

It is not at any great length, therefore, that I purpose now to obtrude my observations upon your Grace; but, under your permission, I shall proceed to give forth, without disguise, the depth of my own convictions upon certain features of this solemn subject, in which the interests of our holy religion are for all perpetuity involved.

First, then, I find it impossible to regard the secularization of the Clergy Reserves as otherwise than stamped with a sacrilegious character. I do not see how it can be denied to be the alienation of a property given to God; and it is well worthy of remembrance that in republican America, the endowments of the Church of England have been held sacred; they were preserved to her, in one noted instance, through the very convulsions of that revolution which separated the colonies from the mother country (and the circumstance was the more marked, because the Church was exposed to particular odium on account of the characteristic loyalty of her members); they were restored to her in another instance, by the decision of the courts of the United States, after a long space of years, in which they had been taken possession of and held as townlands, in the absence, at the time, of any episcopalian claimants of the property. (I speak here of the Church of England as continued in the American Church.) These facts are not unobserved in Canada; nor is it possible to suppose that they are without their influence upon the affection of some of the colonists towards the British Government, when the confiscation of their Church property is threatened under actual British rule.

2. It appears to me at least deserving of inquiry, and it is an inquiry of the most serious character possible which thus presents itself, whether the Royal sanction could be given to the projected measure of confiscation, without violating the coronation oath. If, as I apprehend to be the correct view of the case, and as is assumed in the use, within the colonies, of the forms of ordination, the Colonial Bishops and Clergy, made by the Royal Letters Patent to belong to the Archiepiscopal Province of Canterbury, are Bishops and Clergy of the realm of England, then it is not necessary to say that they are protected by that oath against any invasion or infraction of their existing rights, privileges, and endowments, of whatever kind.

3. The disposal of this question involves the question of the maintenance of public faith. The Act 3 & 4 Vict. c. 78, was regarded and held by all parties, and was accepted by the parties interested, as a final settlement of the long agitated questions respecting the reserves,—a settlement, it is also to be remembered, which was anterior to the establishment of responsible Government within the colony. It has been distinctly recognised as final in the formal language of the Provincial Legislature; and if the conclusive arrangements of that Act can now be disturbed, and its provisions can be upset, it would be difficult to show how any rights or interests in the province can be safe.

My Lord Duke, these are of themselves considerations which, if I am not guilty of presumption in saying so, call for the exercise of the maxim, "Be just and fear not;" and if the Government of this great country had long ago had the firmness to apply this principle to the question, all injurious disturbance in connexion with the Clergy Reserves would have been saved. Respect would be felt for it if such firmness was exercised now. Most certainly the surrender of control over the Clergy Reserves to a party now raising agitation in Canada, will not prove to be the pacification of the colony; and that it never can be too late to do that which is called for by the rule of right, and that consequences are not to be argued upon when this rule is once clear, is what no person will more promptly acknowledge than your Grace.

The matter being once rested upon foundations such as these, it seems almost to be a work of supererogation to reiterate additional arguments, however correct and forcible in themselves, which have at different times been urged upon the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and which will be found stated in the documents to which I have above referred. I will only trespass upon your Grace by noticing two further points, which I number as continuing the series of the considerations already in part here submitted.

4. The nature of this endowment is not such as to be properly productive of any odium or discontent. It carries with it no burden imposed upon any class
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