

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE. Eph. 2 c. 20 v.

VOLUME II.

LUNENBURG, N. S. THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 1837.

NUMBER 7.

From an English Tract.

ON THE ENDOWMENTS OF THE PARISH CHURCHES IN ENGLAND.—Concluded.

When the followers of the Conqueror had been put into possession of the lands of the native owners of the soil, one of the first evils which the Church experienced was the withdrawal of their maintenance from the parochial clergy. These, from being English, were objects of dislike to the Norman lords; who, therefore, in numerous instances, withheld the tithes of their manors from the parish churches, and bestowed them on monasteries that had been founded for Norman monks.* Lay-patrons, in other instances, gave up their right of patronage to collegiate churches, or monastic societies, in consequence of which the latter usually presented one of their own community to the benefices. But as these monks, or canons soon found that they could not attend to the duties of their Order, and at the same time perform the duties of parochial clergymen, they were in the habit of employing an annual curate to represent them in their benefices. These curates, however, received but a small pecuniary stipend for discharging the spiritual duties of the parish, and were little better than pensioners on the bounty of the several parties that appointed them. The great land-owners, too, following the example of the monastic Orders, required all clergymen whom they appointed to benefices, to pay a certain portion of the tithes to the patron and his heirs; so that within one hundred years after the Norman Conquest, the parochial clergy were reduced to the condition of tributaries to their patrons.

This abuse of endowments by lay-patrons was effectually put a stop to; and when the monks of the various Orders found that they would not any longer be allowed to oppress the clergy whom they employed on their benefices, they retained the preferment in their own hands, serving the churches by turns, or by lot, or even by penance. By these means they were enabled to retain for the use of their respective societies, all the profits of the livings that were in their patronage.

It is not surprising that a speculation so profitable should have been speciously grasped at by all corporate bodies. Hence, by paying a fine to the Pope, Secular Colleges, Chantryes, Military Orders, Lay Hospitals, and even Nunneries, obtained leave to appropriate the revenues of parish churches to the use of their several communities. At length the evils of this system reached such an extremity, that although the different monastic societies could not be forced to relinquish the tithes and revenues of such parishes as they had robbed, yet were they obliged, in each case to appoint a perpetual Vicar with a competent maintenance. This Vicar was instituted by the Bishop, and was altogether independent of the monastic societies.

When, therefore, a King and Parliament (in every respect Popish, except as to the Article of the King's supremacy,) decided, that it would be for the increase of religion and morality to confiscate the revenues of the monasteries, for the purpose of enriching a few profligate courtiers; if the parish churches of England were, in many instances, still in possession of those tithes and revenues with which they had been originally endowed. In very many instances, however, the parochial tithes and revenues had been seized upon, as has been stated, by monastic houses, and were in the possession of those societies when the monasteries were dissolved. One pretence for dissolving the monasteries was, that their "revenues

were not employed according to the intent of the donor," but as neither King nor Parliament deemed it worth while to inquire how the religious houses became possessed of their revenues, or to what purpose it was intended that those revenues should be applied, the tithes and endowments of about half the parishes in England, were greedily seized upon in the general plunder. Thus though the Reformation delivered the Church of England from the usurped authority of the Romish Bishop, and purified her from those false doctrines, by which in her Anglo-Saxon state she had never been corrupted; yet it left her stripped of nearly half those parochial endowments of which she was possessed before the Norman Conquest.

From these historical facts it may, therefore, be collected.

1. That before Christianity became the religion of any State, individual churches, as well as churches collectively, were in possession of endowments; and that those endowments arose from the piety of individual Christians.

2. That it was customary to pay tithes to the clergy of the English Church, from the remotest period of the Christian era; and that the Anglo-Saxon Kings and Parliaments only confirmed by law the payments of those tithes, which in all instances were the oblations of private individuals.

3. That before the Norman Conquest, the division into parishes, and the endowment of churches, was general throughout England; the tithes of each parish being set apart for the maintenance of the parochial clergy, those clergy being Episcopal, and the Church being as yet uncorrupted by the peculiar doctrines of Popery.

4. That the progress of Popery, under the Norman rule, was marked by a corresponding robbery of parish churches; a striking feature in the papal tyranny having ever been, to leave the working clergy to be supported by the "Voluntary System."

5. That so far as the revenues of parish churches are concerned, the only effect of the Reformation in England, was comparatively to leave the church in much greater poverty than she was before she was enslaved and corrupted by Popery.

