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

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may look upon this as an instance of His goodness both to her and to those that loved her. She might have languished many years before our eyes in a continual increase of pain, and totally helpless; she might have long wished to end her misery without being able to attain it, or perhaps even lost all sense, and yet continued to breathe—a sad spectacle for such as must have felt more for her than she could have done for herself. However you may deplore your own loss, yet think that she is at last easy and happy, and has now more occasion to pity us than we her. I hope and beg you will support yourself with that resignation we owe to Him Who gave us our being for good, and Who deprives us of it for the same reason.

We close with two extracts from his "Journal of a Tour in the Lakes." He writes :

Walked over a spongy meadow or two, and began to mount this hill through a broad and straight green alley among the trees, and with some toil gained the summit. From hence saw the lake opening directly at my feet, majestic in its calmness, clear and smooth as a blue mirror, with winding shores, and low points of land covered with green enclosures, white farmhouses looking out among the trees, and cattle feeding. The water is almost everywhere bordered with cultivated lands, gently sloping upwards till they reach the feet of the mountains, which rise very rude and awful with their broken tops on either hand. Directly in front, at better than three miles' distance, Place Fell, one of the bravest among them, pushes its bold, broad breast into the midst of the lake, and forces it to alter its course, forming first a large bay to the left, and then bending to the right.

And now for the second passage:

In the evening walked alone down to the lake by the side of Crow Park after sunset, and saw the solemn colouring of light draw on, the last gleam of sunshine fading away on the hill-tops, the deep serene of the waters, and the long shadows of the mountains thrown across them, till they nearly touched the hithermost shore. At distance heard the murmur of many waterfalls, not audible in the daytime. Wished for the moon, but she was *dark to me and silent, hid in her vacant interlunar cave.*

Surely this is poetry, if poetry there be in the world, though the thought is expressed in prose.

CHARLES D. BELL, D.D.



#### ART. VI.—NONCONFORMIST OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

IN discussing the important question which is now filling the minds of all Churchmen, the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church, I think I have observed a tendency to deal too much with one class of opponents, and too exclusively with certain aspects of the controversy. The Liberationist programme is a very sweeping programme, and our attention has naturally been fastened upon it. But it would be a mistake to suppose that it represents the whole attitude

of Nonconformists towards the Church. I am anxious, if possible, in this paper to discriminate. There are Nonconformists who are not hostile to the *work* of the Church, who nevertheless eagerly and passionately desire its severance from the State, as being in their opinion necessary to the full development of that work; as well as demanded by the principles of religious equality. There are Nonconformists, too, who are as resolutely opposed to Disestablishment as the best Churchmen among us. It is worth while, it seems to me, to distinguish between friends and foes, and neither to lump together all Nonconformists as our enemies, nor to conclude hastily that of those who advocate Disestablishment all are influenced by the same motives.

In the first place, let me draw attention to the fact that the Wesleyans, as a body, have never taken up an attitude of hostility to the Church. It would seem as if something of the life of the Church still throbbed in their veins. Like the Church, they eschew identifying themselves with a political party. Nor have they ever issued, either at their Conference or in any other way, as some of the other denominations have done, a manifesto against the National Church. Large numbers of them are Conservatives; large numbers of them, probably a majority, and certainly some of their ablest and most respected leaders, are avowedly opposed to Disestablishment. Is it wise or right to ignore this fact? Ought we as Churchmen to count the whole body of Nonconformists as confederates in the Liberationist camp? I think that, on the contrary, we should be glad and forward to recognise the distinction, and by every means in our power to show that we appreciate it.

