the gain, from a social point of view, was considerable. The presence of a Christian gentleman and his family constituted a centre of education and of culture in every parish, and notably so in those districts in which the sphere of direct labour was the most limited.

On the other hand, the clergy themselves were too often either not fully employed, or devoted themselves, in the absence of their more special work, to the humbler office of "serving tables" and becoming the almoners of a population to whom they were precluded by circumstances from otherwise ministering. A redistribution of parishes and of parochial stipends, following the lines, not of an ecclesiastical organization which had become obsolete, but of the present spiritual needs of the country, would have been desirable. In place of this, the Irish Church Act looked only to the compensation of the clergy for their vested interests, taking no account of those of their flocks. The result has been that while existing incumbents, and, to some extent, their curates, are fully provided for by the terms of the Act, they alone escaped from the

general disaster which befell the Church of Ireland. The provision which the Legislature made for her future has been inadequate to meet her requirements, even had the Irish Church Act been the sole blow dealt to the Establishment. This, however, as we shall show hereafter, has not been the case.

The first step to be taken was a return to the old system of unions of parishes. Owing to local prejudices and personal considerations, this could only be imperfectly carried out in the first instance. Much, therefore, still remains to be done in this direction. Many scattered Protestant families could be far better dealt with by providing their minister with the means of locomotion in the week, and themselves with those of coming once to church on Sundays, than by awarding to them a separate minister and service. From an economical point of view, such an arrangement worked better, while it secured to them the benefit of remaining members of a *congregation*. But the stipends assigned to future incumbents were inadequate for the purpose. Two hundred and fifty a year, with a house often too large for such an income, is not an adequate remuneration for an educated gentleman who has little to look for in the way of promotion, and no means of increasing his income. The generous liberality of Mr. Goulding, the late member for the city of Cork, in formulating a scheme for the endowment of "prize parishes" with £500 a year, would have done much to lessen the tension of the situation had it met with more imitators. As it is, there is a deficiency in candidates for Orders, both in the quantity and quality of the applicants. A young man, unless he possess exceptional earnestness and self-denial, shrinks from entering a profession in which he must remain for many years a subordinate, and can look forward only to a pittance when he succeeds to a parish. Even then it is never quite certain that his parishioners, if he happen to offend them, will make up the quota of their assessment. He may, therefore, find his narrow stipend still further diminished by the petulance or parsimony of his flock. It is no answer to reply that he has the richer members of the community at his back, while the Roman Catholic priesthood are maintained by the contributions of the poor. No one has ever yet denied the cheapness of a celibate priesthood, while the "dues" of the "Parish Priest" can be exacted in a way which is not open to the Protestant Rector.

This brings us, however, to the threshold of another branch of the subject, the effects of the subsequent changes in the Land Laws upon the disestablished Church of Ireland. This is a point the full bearings of which are very little understood on this side of the Channel. Yet the simple truth is, that

whether that legislation was justifiable or not, from a political point of view—a question which we are not now considering—it has meant nothing short of ruin to the smaller resident landowners of Ireland. These men, already far too few in number to form a substantial middle-class population, with incomes ranging from £400 to £1,200 a year, have been either blotted out altogether, or almost hopelessly impoverished. This fact comes out strongly in the returns of the Commissioners of Intermediate Education, and in the decline of all local colleges and schools. A case is before us in which an old-established educational institution, with a former average of seventy boarders, can now boast seven only. The decadence commenced with the inability of the Irish clergy to give their sons an education costing some sixty guineas a year, and was completed by the spread of the same malady among the local gentry since the days of the Land League. As a rule, the land of the smaller proprietors was highly rented, judged by the new official standard, in comparison especially with the great absentee estates. Very often they were subject to heavy family charges bearing a high rate of interest. These proprietors had not only to bear the full brunt of an investigation the present effects of which were avowedly directed against those who could not afford to meet them; they had to see their rents heavily reduced before their eyes, and to meet the exceptional expenses entailed upon them by valuations and by actual litigation. And all this just at a moment when the chief portion of the expense of maintaining the services of their Church had been thrown upon them, and when they were expected to be “cheerful givers” out of funds which had been so cruelly attenuated. It is an undoubted truth that the immunity from such demands which they had enjoyed for generations had left many of them much to learn in the exercise of a Christian liberality. But it is equally true that no more unfortunate moment could have been selected for the inculcation of such a lesson than the one at which, for a “political necessity,” incomes which had never been large were so grievously depleted. In these cases the fall in rents averaged from twenty to twenty-five per cent., in a country where few avenues of money-making are offered to men brought up as most of their class had been. The result is a woeful tale of shortcomings in the way of “parochial assessments,” and a prospective increase in the number of “parochial unions.”