If, therefore, for party purposes, interested persons will continue to declaim against the possessions of the Established Church, the commonest regard for truth and decency, demands that tithes should be spoken of, not as having been given to the Church by the State; but as the gifts of Land-owners, who had a right to devote to the service of religion, a part of that property which was undoubtedly their own to give. It ought to be told, that what the Land-owners chose to give was secured, by due process of law, for the maintenance of Episcopal clergymen, who ministered in a Church, as yet uncorrupted by those errors which are peculiar to Popery. It ought to be stated, that the property of this country has been sold, and bought, and transferred, from time immemorial, on the express condition that Tithes should be paid out of it; and that it is a notorious fact, that the person who buys, and the tenant who rents, land subject to Tithes, pays less for his land, on that very account, than he otherwise would.

Let these important facts be but fairly made known, and the most dishonest will have to confess, that the Endowments of the Church are as strictly private as the Endowments of the Dissenters; and that, though the Papists may, for a time, have usurped the revenues of the Church, as the Socinians are at this moment in possession of the Hewley Charity, yet the Protestant Clergy have a more indisputable title to the Tithes of their parishes, than most landlords have to the rents of the soil.

*The Bishops, and Patrons, and not the State, are the Trustees of Church Property. The right of a State, therefore, to interfere with Tithes or Parochial Endowments, extends only so far as its right to interfere with the Endowments of Dissenters, but no farther.

TENETS OF THE GREEK CHURCH.

Like the Roman Catholic, the Greek Church recognizes two sources of doctrine—the Bible and tradition. Under the last, it comprehends the doctrines orally delivered by the apostles, by the fathers of the Greek Church, and by seven general councils. It treats its tenets as entirely obligatory and essential to salvation. It holds that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father, but not from the Son. It has seven sacraments—baptism, chrism, the eucharist, penance, ordination, marriage, and supreme unction. It baptizes by triple immersion, administers the eucharist to children, and holds to transubstantiation. It allows the clergy, except the monks, and higher clergy chosen from them, to marry a virgin, but not a widow; and they must not marry a second time. It frequently grants divorces to the laity; but does not allow them a fourth marriage. It rejects the doctrines of purgatory, supererogation, and indulgences; but a printed form of forgiveness of sin is sometimes given to the deceased, for the comfort of survivors. It acknowledges no visible vicar of Christ on earth. It allows no carved, sculptured, or molten image of holy persons or things; but admits painted representations of Christ, the virgin Mary, and the saints; which are objects of religious veneration in the churches, and in private houses. But in the Russian churches, works of sculpture are found on the altars. The Greeks invoke the saints, especially the Virgin, as zealously as the Romanists. They hold relics, graves, and crosses, sacred; and crossing in the name of Jesus, to have a blessed influence. Among the means of penance, fasts are numerous, at which it is unlawful to eat any thing but fruits, vegetables, bread and fish. Their church services consist almost entirely in outward forms. Preaching and catechising are little practised. The congregations have choirs, who sing psalms and hymns, but not from books: and instrumental music is excluded. Besides the mass, which is regarded as the chief thing, the liturgy consists of passages of Scripture, prayers, and legends of the saints. From the monks, bishops are chosen; and from the bishops, archbishops, metropolitan, and patriarchs. The government of the church in Russia, is now intrusted to the holy Synod, at Petersburg; under which, besides four metropolitans seated at Petersburg, Kiev, Kasan, and Tobolsk, stand 11 archbishops, 29 bishops, 12,400 parishes, and 425 convents, 58 of which are connected with monastic schools for educating the clergy. The dignities of patriarch of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, still subsist. The former, however, exercises the highest ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the Greeks in the whole Turkish empire. He has considerable income; but is compelled to pay nearly half of it, as a tribute, to the Sultan.—Portland Times.

TRIBUTE TO EPISCOPACY.

The following panegyric on the Episcopal Church; from the pen of a most determined opponent of Episcopacy, is copied, from *The Quarterly Christian Spectator*, for December, 1836, published at New Haven;—

Though the Episcopal Church, [in the United States,] is comparatively small as respects the number of its ministers and Churches, MANY CIRCUMSTANCES SEEM TO INDICATE THAT IT MAY BE DESTINED IN THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD, to sustain an important part in the work of saving our land and of saving THE WORLD. All who, with enlarged minds and liberal hearts, pray for the peace of Jerusalem, must pray for the prosperity of that Church, and for the effusion upon it of the reviving influences of the Holy Spirit. To the prayer of their liturgy, "Send down upon our Bishops and other clergy, and upon the congregations committed to their charge, the healthful spirit of thy grace,"—what heart that loves the Lord Jesus Christ will not respond, Amen.

*All the Monastic Orders except the Benedictines, settled in England after the Conquest.

†The Duke of Bedford alone is in possession of Monastic property to the amount of £100,000 a year, at the lowest calculation.