

CHURCH AND STATE.

THAT the Government of a country should have anything to do with Religion is thought by some people to be an unwarrantable interference with matters which do not concern it. Political institutions are supposed to exist for the sole purpose of promoting the worldly interests of those who live together in the same country, and who connect themselves together for mutual protection and for carrying on those objects which are calculated to benefit the worldly interests of those who are parties to the political organization. But we should be disposed to contend for the principle that it is the duty of man to honour God in all the relations of life; and especially should we believe it to be his duty to promote piety towards God in the highest and most extensive relation which he can hold towards his fellow men—when he is concerned in the government of a nation. Nor can we imagine that the temporal interests of a State can be better secured than by spreading religious influences therein. The fact that there might be a difficulty in choosing the particular religion to be supported by the State, in countries like Canada or the United States, arising from the multitude of opinions on religious subjects, does not alter the fact or the nature of the duty, if it can be shown to exist; and we cannot doubt that Almighty God will look with anything but complacency upon the nation which by its disagreements upon religious questions, has rendered the adoption of a national religion an impossible attainment. The benefit to be derived from a union or identity of Church and State is however always on the side of the State. The Church herself is never benefited by such a connection in her spiritual progress, and not often in her temporal interests. In England, the Church would have been far richer and would have had a far greater power of expansion if the State had never interfered with her worship, or laid sacrilegious hands upon her endowments, almost all of which, especially her tithes, were derived from voluntary and private sources—the State having only enacted laws for the protection of her rightful claims, always excepting however the instances wherein the State has thought fit to seize portions of her revenues either for its own use or for the use of its creatures.

The objection to a religion fostered by the State, arising from the unwarrantable interference of the State in ecclesiastical matters is not neutralized entirely by disestablishment. We noticed, a short time ago, the Civil Courts in Ireland being called upon to decide whether a member of the Presbyterian organization should have the privilege of demanding the communion at the hands of his teacher: and in Canada, a case of a somewhat similar nature has been brought before the Civil Courts and is yet undecided. A Churchman in the Diocese of Ontario feels aggrieved because his clergyman refused to administer the Holy Communion to him contrary to the rules of the Church, and has actually applied to the Civil Courts to compel the administration or to obtain damages. And yet, neither

is the Presbyterian body established as the national system in Ireland, any more than is the Church established as the national religion of Canada.

The great difficulty arising from an established religion is from the tendency to make the Church an engine of State policy, a mere political machine. And this Erastian principle is sure to have adherents wherever a union of Church and State exists. In England at the present moment the contention going on in Church matters is not so much one of Ritual or no Ritual, of extreme Ritual or of authorized Ritual. The question is as to whether or not the grand old Church of England is to be reduced to a mere department of the State. The tendency of one party is to degrade the Church to that position; the aim of the other party is to prevent that terrible calamity, so subversive as it would be of the best interests of both Church and State. The Church in England is a society of which at one time all Englishmen were members. At that time the Church was the State, and the State was the Church. When England had submitted to the jurisdiction of Rome, appeals in spiritual matters were heard before the Pope. During the period the Church was passing through her transition state of release from the thralldom of Rome, and for some time afterwards, the right of appeal was vested in the Court of Delegates. From that Court of Appeal the Crown had released the Church by the 2 and 3 William iv., c. 92, which formally and literally abrogated the appeal to the King. And since the Church in her convocations had given no assent to the substitution of any other Court of Appeal in spiritual matters for that which was abolished, they constitutionally reverted to the provisions of the Statute of Appeals, by which all appeals in causes ecclesiastical were determined either in the Court of the Archbishop or in Convocation. In the Statute of Appeals it is declared that "the body politic is divided in terms and by names of spirituality and temporality; the body spiritual whereof having power when any cause of the law Divine cometh in question, or of spiritual learning, is sufficient of itself, without the intermeddling of any exterior person or persons, to declare and determine all such offices and duties as to matters spiritual doth appertain. And the laws temporal are for trial of property, of lands and goods, and for the preservation of the people in unity and peace." This is the constitutional distinction in England between the Spirituality and the Temporality which is sought to be maintained on the one hand, and to be entirely destroyed on the other.

SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL.

ON the first of this month, the hundred and seventy-sixth annual meeting of this venerable and flourishing Society was held in London, the Archbishop of Canterbury presiding. Among those present there were the Bishops of Rhode Island, of Guiana, of Antigua, and Bishop Perry. Prayers were

said by the Rev. W. F. Bullock, the secretary, who also read an abstract of the report for the past year. It announced the gratifying fact that the receipts of the society for the past year were larger than ever before, having amounted to £136,906 16s. 9d. It also stated that there are now 62 colonial and missionary bishoprics, and in 42 of them 533 missionaries have been engaged in various fields of labour under the supervision of the Society. They are distributed as follows:—In Asia 132, in Africa 112, in Australia and the Pacific 63, in America and the West Indies 225, and in Europe 1. There are also about 800 catechists and native lay teachers in heathen countries, and two hundred students in colleges abroad. The report dwelt on the fact of the great want of the missions in Asia of additional bishops, but referred to the want having been partly met by the appointment of four assistant bishops in the Indian districts, the Society having provided the entire income of one bishop, and a sum of four thousand pounds towards the endowment of two others. The accounts sent home from the various parts of the world where the missionaries are stationed, show that the work of the Church through the instrumentality of the Society continues to prosper. The report also states that the part of the Society's efforts in connection with the Ladies' Association, founded in 1866, for the promotion of female education, is particularly successful, and is yearly rising into still greater prominence.

The Archbishop of Canterbury congratulated the meeting upon the steady progress which, under God's blessing, that ancient Society continues to make in the great work which has been committed to it. There had been nothing in the labours of the Society during the past year of a very startling nature; but there was one point in connection with its work which should be noticed. Much has been said in the present day about women's rights and women's work, and his Grace said he believed the two went together. The rights which they possess are those rights which belong to them, because they do very important work in the community; and this Society has the credit of having organized a ladies' association, the object of which is to promote as much as possible the co-operation of women in missionary labour. It was not merely established in order that ladies in London might meet and consider what was best to be done for the conversion of women in India, but at many of our distant scenes of labour there are at present Englishwomen carrying on missionary work in a quiet and unobtrusive way, and, by the share which they are taking in such work, they are contributing to solve the question of what women's rights are, and what is the kind of work in which women can well be engaged. He had been visited the other day by a dignitary of the Church of England, who said that his own daughter had been for some time back labouring as a nurse in the missionary station of Zanzibar; and he believed the presence of that English lady in the hospital had been the means of restoring to health not only missionaries who had