

# 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](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php)

“instans calamitas”; and to the Christian, life and Lent must be, in a sense, conterminous.

“The Shepherd of Hermas” is not now regarded as a work of such high authority as once was accorded to it; but, nevertheless, I will venture to conclude with part of the fifth Similitude of the third book:

“As I was fasting, and sitting down on a certain mountain, and giving thanks unto God for all the things that He had done unto me, behold I saw the shepherd, who was wont to converse with me, sitting by me, and saying unto me: What has brought thee hither thus early in the morning?

“I answered, Sir, to-day I keep a station.

“He answered, What is a station? I replied, It is a fast. He said, What is that fast? I answered, I fast, as I have been wont to do. Ye know not, said he, what it is to fast under God; nor is this a fast which ye fast, profiting nothing with God.

“Sir, said I, what makes you speak thus? He replied, I speak it because this is not the true fast which you think that you fast; but I will show you what that is which is a complete fast, and acceptable unto God.

“Hearken, said he, The Lord does not desire such a needless fast: for by fasting in this manner, thou advancest nothing in righteousness.

“But the true fast is this: Do nothing wickedly in thy life, but serve God with a pure mind; and keep His commandments, and walk according to His precepts, nor suffer any wicked desire to enter into the mind.

“But trust in the Lord, that if thou dost these things, and fearest Him, and abstainest from every evil work, thou shalt live unto God.

“If thou shalt do this, thou shalt perfect a great fast, and an acceptable one unto the Lord.”

BLOMFIELD JACKSON.

---

#### ART. IV.—DISESTABLISHMENT—WELSH AND IRISH.

THE vicissitudes of political parties have brought it about that the question of the Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Welsh Church is again to the front. How, then, is the assault to be repulsed and the fortress rendered impregnable? This is a utilitarian age. Appeals to history or to sentiment, unless backed up by something more practical, will prove of little avail. The average voter does not greatly

concern himself as to whether the title "Welsh Church" be correct, or, rather, that of "Church of England in Wales." The Church of Ireland had and has an acknowledged right to this claim of high descent. It did not, however, avail her much in her hour of need. Around other points the controversy waged. And so the Welsh Church shall most wisely trust, not to the prestige of ancient and independent pedigree, nor, on the other hand, to the claim to be part and parcel of the Church of England, but rather to the work which she is now doing, and on the place which she alone can fill in the nation's life, likely to become, if deprived of her, hard, barren, unspiritual. We do not, be it understood, desire for one moment to minimize the power and the inspiration which flow from the consciousness of a noble ancestry. Such should nerve the arm and fire the courage of all true defenders of the faith. This appeal, however, is confessedly felt by those within, rather than those without, the Church.

The Welsh Church, it must be admitted, had, equally with the Irish Church, for the last one hundred and fifty years failed in its appointed work. But it must also be equally insisted upon that in neither case was the cause of failure solely that these were Established Churches. The outcry in Wales against Establishment—*quâ* Establishment—is quite a modern one, nor is it even now the genuine expression of a majority against grievances at present existing. These are Mr. Gladstone's words in the House of Commons: "It has been no question of National Establishment that has led to the growth of Welsh Dissent. In my opinion it is due to the cruelly anti-national policy that has been pursued. It is a fact of some interest that the people of Wales were the stoutest Churchmen in the country so long as the Church was administered in a spirit of sympathy and in accordance with the national feeling." External influence wrongly applied cramped and stifled the Welsh Church, just as in Ireland it compelled the Church to be the tool of a party, not only failing to encourage, but rather sternly repressing, all symptoms of national life. It seems to be a law of nature that a dominant race should not possess an effective missionary power. The conquered instinctively shrink from adopting the faith of the conqueror. The fact of their national insignificance was surely a prominent factor in the success of the missionary efforts of the Jews. This, however, which largely accounts for the comparative failure of the Church of Ireland in dealing with the Roman Catholic population, cannot be said to apply in the same degree to the history of the Welsh Church. Yet the English Church, in face of the vast forces of Dissent arrayed around herself, cannot surely afford to blame either

of her feebler sisters, but shall rather assure them of her sympathy and her active aid. She was left almost unhampered and free at least from external force, to pursue her path, whilst they were made for long years the tools of political parties, their mother-tongues and their national aspirations alike ignored, ruled by stranger-prelates often non-resident, careless alike of their people's wants and of the feelings of their clergy. Does not this, however, seem to tell against the benefit of State-connection altogether? It does, if the possibility of the abuse of a right is good ground for abolishing that right. If the Church is to be a political tool, and not the spring of the national conscience, better far that such alliance should at once be severed.

The question of Establishment is now one of expediency. If the national life really be the poorer, weaker, and bitterer from its continuance, no true patriot, much less Christian, could seek for one moment to support it. But this is the very question at issue. This, also, is the very point which men fail to sufficiently consider. The "Home Rule" policy promised certain advantages to Ireland. Well and good. But were there no accompanying disadvantages which altogether outweighed the former? Investigation proved that beyond all question the evil far surpassed the good. We have, indeed, heard of someone who, when sentenced to capital punishment, committed suicide *to save his life!* But, then, he was an Irishman.

