

year to endeavour to upset the reserved schedules, and do away with State aid to religion altogether, and the accidental triumph which they have obtained they look upon as a sure omen of victory. It is, no doubt, a question of time only; and it will probably not be more than three or four years before the Church is thrown entirely on the support of her children."

THE ECCLESIASTICAL GRANTS IN AUSTRALIA.—We take the following from the *Southern Spectator* for February, a monthly magazine of religious and general literature connected with the Congregational churches of Australia, edited by the Rev. Richard Fletcher, formerly of Manchester, and now of St. Kilda, Melbourne. From the three numbers now before us it appears to be both a useful and well conducted periodical.

The step taken in New South Wales cannot fail to have a decided influence on the progress of the same great question in Victoria and Tasmania. * * The withdrawal of State support to religious bodies was moved for in the Tasmanian Legislature not long ago, and only failed in being carried by a narrow majority. Argument, zeal, and faith, were defeated by self-interest and prejudice; but only for a time, for the contest is sure to be renewed again and again until the victory is won.

In the Victorian Legislature the question is not formally, but is considered to be virtually settled. The abolition was, last Session, carried in the Assembly by a decided majority, and was thrown out in the Council by a majority of only one. Several fresh elections for the Upper House have since been held, and changes in consequence have taken place of such a nature as to leave little doubt of the majority being now prepared to support a measure for abolition. A Bill for the discontinuance of State Grants was introduced into the Lower House in the present short session, but the pressure of other business requiring immediate attention, has caused its postponement till the Parliament next assembles; and this is expected to be at an early period.

Some attempts, however, have been made, if not to tinker up the old and decaying system, at least to get as much out of it as possible. A bill professedly for the better regulation of Ecclesiastical Trusts, but really under that pretext, which but thinly veiled the true object, to give power to trustees to sell church lands granted by the State. But the device being detected, the measure was first emasculated and then suffered silently to drop as useless. Three several private bills were also brought in, to seek under special circumstances, power to sell certain church lands; but meeting with unexpected opposition and obstruction, they seem at present hanging fire, to await, perhaps, the fate of a bolder and more comprehensive measure, now before the Legislature. This measure proposes to give power to all religious bodies throughout the colony, holding grants from the Crown for church sites, to alienate them at pleasure from their proper and designed use, and to traffic and trade in them as they please, provided, of course, that the proceeds are devoted to Ecclesiastical purposes. It is to be hoped that the common sense of the House and the country will at once quash such a barefaced proposal, and insist upon the lands, as they are granted, being strictly applied to their original object, viz., sites for churches, schools, and parsonages. There is little reason to doubt that the Parliament soon to be summoned on the basis of the new Reform Bill, will at once free all the religious bodies in the colony from all dependence upon the taxes for support, and free the Legislature also from all pretexts for meddling with matters ecclesiastical. It will be a happy day for the peace of the country, and we believe for the interest of vital religion itself, when that consummation, so devoutly to be wished, shall have arrived throughout the whole of the Australian colonies.

WORKING OF STATE ENDOWMENTS IN AUSTRALIA.—At a public meeting lately held in Sydney, for the purpose of protesting against Ecclesiastical grants, the following address was made by the Rev. J. Roberts.—He said he was an Episcopalian, a member of the Church of England, baptized, bred, and ordained in that Church. His presence at that meeting was not inconsistent with his position.