

ment to advance the interests of true religion. In his speech on the Colonial Bishop's Bill on Wednesday the 28th April 1852, to my grief and astonishment, Mr. Gladstone says,—

“ I hold in my hand an Act of the Parliament of Canada, passed for the purpose of disendowing certain rectories, which states in the preamble, ‘ Whereas the recognition of legal equality among all religious persuasions is an admitted principle of colonial legislation: And whereas in the state and condition of this Province such a principle is peculiarly applicable, it is desirable that the same should receive the sanction of direct Legislative authority, recognizing and declaring the same as a fundamental principle of our civil polity.’ ”

“ Now, if it be meant that more is intended in this preamble than to repeat the truism that all religious persuasions in the colony are equal in the eye of the law, a principle which has been long understood and admitted, the framer of this Act was unconscious of it, for all that he had in view was to destroy the rectories by dropping the power of presentation, a fraud which was discovered and prevented, so that the Act leaves the rectories as they were, and merely transfers the patronage from the Crown to the church society of the Diocese, and this body empowered their Bishop to exercise it.”

Now the first thing which strikes me on reading Mr. Gladstone's speech alluded to is, that he mentions such a monstrous act of injustice as the destruction of forty-four rectories without the smallest sympathy or indignation, for though they were not suppressed he believed that they were. Surely the extinction of forty-four parishes, even in England, would be deemed a very serious calamity, from whatever cause; how much more in Canada, still so destitute of religious ministration as scarcely to number one clergyman for every 200 square miles. But theory seems to blunt our best natural feelings, and perhaps no theories are so dangerous in this respect as those of a religious character.

The speech goes on to infer that because this Act passed through both Houses, and was sanctioned by the Queen, religious equality is fully recognized by the Imperial Government in the colonies; but it would appear that what is good for the colonies is not good for England, and we are advised to judge colonial questions upon their own grounds, and English questions upon their own grounds. But it so happens that the questions here mentioned are religious questions, which are unchangeable in their moral and spiritual aspect, and therefore the same at home and abroad. Now as we are already in the colonies all equal in respect to religion before the law, this equality must include religious advantages of a physical character; that is, endowments, which in colonies must it seems be destroyed, though guaranteed by the most solemn pledges and engagements; but if religious endowments be wrong in colonies they must be wrong in the three kingdoms, and thus all Church Establishments must disappear. The inference is irresistible. Now in all this I entirely differ; but I stop not to enter upon the general question of religious establishments. It is sufficient for my purpose on the present occasion to show, that were the French religious endowments in Lower Canada and those of the Church of England in Upper Canada to be swept away, incalculable evils must immediately follow.

How such a doctrine as that the teaching of pure Christianity ought to receive no assistance from Government in a Christian country can be reconciled to the Holy Scripture is to me incomprehensible. I must therefore in my simplicity adhere to my old belief, that it is the first duty of Government to advance the interests of true religion, and that the religious equality so put forward is a dream which can never be realized, because truth being from its nature aggressive is stronger than falsehood, and though it may be compelled to succumb for a season is sure to rise superior at the last.

Having thus shown the state of religion in Canada, and the means by which it is at present supported, I feel encouraged to submit, that so far from being merely local and domestic, the Clergy Reserves involve a national question of the greatest importance.

At the peace of 1763 the Crown of France ceded all its rights in Canada, not to Canada itself, but to the Crown of England, the title to which is twofold: First, the right of conquest; second, the right of cession. The validity of the latter is acknowledged by France at this very day. The Crown and