What are the alleged grievances in the case of the Welsh Church which only Disestablishment and Disendowment can remove—which are so necessary and inveterate that not reformation but destruction alone is the remedy? We confess not to be aware of them.

Will Disestablishment cause that the spiritual wants of the poor shall be better looked after? will it make the tithe-paying Nonconformist a richer man? will it abolish sectarian animosity? will it purify and elevate the spiritual tone of the national life? will it increase the flow of offerings to charity? will it make education more wholesome and more co-extensive with the complex nature of the scholar? will it help to stem the rising tide of anarchy, immorality, godlessness? Such, indeed, would be national benefits of the highest value, and if any barrier exists between these and the nation's life, away with it, it must not stand. But is there the slightest ground for believing that any such results must follow upon the policy of spoliation? The Rev. Stephen Gladstone in his address to his parishioners urges upon Churchmen the duty of removing every ground of irritation, every grievance which Dissenters may feel. Assuredly, when such are not imaginary,

when it can be clearly pointed out that the spiritual gains outweigh the losses. Unless this be done, what right have men to part lightly with the heritage bequeathed to them in trust for the spiritual benefit of future generations? It is true we must not sacrifice the spirit to the letter, and selfishly hoard or squander spiritual resources when there is no accompanying spiritual result. But again we ask, Where is the proof of this? Is not the very opposite acknowledged to be the case in the Church of Wales? We are by some pointed to the so-called advantages which flowed from the Disestablishment of the Church of Ireland. There is surprising ignorance even among Churchmen on this subject. It cannot be too widely known that the only advantage which the Irish Church directly obtained from Disestablishment was the right to legislate for herself. If Irish Churchmen are pointed to the rising tide of spiritual effort in Ireland during the last quarter of a century as a convincing proof of the great boon which Mr. Gladstone so generously conferred upon them when he stripped their Church naked of her rights and possessions, the apt rejoinder is, "What is *post hoc* is not necessarily *propter hoc*." "What of the very same renewed life in the churches of England and of Wales, and the Episcopal Church of Scotland, where this factor of Disestablishment played no part?" Surely we may rather put this question, "What great spiritual results might not the Church of Ireland have achieved with this new life stirring in her veins, had her rightful inheritance been left to her, or even had the spoiler spared but a small portion thereof?" The religious revival which produced such mighty results in England and in Wales reached Ireland also, and caused the dry bones to live. They stood upon their feet a mighty army, but alas! the weapons of their spiritual warfare were unjustly denied them—no longer theirs to wield.

Must Disendowment alone bring it about that the laity shall take an intelligent interest and an active participation in the affairs of their Church? That clergy and laity shall unite in choosing their bishop—a most primitive and expedient custom? That parishioners shall have some voice in the choice of their minister? In Ireland these concomitants of Disendowment are gladly welcomed; but they would have been much more welcome without it. They had no necessary connection with it. Have, however, any of the supposed advantages of Disestablishment followed as alluded to above? Is Ireland to-day richer, more loyal, more contented? Are opposing sects drawn more closely together? Is spiritual life throughout the whole land deeper and fuller? Is the tone of the national life higher? Is popular education more compre-

hensive and more sound? We fear it is not so. The Upstart of Protestant ascendancy—which is the rightful order of the realm—has given place to a foreign despotism ten times more galling and enslaving.

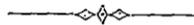
“The Welsh Church,” it is said, “cannot hope to obtain such good terms as the Church of Ireland.” Indeed, the provisions of Mr. Asquith’s recent Bill are much more severe than in the case of the latter Church. What, then, were these “good terms”? To the Church of Ireland were left the church fabrics, the life services of the then existing clergy, *and nothing else whatever*, neither parsonage-house, nor rood of land, nor one penny of her inheritance. “Over two thousand burial-grounds, hallowed by the sacred association of centuries, are now in the grasp of Poor Law Guardians and Boards of Health. The very graves of St. Patrick and St. Columkille have been secularized.” Even a journal like the *Times* was bold enough to say that the Irish Church was “re-endowed.” It is true that about £520,000 was repaid as compensation for private benefactions and endowments, and for proprietary churches of so recent a date that no principle, save that of barefaced and open pillage, applying equally to Nonconformist trusts and meeting-houses, could pretend to lay hands upon them. How, then, does the Irish Church exist? What is its support? Its position to-day is, under God, due to the loving skill, to the open-handed benevolence of impoverished Irish Churchmen. The State, to save itself trouble, handed over to the Church the task of paying the existing clergy who could still draw State-payments for a whole generation. The sum handed over was exactly that amount, plus a small grant for expenses, which would meet these annuities, if it were invested so that every shilling, till it was demanded by the annuitant, should bear interest at the rate of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The only gain the Church could have in taking this responsibility off the shoulders of her spoilers was that she would have for herself whatever interest over and above this  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. she could obtain for the capital while it was in her custody. Upon this and upon the generous contributions of her children the Church of Ireland strives to-day to do her work. She has been of necessity compelled to amalgamate her outlying parishes; she has no longer any positions of ease and competence wherewith to reward her hard-worked clergy. A bare sufficiency is all that can be looked for outside the few large towns. She cannot hope to attract into her ministry the same class of men as formerly; nor is a learned ministry a popular desideratum. In olden days, throughout the length and breadth of the land, in the lonely regions of a few scattered hamlets, the Church parsonage was a centre of culture and all

