

Legislature. Another thing was that the Church of Scotland was full of prosperous work. Those who advocated this change were not there on the part of an effete and decrepit institution. It was an institution at once venerable and full of vigorous life, and was asking for the reconstruction of a liberty which it considered necessary for the restoration of its national powers. He contended that the change might the more favorably take place now, when both private and Crown patronage had been exercised in a way that deserved thankful acknowledgment.

Mr. McLaren objected to the resolution because of its extreme vagueness, and also because it would place the other religious bodies in Scotland at a disadvantage.

Mr. Gladstone admitted that the subject was one of great and vital interest to Scotland, and thought that the opinions of the people of Scotland ought to be carefully considered before any action was taken by the House.

He wished to observe, however, that the discussion, interesting as it had been, and the speech of the hon. gentleman who moved the motion had in reality only passed over the surface of the question. His hon. friend commenced his motion with a vague declaration, and concluded by saying that the system of appointment of ministers ought to be greatly altered. That proposition was a very important one, but was a very small portion of the whole subject. It was true there had always been a strong feeling against the existence of church patron-

age. But, on the other hand, there had been a most remarkable diversity of proceeding in Scotland, and the widest difference of opinion had existed in regard to the law of patronage. So far back as 1590 it had been declared in the broadest terms that every congregation had a right to appoint its ministers. In 1834 the question was handled by elders of the Scotch Church, who were men of eminence, and who would be an ornament to any communion in Christendom, and a complete new method of procedure was adopted. His hon. friend proposed, not that they should adopt the plan of the General Assembly, but that they should revert to the Act of 1590. He did not point to these almost numberless methods of procedure with any invidious purpose, but only to support his position. If the time had come to take steps in the matter, the time had not come for the House to bind itself by the adoption of abstract resolutions which contained no guide and no assistance as to the nature of the measure they intended to adopt. His hon. friend must agree that it was a matter which required further investigation. What he would propose to his hon. friend would be to propose, not this session, but early next session, the appointment of a Committee to continue its enquiry into the subject of the law of patronage. The disruption of 1843, though in some senses to be deplored, was not an evil without compensation, for it had led to religious activity. In conclusion, he would say that, viewing the inherent difficulties of the case, and the importance that, before taking definite steps, they should well understand what they were going to do. He proposed that Parliament should be invited at the earliest fitting opportunity to resume these investigations of 1844, so as that they might have the opportunity of gathering material and satisfying the House as to the real convictions and wishes of the people of Scotland in regard to the law of patronage.

Our Sanctum.

If we have gone a little out of our beaten path in alluding to the action of the Imperial Parliament on the LAW OF PATRONAGE, it is not that we care to dabble in politics but because we foresee the beginning of great issues that, for weal or woe, will certainly affect all the Churches of the Realm. That the expressed desire for abolition of Patronage by members of the Established Church should call forth strenuous opposition from the Church who ostensibly left the establishment because patronage was tolerated, is a significant fact, and it is well that it has not been attempted to conceal what lies at the root of the opposition—that to acquiesce in legislation in this direction would be to trench the National Churches in their present position and give the *coup de grace* to the cry for “disestablishment.” The following resolution of the United Presbyterian Church, submitted for the consideration of the Government, renders this clear:

“That the Church which they represent as a Committee has long and earnestly opposed the statutory endowment of religious bodies, and from its origin has been opposed, on grounds of principle, to Patronage in all its forms; regarding the statutory control of the choice of ministers as an interference with the just and scriptural rights of the Christian people. What, therefore, they would rejoice to see all members of the Established Church appreciating and exercising the rights and privileges of Church members in the matter of the choice of the ministers, and likewise performing the duties of Church members in the matter of their support, they know no reason why legislation should be invoked to deal solely with the evil of patronage, and not also, and at the same time, with the related evil of endowment; and they believe the strongest reasons exist why both the legislative control of appointments to benefices, and the legislative provision for incumbents, should