And as regards other Nonconformists, let us try to estimate fairly their position. What are the earnest men, the men of religious conviction, saying? It is one of the most hopeful signs of the conflict that many religious men on both sides are trying to understand one another. Well indeed would it have been if in past times Churchmen had assumed a less arrogant tone towards Nonconformists! If instead of consigning them to the "uncovenanted mercies of God," and placing them in a category somewhere half-way between Christians and heathen, they had frankly extended to them the right hand of fellowship—if, I will add, instead of resisting passionately their reasonable demands, they had been willing to concede them, we should have heard far less of Disestablishment than we do now. And I cannot but cherish the hope that even now it may not be too late, by a broader sympathy, by a generous recognition of the good they are doing, by a larger spirit of brotherly kindness, to draw together those who ought to feel that, whatever their differences, they are servants of one

Master, and that however large their differences may appear when they are examined in the narrow and darkened chamber of the partisan and the sectarian, they are but as specks scarcely discernible when seen in the full light of Christian love.

Let us try to understand some of the reasons which, in the minds of many Nonconformists, seem to justify the effort to bring about Disestablishment. That there is a danger of their being misunderstood, or that they think there is, is evident from Dr. Joseph Parker's letter to the *Times*, commenting on the Bishop of Peterborough's Conference address. He writes : "I cannot but regret that the honoured prelate, held in high esteem by multitudes outside his own communion, should have so grievously mistaken the purposes of Dissenters as to convey the idea that, directly or indirectly, they wish to diminish, if not destroy, the spiritual influence of the Church which he adorns. Nothing can be further from the truth. It is simply unjust even to hint at any such imputation."

I do not know whether Dr. Parker has joined the Liberation Society,<sup>1</sup> but if he had read the Bishop's address with a little more care, or a little less sensitiveness, he might have observed that it is throughout with the Liberation Society, and those who support that society, the aims and objects of which have been avowed with an almost brutal sincerity, that the Bishop is dealing ; and it is very difficult to persuade men who can understand plain English that the Liberation Society does not wish "to diminish, if not destroy, the spiritual influence of the Church." We are, however, very glad to have from Dr. Parker the assurance that "Nonconformists recognise the immense value of the spiritual work now being done by the Church of England, and that they not only rejoice in it, but regard it as a distinct proof that men and women, so strong, so capable, and so devoted, have absolutely no need of the aid derived from their invidious and anomalous relation to the State." But does Dr. Parker really believe that those who propose—(1) "to take away from the Church of England every cathedral and ancient parish church that she possesses ;" (2) "to take from her every penny of her endowments, and to devote them to purely civil and secular uses," have no wish "to diminish, if not destroy, the spiritual influence of the Church ?" If he does, his mind must be cast in a mould of extraordinary simplicity.

Mr. C. S. Miall, in his reply to Canon Liddon, takes a very different line. Referring to Canon Liddon's quotation from Dr. Döllinger, he says : "I venture to express a doubt whether

<sup>1</sup> In a recent letter to *The Times*, Dr. Parker says he is not a member of the Liberation Society.

the type of Christianity which they so zealously support is such as, at all events in the opinion of Dissenters, is adapted to become a universal religion. While it repudiates the claims of the Papacy, its basis is Sacerdotalism and Sacramentarianism. These are, in my view, the dogmas which throughout Europe have left no room for what may be called rational religion—that is, the simplicity of the Gospel.” He then notices the state of religion in France, which is due, he thinks, to the influence of the Romish Church, which, as “the embodiment of priesthood,” has “driven the people into infidelity, and has left no medium between superstition and unbelief.” “Protestantism and Evangelicalism,” he adds, “are at the lowest ebb on the Continent.” If this deplorable state of things does not exist in England it is due, he thinks, “not so much to the agency of the Church of England as to the action of Nonconformity, to the influence of those Free Churches which hold fast to the Protestant faith and primitive Christianity.”

But Mr. Miall does not explain how it is that the Church of England, with her “basis of Sacerdotalism and Sacramentarianism,” has not produced here the same results which the Church of Rome has in France. Is it only because she “repudiates the claims of the Papacy”? Nor does he explain how it is that the Protestant Churches in France have failed in accomplishing what he claims for the Free Churches in England. Is it perchance because they receive a subsidy from the State? We should be thankful for a little more light on this matter. The phenomenon is well worth our study, but it is not clear that Mr. Miall’s conclusion is the only one that ought to be accepted.

