

being the more encouraged thereto for that divers of the owners of the said parsonages, vicarages, tithes, and oblations, are lay-persons." Then the Act goes on to give to these lay-persons all the rights of the clergy as to suing in the ecclesiastical courts, which they could not do without an Act for the purpose.

After the minor plunder of the chantries, of the guilds and fraternities and hospitals, it was necessary to pass another Act (2nd and 3d Edward the Sixth, chap. 13.) to enforce these Acts of Henry the Eighth, and to compel payment of tithes to laymen upon the footing of the clergy, as to the manner of suing for the same.

Here, then, are all these Acts of Parliament, proving, that, in spite of the opposition of the people; that, in spite of their deep sense of the injustice; that, in the face of all the former laws of the country, the Parliament had the rightful power to take away both the prebend and personal tithes, and to give them to laymen, and to vest them, as an estate, in laymen.

Now, then, if this were not an act of rapine, if it were a thing that a Parliament could rightfully do, what pretence have you for saying, that this present Parliament cannot rightfully deal with the remainder of the tithes, in any manner that they may think proper? And if it were an act of rapine, then all the laws relative to the abbey lands; all the laws relative to the tithes, all the laws relative to this Church Establishment, are to be considered as no law at all. If you plead, that the Parliament has no right to take away, or alienate, that which is called Church property, you must insist that no layman has a good title to tithes; but you cannot do this, without, at the same time, denying the validity of those Acts of Parliament, to which and to which alone, you owe your own right of possession to tithes, to oblations, to any part, or particle, of that which you possess. So that it comes to this, at last: that either all was rapine; all was directly contrary to the laws of God; and therefore null; or all your possessions and privileges have their foundation in Acts of Parliament alone, and may, therefore, be all taken away by the rightful power of the Parliament.

There are some persons who contend, that the Parliament has the rightful power to make regulations with regard to the property of the Church; to make a new distribution of it amongst the bishops, deans, parsons, and so forth; but that, though there may be too much property found lodged in certain hands, and though the rightful power of the Parliament to make a more desirable distribution is undoubted; still that power does not extend so far as the taking of it away from the Church altogether, and that if it be taken from the parsons, bishops, and so forth, it must be applied to some purposes or other tending to the upholding, and to the efficiency of the Established Church and the purposes of education are generally named; which is about as curious a whim as ever entered the head of mortal man. Why, what is the established Church FOR? For what do its clergy swallow up from five to eight millions a year? If for any thing of public benefit, it must be for the purpose of instructing the people in religion; that is to say, for educating the people in the principles of true religion.—Why, then, take the money away from the parsons and give it to somebody else, that they may teach the people? Besides, if the tithes be taken from the parsons, and their amount given to schoolmasters, there is, in fact, an alienation from the Church.

It is, then, a mere matter of expediency; and the only question is, would it be good for the people; good for the people in general, of this kingdom, to take the whole of the property from the clergy, or would it not? This is the only question to be entertained on the subject by rational men. I am of opinion that it would be good to do it; and, before I have done, I shall clearly and frankly state all my reasons for being of that opinion.

The first question, "How came there to be an established Church?" I have now answered: I have stated, and clearly shown, the motives for the making of this Church; I have shown the manner in which it was made; I have given a true picture of the character and conduct of the makers of it; I have exhibited to the view of the reader the severities, the cruelties, the ferocious, the more than savage punishments, by which its introduction was enforced; I have, above all things, shown that originated in Acts of Parliament; that it rests solely on Acts

of Parliament for every fragment of possession that it has; and that it, and all that belongs to it, may now be disposed of by the rightful power of the Parliament, in any manner, and for any purpose, that the Parliament may deem to be proper. and now I shall, in the next letter, proceed to show "how there came to be people called dissenters."

CONSEQUENCES OF PRIVATE JUDGEMENT.

One of the most deplorable effects of this absurd principle of Protestantism is, that it has brought the sacred ministry into contempt, and degraded its functions in the eyes of the people. We find from the Scripture that in ancient times no one took the honour of the priesthood to himself, or arrogated its functions, but he that was called of God, like Aaron. The Redeemer himself was not an exception to this universal rule. But when the destructive principle of Private Judgement was once proclaimed every fanatic set himself up for a priest and a preacher. The commission to preach came not from the Church or the Bishop, but was obtained from the civil Magistrate in the shape of a License. This was what made Dryden say:—

"Each pious 'prentice freely may dispense
Salvation, licensed now for eighteen pence
And should devotion tempt him from his awl
He'll get his orders, if he gets his call!"

Dr. Daubeny a Protestant Divine, describing some of those self elected preachers, says:—

"They are a set of ignorant, self sufficient enthusiasts, industriously pushing themselves into every parish, creeping into houses, and leading captive those silly persons who are weak enough to be led by them. They are many of them of so low a description, as to be obliged to substitute their marks for their names."

The confusion produced in England a century ago, by those spiritual quacks is very happily described by Dr Walton, an English Protestant in his Preface to his Polyglott where he says:—

"Aristarchus heretofore could scarce find seven wise men in Greece; but with us, scarce are to be found so many idiots. For, all are doctors, all are divinely learned; there is not so much as the meanest fanatic or jackpudding who does not give you his own dreams for the word of God. *The bottomless pit seems to be set open*, from whence a smoke has arisen which has darkened the heavens and the stars, and locusts have come out with stings, a numerous race of sectarians and heretics, who have renewed all the ancient heresies, and invented many monstrous opinions of their own. These have filled our cities, villages, camps, houses, nay our Pulpits too, and lead the poor deluded people with them to the pit of perdition!"

What wonder that an English Prelate should say:—"The establishment is a tree which is shivering to pieces with wedges made out of itself."

Dr. Walton's complaint, is however, very unjust. For, according to the Protestant Rule of Faith, those crazy fanatics and jackpuddings had as good a right to preach and interpret Scripture as himself.

Every one knows what a great champion of Protestantism the late Robert Southey was; listen to his description of a certain class of preachers of the word:—

"They consist of roving adventurers; in all their intermediate grades between knavery and madness, who take to preaching as a thriving trade. One Magistrate in the county of