For the next ten years, at all events, the financial position of the Irish Church must remain exceptionally critical. The whole science of organization, of economical management, and, above all, of self-sacrifice, has had to be studied from its earliest rudiments by men who had never had any occasion to turn

their attention to it before. The difference is already remarkable between the financial position of those dioceses in which funds have been administered skilfully and those in which the reverse has been the case. The mysteries of "commuting and compounding" are not to be mastered in a day, involving as they do somewhat abstruse calculations. Until a certain proportion of the annuities have dropped, the actual financial position of the future must remain somewhat dubious. Everything depends upon the ability and willingness of the parishes to keep up their assessments; and both of these conditions are in some districts very problematical. As the personal influence of the old incumbents disappears the task does not become an easier one. Many of those who would have been contributors have either left Ireland altogether, or have retired to Dublin and its environs. The economy of a house without any surroundings is preferred under existing circumstances to the uncertain demands upon the purse of country life. In some cases it has not been safe to reside at home; in others, the breach in the old social relations between the squire and his dependents has engendered a distaste for the old neighbourhood. Everywhere there is a scarcity of money, and times are bad. Above all, the drift of recent legislation—so totally at variance with the traditions of the past—and the constant admission of the doctrine of political necessity, have produced such a feeling of insecurity, that all arrangements have a tendency to be regarded as provisional. There is little scope for liberality when there is no certainty that funds contributed may not be diverted at an early period from the purposes for which they were intended.

A further amalgamation of parishes must, as we have already stated, take place within a reasonable time. This would not be in itself an unmixed evil, if judiciously carried out. Small congregations of from twenty to one hundred individuals damp the energies of a minister, and are a simple waste of power. The true economy would be to found centres of parochial work, with an adequate endowment for a man of energy and experience, and proper stipends for a sufficient number of assistants. That there are funds in Ireland available for such a purpose, and that those who own them are not always unwilling to devote them to Church work, is proved by the costly restoration of the two metropolitan Cathedrals and of that at Cork. As usual, money is much more readily forthcoming in aid of such tangible objects than for the less ostensible but still more important work of endowment.

By degrees, and especially if the Land Agitation settles down, it may be hoped that individuals will recognise in all its fulness what has been well termed the "luxury of being

spiritually superintended by a social equal." Certain it is that, unless such a conviction forces itself upon the minds of those members of the Church of Ireland who can afford it, they must be content to see the ablest and most zealous of the Irish Clergy drift over to the other side of the Channel. However much attached a man may be to his own Church, the claims of family, of education, of the advancement of children in life, must result in weaning him gradually from an allegiance to a branch of the Protestant Communion, the members of which are not prepared to offer inducements to men of culture to remain in their midst.

There is, however, much to be done. Both the clergy and laity of Ireland have a great deal still to learn before the relations which ought to exist between them can be placed upon a proper footing. Mutual self-respect and forbearance have to be cultivated, greater earnestness must be infused, in many places, into the services, and a much more constant and regular attendance at public worship should be enjoined. The scattered character of the Protestant population, the distance from a place of worship, and, it must be added, a sort of traditional laxity in the matter of observances, which is "racy of the soil," have all had something to say to this state of things. New habits have to be formed, and new lines of thought inculcated. And all this takes much time, and needs the exercise of much tact and patience—two qualities by no means indigenous in Ireland. Better seasons may do something. But better seasons will not restore to landed proprietors that management of their own affairs which the State has recently usurped. When it is left to Government officials to fix the rent of a holding, to limit the term for which it is to be leased, and to define the class of man who shall be accepted as occupier, little interest is left to an owner in the management of an estate the rents of which have been invariably lessened. He has every inducement to become an absentee. If he remains at home, he has an excellent excuse for shirking any additional pecuniary responsibilities. If he does not, his interest in services which he does not attend is apt insensibly to diminish.

Considering the gravity of the crisis through which it has been passing, the present position of the Church of Ireland is probably quite as good as could have been anticipated by those who had an opportunity of knowing the facts. Legislation, agitation, bad seasons, the inexperience of her supporters, lay and clerical, have been grievously against her.