gentle influences, where no civilized gentleman would consent to bring up a family except for the love of God and His Church. Is the land none the worse for the loss of this—a blank filled by ignorance and grinding superstition? Where is the result of "The Message of Peace"? *Cui bono*? Is the Nonconformist conscience comfortable under the sense of the ever-tightening grasp of the Church of Rome upon over three millions of fellow-subjects? What mockery to "protest" against Ritualism in England while weakening the defences of the Reformed Faith in Ireland!

We could earnestly ask Christian, patriotic men of every class and creed not to inflict a grievous wrong upon their Fatherland, simply because Disestablishment is an item in a political programme. The forces for God and Righteousness in these lands are weak enough without being still further impaired. Undoubtedly all wrongs must be righted, all injustices removed. If such can be clearly shown, no true Churchman, simply from veneration for the existing order, can dare to raise his voice against their abolition. We acknowledge the existence of anomalies, excrescences, weaknesses. We work and pray that such may speedily be taken away, for they only hamper the Church in her duties and bring reproach upon her fair fame. We deplore bitterly the demeanour of some clergy toward Nonconformists—arrogant, discourteous, unchristian. The more men are assured of the goodness of their cause, the less they are inclined to this. How many of the clergy know the Nonconformist minister in their neighbourhood? It has been largely the Church's fault, in England and in Wales, that Nonconformity has grown so powerful. Human nature being what it is, it should be for Churchmen first to extend the friendly hand. The amenities of social life go a wonderful way in smoothing down the rough places in the ecclesiastical and political worlds. Every privilege has its corresponding duty. The Church exists not for a caste nor a community, but for the nation. The individual has no right and no authority by his words and acts to impair and weaken the Church whose commission he has received. "Noblesse oblige" is true of Church as of chivalry. We should labour that the Welsh Church may not be disendowed, for no selfish or class reason, but chiefly and principally because we firmly believe that if this happen the cause of the poor, the cause of religion, and so the cause of the nation, must receive irretrievable injury. Dispassionately and convincingly pleading this alone, we shall find patriotic men more willing to listen to us than we imagine. The aim of all such is the same. When men understand this and one another, the efforts of professional politicians shall not prevent the mutual toleration of even

widely different means. Politics are eating the heart out of Nonconformity. Better Disestablishment a thousand times than that such result should befall the Church. It is always a misfortune for a church to be associated with a political party. Let there be the "priest in politics" only in questions of moral import. The Primate put it that the Church symbolizes the moral life of the nation. Let us strive to make this a reality and not a pretty saying, that clergy and laity with their unrivalled opportunities may really be in the van of every movement for religious and social welfare. The Parish Councils Act will put the clergy on their mettle. It will test their influence and real worth as national servants. Mixing with their fellow citizens, they can now prove that the Church is not a sect, but exists for the good of all, and that they, having no selfish purposes to serve, and not depending for their bread on the favour or the whims of a chance majority, without fear of giving offence, or temptation to show favour, are able to be "daysmen" between the "masses" and the "classes," witnessing for God and for Righteousness in every department of our many-sided life.

RICHARD W. SEAVER.



#### ART. V.—MR. GLADSTONE ON HERESY AND SCHISM.

"Non fumum ex fulgore sed ex fumo dare lucem."—HOR., *Ars Poet.*

NOTWITHSTANDING his great affection for Horace, as manifested by the new translation of the "Odes" and "Carmen Seculare" which he is said to have in hand, it is clear that Mr. Gladstone has not laid to heart the line with which we have headed this notice of his article in the *Nineteenth Century*. When one comes to consider in detail his speeches and writings, putting aside all the adornment of beautiful language and ingenuity in vocabulary of which he is master, one is generally left very much at a loss as to what he really means. Every paragraph bears traces of that "open mind" from which are evolved theories and assertions which are chiefly remarkable for their plastic nature. The article in which he undertakes to define heresy and schism, and to show how they should be dealt with, is no exception in this respect. This is not only the result of an oracular style in which long practice has made him an adept, but it appears equally due to a confusion of ideas on vital points, and to the free-and-easy use of terms and expressions which have extremely different meanings when used by different people.