Let us turn to another indictment. Dr. Thomas, in his Address from the Chair of the Congregational Union at Hanley last October, on “Spiritual Religion, its Perils and its Power,” cannot refrain from this tempting topic of the Church and the State.

“In the past,” he says, “nothing has done so much to weaken the Church as its connection with earthly states. Governments have never gained by their connection with the Church. This is the heaviest burden ever put upon them. There is no end to the greed of a Church made worldly by its union with the State. The more she gets, the more she desires. It is easier to ‘hunt the prey for the lion, or fill the appetite of the young lions,’ than to satisfy the cravings of a Church which has lost taste for the Bread of Life. It would be a great relief to the State to get this burden off its shoulders. But the Church would gain the most by Disestablishment, because she has suffered the greatest injury through the connection. This union has made the Church haughty in spirit, arbitrary and

cruel in manner, persecuting all who venture to disagree with her views, and has paralyzed all her efforts and activities. We demand the separation of religion from the State for the sake of religion itself. As politicians we ask for Disestablishment for the sake of the State, and that is the only ground on which the question can be discussed in Parliament; but we are here as religious men, and in the name of religion we ask its liberation from the yoke of the Government. *This is one of the questions of the immediate future.*"

This is a tone with which we are all, unhappily, familiar. But our Nonconformist friends forget that we as religious Churchmen do not feel the pressure of the yoke, which to them appears so grievous; and it seems somewhat difficult to reconcile the charge here brought against the Church—this paralysis of "all her efforts and activities," with the fact that by the common consent of friends and foes there never was a period when the Church was so alive to her true mission as now, or so active in prosecuting it.

It is, however, the charge of "Sacerdotalism" in the Church of which most is made just now. Thus, for instance, Dr. Fairbairn, in his address to the Congregational Union at Hanley, last October, remarks: "The native and reigning tendency of the Anglican Church, certain to grow the stronger the more she is relieved from the religious disabilities incident to civil Establishment, is Sacerdotal; while the native and governing principle in Independency which must, if there is to be life, increase in the degree that civil liberty prevails, is Puritan." "Our fundamental attitude to the Anglican Church," he insists, "is not determined by the principle or fact of Establishment. That is a mere accident of only occasional significance destined to an early ending, and certain when ended only to leave the two systems the more openly and the more resolutely face to face. . . . The question as to polity is important but secondary; the question as to Sacerdotalism is primary and essential." In short, he thinks the two theories, the Puritan and the Sacerdotal, so opposed "that the men who hold them hardly ever become intelligible to each other; they speak of the things of God in the same mother-tongue, but so think of them as to be aliens in heart and strangers in mind;" and for him there is nothing but "controversy to the death and to the end with the Sacerdotal system" of the Anglican Church.

All this is surely gross exaggeration. As a matter of fact there is not this sharp-cut line of separation between the two systems. It is precisely the merit of the Church of England that she is able to comprise within her pale men leaning to the one or the other of these theories, and sometimes in a curious

way combining both. John Wesley himself was a striking instance of the combination of the two. And many modern High Churchmen whom Dr. Fairbairn would call "Sacerdotalists and Sacramentarians" have much of the missionary ardour and glow of the old Evangelicals, and not unfrequently use language which might come from the mouth of a Methodist preacher.