But the lessons of adversity have not been without their uses, and in some dioceses, at all events, they have borne substantial fruits. The main difficulty will be that of keeping up

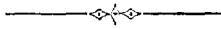
the standard of the candidates for Holy Orders. Where, as in three provinces out of the four, the ministrations of the Clergy are mainly confined to the upper and middle classes, it is essential that the Clergy should be gentlemen. We have already pointed out the obstacles which stand in the way of securing this indispensable qualification. But as the question is simply a money one, a way out of it ought to be found. There are plenty of earnest-minded young men, sincerely attached to a country which they love in spite of its faults, who would be willing to devote themselves to the good work if they could see their way to a competence. A beginning has already been made in the right direction, and it has been attended with the best results. No doubt, there are rocks ahead, and chief among them is the general financial depression which has fallen upon all the best supporters of the Church.

Whatever may have been the intentions of the framers of the Land Act, what they have done is to bring about a substantial reduction of rents, on all estates, under all circumstances, and however long they may have been paid without remonstrance. This reduction, too, while it takes effect immediately, remains in force for fifteen years at least, even if seasons, prices, and the demand for land should all have a steady upward tendency. Apart, then, from an increased spirit of liberal giving, nothing can be expected from an improvement in the circumstances of those upon whom the Church will have in future to depend. This points to the necessity of exercising a rigid but judicious economy of time, labour, and material resources. Organization may do a good deal; so also can personal influence—always an important factor in Ireland. The duty of supporting their own Church is a new one to the Protestants of Ireland, and has not yet been thoroughly naturalized there. Much remains, therefore, to be done in that direction. But there is a strong and reasonable claim also on those English Churchmen to whom God has given the means to help. A little aid here and there, judiciously distributed, will make the whole difference in bridging over a trying time.

As we have said before, the period has not yet arrived when the history of the last fifteen years of Irish legislation can be written with impartiality. The many "burning questions" which have arisen are still too recent to be stirred. Human nature will scarcely permit those who have committed errors of judgment to confess that their hopes have already been disappointed. But when that time does come, as come it most assuredly will, no praise will be too great for the few self-denying individuals who threw themselves into the breach, and cast in their lot with the Church in which they had been brought up. Many

of them might have sought and obtained preferment elsewhere. Some of them, like Canon Jellett, actually refused it. If the Irish Church is to hold her own, it will be due, under Providence, to the courage and constancy of these faithful few. The story is familiar to us of the Roman leader who, returning from a lost battle, was met by his countrymen, not with reproaches for a catastrophe which he had been powerless to prevent, but with gratitude because he had not despaired of the future of his country, and was still at her disposal. Surely less justice ought not be meted out to men who, through evil report and good report, have tried to do their duty. To their unwearying and unselfish exertions Ireland owes it that she still retains energy and utility in her Church after a succession of blows as unavoidable as they were unprecedented.

MIDLETON.



ART. II.—THE MOUNTAIN RANGES OF CALIFORNIA.

MOST of us can remember how, in our early school-room days, we were taught to generalize the great mountain ranges of Western America under the comprehensive name of "The Cordilleras"—the name given by the Spanish settlers to describe the many chains of mountains which trend north and south from Patagonia to British America, forming the sinews of the vast continent. In South America, these mountain cords were defined as Cordilleras of the Andes, that grand simple range usurping the supremacy beyond all question. But the Cordilleras of North America comprise a great number of ranges, intricate as the cordage of a ship.

Nearest to the shores of the Pacific lies the Coast Range, which is composed of a multitude of subordinate ranges, most of which bear the name of some Christian saint, bestowed on them by the early Spanish-Mexican settlers. This region is described as a sea with "innumerable waves of mountains, and wavelets of spurs." It is a comparatively low range, its highest points not exceeding 8,000 feet; while those near San Francisco are only about half that height. Mount Hamilton, the highest point visible from San Francisco, is 4,440 feet high. The charm of the range consists chiefly in the beauty of its slopes and fertile valleys, and of their rich vegetation, including the magnificent forests of redwood cedar, the *sequoia sempervirens*, which belongs exclusively to the Coast Range, and which, in the majestic beauty of its stately growth well-nigh rivals that of its mighty brother the *sequoia gigantea*, which