

that Henry the VIII. became Pope instead of Leo,—a very doubtful improvement! The Reformed faith was declared by Act of Parliament to be the religion of the land, and the semi-Protestant Church of England stepped into the silver slippers of the Church of Rome, and from that hour to the present has continued to wear them.

Three centuries, however, have totally changed the aspect of the case. The Church of England is no longer without a rival. Dissenters and churchmen are now about equally divided, and the question naturally forces itself upon public attention, if religion is to be endowed at all, to which of these rival bodies shall the patronage of the State be extended?

The Irish Establishment occupies a position more anomalous still. It has not, and never has had, even the flimsy plea of its sister establishments in England and Scotland for Government support, viz., that of being the church of the majority. But little more than *one-tenth* of the people of Ireland make any pretence of connection with it, while of that tenth, probably one-half never enter the doors of her sanctuaries. A recent contributor to the *North British Review* declares, upon the authority of Parliamentary returns, that there are over 780 parishes in Ireland whose incumbents enjoy an income of £300 sterling (about \$1,500) each, where the number of adherents of the Established Church, all told—men, women and children—*will not average 20 persons*. We wonder how long Canadians would patiently endure taxation for the support of an ecclesiastical establishment at such a rate, especially of one as odious to them in its character as the Church of England is to the great mass of the people of Ireland!

These, however, are only incidental circumstances in the case; the principle involved would be the same were the proportions reversed, and the minority taxed for the maintenance of the religion of the majority, although in the latter instance the injustice might not be equally apparent. It is manifestly wrong and utterly at variance with the cardinal principle of Protestantism—the right of private judgment in the interpretation of Holy Scripture—to compel any man to subscribe, either with his pen or with his purse, to the support and propagation of what he does not believe.

Into the discussion of the general question of church establishments, from a scriptural point of view, or of their influence upon spiritual religion, we have not space to enter. We are willing to admit, or at least we do not care to deny, that it is possible to conceive of circumstances in which they might work to advantage in the furtherance of the cause