

THE PRESBYTERIAN

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SCOTLAND.

We are indebted to a kind friend for a copy of the "Glasgow News" giving a full account of an important meeting held at Helensburgh in connection with the Endowment Scheme of the Church of Scotland, at which the Duke of Argyll presided. The Town Hall was completely filled, and the proceedings seem to have been of a very enthusiastic character, in so far as talking was concerned. The noble Chairman, always happy in his utterances on ecclesiastical questions—outshone himself on this occasion in the delivery of an able and comprehensive address to which, we observe, the Argus-eyed SCOTSMAN has devoted nearly two whole columns of left-handed compliments, in its characteristic sneering vein, though not with its accustomed acumen.

In answer to the question, "How are the ministry to be supported," His Grace very naturally dwelt, in the first place, on the principle of "State Churches". He repudiated most strongly the idea that because he was a consenting party to the disestablishment of the Church in Ireland, that therefore, he, or the government either, should be held as opposed to the principle of establishments. Their legislation in that instance was based upon certain special circumstances affecting the Church and people of Ireland, these circumstances being not only different, "but the very antitheses" of all the circumstances affecting the question in the sister kingdoms. The speaker gave it as his opinion "that established churches where they have grown up with the history of the people, and where nothing has happened to alter their fundamental character and position, are among the greatest national blessings, to be cherished and maintained as long as that character is preserved." At the same time it was frankly acknowledged that Established Churches cannot be extended in our times upon the same principles on which they were founded. His Grace next alluded to what was called

in the late controversy "Concurrent Endowment" that is, where the clergy of all denominations, without reference to anything but the numbers of those who adhere to them, are paid salaries by the State, a method largely adopted on the Continent of Europe; but which he considered alike impossible and impolitic in Britain, one indeed, really fatal to civil and religious liberty. Coming to the third mode of supporting the ministry, namely, that of pure Voluntary Congregationalism, he said:

Far be it from me to say one word against the congregational support of ministers. I know as a matter of fact that it is consistent with the formation and long duration of the happiest and the most sacred ties between the minister and his people. It is not the method which I should prefer for myself. I cannot help thinking and feeling that there must be some embarrassment in the position of a minister who is entirely dependent, and solely dependent on the contributions of his people. But this I will say, that I wish there was more of congregational feeling amongst us all in this matter. Although I do not think they ought to be dependent entirely upon the contributions of their congregations, I say this—that it is a duty on the part of the congregations, if, by accident or otherwise, they know their minister to be insufficiently endowed—I say it is the duty of the congregations to supplement his income. (Cheers.) And I rejoice to believe that it is a custom which is extending rapidly in the Established Church of Scotland, although there can be no doubt whatever that one of the inconveniences of the system is that it does tend to check the desire of the people to contribute voluntarily towards the support of their minister.

I should like to see that spirit more common, and that where congregations know or have reason to believe, that the endowment is insufficient for the adequate support of their minister, there should be a systematic plan by which their stipends or incomes should be supported. (Cheers.) That seems to me to be a positive duty on the part of the various congregations that constitute the Church of Christ. I believe it is more done in Scotland than in England. The English Church is said to be one of the richest churches in the world, and so it is if you look at the aggregate amount of property. But there is a larger amount of poverty in the Church of England at this moment than in the Church of Scotland, a larger number of men who have barely the means of living in that Church, which is considered so rich, than there are in the Church of Scotland. It is in consequence of