But another speaker at Hanley went a step further. Dr. Fairbairn's paper was followed by a motion as to the danger arising from "the rapid growth of Sacerdotalism in the teaching and observances of the Established Church of England, and in the pretensions of its clergy." And Mr. E. A. Lawrence, in seconding this motion, gave some "reasons for regarding the growth of Sacerdotalism with great and real thankfulness;" not, I need scarcely say, from any sympathy with it, but apparently because it made the gulf between the Church and Nonconformists so wide that none could cross from the one side to the other. "The growth of Sacerdotalism," he says, "within the Established Church seems to me unquestionably to indicate an awakening of the moral sense of many of its clergy. The Established Church is Sacerdotal, and always has been. It knows and always has known an order of officers called priests, though neither the name nor the office was known in the Apostolic Church, of which some ignorantly suppose that it is the sole or almost the sole surviving representative. Sacerdotalism could not have grown in the Church if the roots of Sacerdotalism were not there already."

The ignorance betrayed in this passage is quite remarkable. It may be true that the roots of "Sacerdotalism" have always been in the English Church, but it is not true that the Church has always been Sacerdotal. There have been periods in her history when this element of her life has been anything but prominent. Indeed, from the time of the Reformation to the present hour there have been at least two parties, and more recently three, of which one only can be called Sacerdotal. But the extraordinary ignorance of the speaker appears in the remark that the Church "knows and always has known an order of officers called priests, though neither the name nor the office was known in the Apostolic Church." He can never have taken the trouble to look at the English Ordinal, or to be aware in what sense the word "priest" is there used. That Ordinal tells us in its preface that "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church—bishops, priests, and deacons." Can Mr. Lawrence deny that there have been these orders? or will he deny that "priests" here is the equivalent of "pres-

byters"? But if here, then throughout the Ordination service; and if throughout the Ordination service, then throughout the Prayer Book. *For we are that, and that only in the eye of the Church, which we are ordained to be.* Add to this the pointed exclusion from the Second Service Book of the word "altar," and the case is complete so far as the charge here brought is concerned.

That there is a tendency to what the speaker calls Sacerdotalism in a large body of the clergy, I of course fully admit. But this is no new thing. Many of the great divines of the Church of England have been what is called High Churchmen and Sacerdotalists, though sometimes, as in the case of Jeremy Taylor, their Churchmanship has been tempered by a large liberality. What I venture to think is new in English theology is the extreme consequences to which the doctrine of Apostolical Succession has been pushed. These have been pushed to an extent to which neither Cosin nor Bramhall nor Andrewes, nor even Laud, would have pushed them. And I suspect it is this, this over-statement of the *jus divinum* of Episcopacy, this stretching out of hands to the Roman Church and to the Greek Church *because* they are Episcopal and have the Apostolic Succession, this unchurching of other churches because they have lost the succession—in a word, this claim to an exclusiveness of spiritual privileges, which has done more than anything else to alienate Dissenters and to rouse in them a spirit of antagonism to the Church.

But it is not a little remarkable that this intense feeling with respect to the Sacerdotalism and Sacramentalism of the Church has led eminent Nonconformists to two very opposite conclusions with regard to the necessity of a severance of the relation in which the Church stands to the State. According to some, that severance is imperatively demanded because the Church is Sacerdotal. According to others, the prevalence of Sacerdotalism makes the control of the State the more desirable and the more necessary.

In the Autumnal Session of the Congregational Union held at Leicester, October 17, 1877, the following resolution, moved by the Rev. J. Guinness Rogers, B.A., and seconded by the Rev. W. F. Clarkson, B.A., was carried unanimously :

Whereas the Sacerdotal pretensions of a portion of the clergy of the Established Church are unscriptural, contrary to the spirit of the Christian faith, and full of peril to the highest interests of the people of England; and as those pretensions have lately, in the practice of systematic confession, which many of the clergy are advocating and maintaining, assumed a more alien and alarming form than ever before since the Reformation; whereas the sanction given by the formularies of the Established Church to the errors on which the pretensions in question are founded, taken in connection with the views and temper of parties

within the Church, leave no room for reasonable hope that the evil will be checked by discipline ; and whereas, while the Established Church as such owes its existence and its order to Parliamentary enactments, and the whole electoral body is thereby made responsible for its teaching and influence, the state of religious opinion in the country prevents the Legislature from exercising any efficient control over the doctrine and practices of the clergy : it is resolved, (1) That it is the solemn duty of the pastors and churches connected with the Union to use all diligence to protect the people from the peril to which their faith is exposed, by sedulously inculcating the doctrine for which Congregational Nonconformists have ever contended, that all men have access to their heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, without the intervention of a human priest, or the observance of any ecclesiastical ceremony ; (2) that it is the duty of all who desire the maintenance of a scriptural faith, and of Christian simplicity in worship, and who value the spiritual and political liberties of England, to use their influence as citizens to bring about the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church, that they may be freed from complicity in the dissemination of errors which they abhor, and that the relations of Church and State in England may be settled on a basis sanctioned alike by Scripture and experience.

I need not stop to point out the errors in this statement. Anything more glaringly contrary to truth than the assertion that "the Established Church as such owes its existence to Parliamentary enactments" was never penned. But I only draw attention to the fact that the same ground is taken here as to the essential and distinguishing features of the Church of England, as is taken by Mr. Miall and Dr. Fairbairn, and that on this rests the plea for the Disestablishment of the Church.

Curiously enough, as I have already remarked, the very opposite conclusion has been reached from the same premisses by a leading Nonconformist minister in London, whose testimony I have quoted in my paper, read before the Peterborough Diocesan Conference.<sup>1</sup> He regards the Church of England as being, by virtue of its union with the State, the great bulwark on the one hand against the Church of Rome, and on the other against infidelity. He admits and deplores the sacerdotalism of the Church, but he thinks that Disestablishment would only increase the sacerdotal tendency of the Church, and end by throwing her into the arms of the Church of Rome ; he firmly believes that within fifty years after Disestablishment the English Church would again be "under the control and supreme sway of the Pontiff himself," and that Cardinal Newman's dream would be realised. In a recent letter to the *Christian World* (of Oct. 8) he writes :—"The question of to-day is . . . whether we should not be helping sacerdotalism rather than hindering it by disestablishing the Church. This I strenuously hold we shall do ; and I admit that I hold this opinion much more earnestly than I once did, after a study of the possibilities

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<sup>1</sup> See *THE CHURCHMAN* for November, p. 157.

of Church reform, and the danger of setting free what would be an irresponsible sacerdotal Church having possession of 16,000 churches." He adds, "From a statesman's point of view, I hold that it would be most unwise to disestablish what might become a much more truly National Church; and from a Christian's point of view I cannot, in the face of modern secularism, agnosticism, and atheism, shut my eyes to the fact that Disestablishment would strike a blow at the religious side of the national life."

Nothing, I believe, can be more profoundly true than this view of the case. Mr. Statham, looking at the Church of England from an opposite point of view, nevertheless comes to the same conclusion as Dr. Döllinger. Having no sympathy with the sacerdotalism of the Church, on the contrary deplored its existence, he nevertheless concurs with the distinguished Old Catholic theologian in thinking that to strike a blow at the Church of England is to strike a blow at Christianity itself. He believes that "the best friends of religion are those who see that the Church needs reform, and not Disestablishment, and who realize that in her service there might be a glorious sphere for the permanent preservation of the Christian faith in an orderly and beautiful service, which would preserve alike the verities of the Christian faith and the sanctities of spiritual and social life."

The true note is struck here. Reform, not Disestablishment, is the need of the Church; the frank acknowledgment of existing abuses, and the earnest endeavour to put them away. We *must* enter upon this path; we must take this task in hand. The lines on which reform should be attempted I cannot indicate in this paper; I may hope to do so on some future occasion. I must now only satisfy myself by expressing the hope that our rulers in the Church will insist upon a full examination into existing abuses, with a view to their correction, and that Churchmen of all shades of opinion, laity as well as clergy, will be determined that these abuses shall be swept away.

J. J. STEWART PEROWNE.

