

CHURCH THOUGHTS BY A LAYMAN.

THE ENEMY AT THE GATE.

THE entrance of the classes called by Mr. Bright, "*the residuum*," upon the full privileges of citizenship as voters in Parliamentary elections, has opened for discussion one of the gravest topics ever considered by the people of England. The occasion has been seized by the enemies of the English Church, as a church, in alliance with the foes of christianity in any form, to bring before the new electorate two questions which they will be asked to settle sooner or later. These questions are, first, the relation of the State of England to the Church of England, next, the right of the church to hold its property. The one is called the Disestablishment, the other the Disendowment question. The dissenting and atheistic faction, we say faction, for the union is complete of these classes, have put forth a formal statement of their demands, the leading one being Disestablishment and Disendowment of the Church. The two things have no necessary connection, but they are placed together for political purposes, the arguments for disestablishing the church being made to do double duty, as the majority of the new electors are too illiterate to discern that reasons which may be valid and just for disestablishment, have no conceivable relevance to the question of disendowment. Those who have ever read the stock charges of political dissent against the church on the ground of its State connections, know how mere sectarian passion, prejudice and ignorance are their inspiration and strength. Those who are conducting the attack upon the *standing* of the church, are well aware that these forces will sway the uneducated voters, and that having incited their passions against the Church on *social* grounds, they will be able all the more readily to use this passion for carrying on the assault against the *possessions* of the Church. The policy of dissent and atheism in alliance is identical with that of the communists, who first excite hatred against the well to do by comparisons of their comfortable affluence with the distresses of the poor, then use this hatred as an impelling force in robbing or destroying the goods of the rich. The children of this world understand their Master's work. To show the effects of disestablishing the church, one needs to know England; Canadian or American born churchmen are not able, without study, and long personal observation in the old land, to judge in this matter, and their sympathies are likely to be, if not with the enemies of the church, at least, not actively in unison with their brethren at home. This is a misfortune, for we regard it most desirable that the condition, the position, the claims and the dangers of the Mother Church should be well understood by all her children, so that in time of trial they may help her by signs of filial love.

The chief literary organ of the Liberals of England, the Edinburgh Review, says: "The disestablishment of the church would go far to

destroy the parochial system in the rural parishes of England. As long as the church retains its character of a national institution, the rector or vicar of the parish is its official head. He is looked up to not only as a minister of religion, but as the person who promotes its schools, its charities, as well as the moral and even temporal welfare of the parish. They are, by position and character, the friends of the poor, to relieve their wants, to assist them by advice, to comfort them in adversity, sickness and the hour of death. The poor have a rightful claim upon their pastor which is not unheeded. Disestablish the church and all this is changed, the incumbent would cease to be the parson, *the persona* of the parish. He must be supported by voluntary contributions, *paid by those to whom he now owes a gratuitous service*. The distinction between the clergyman and the dissenting minister, *which excites the jealousy and rancour of dissenters*, is that their minister is the head only of his own congregation, depending on their voluntary support, whilst the clergyman is *the servant of the parish*, bound to assist all who requires his offices, without fee or reward from the people."

The Edinburgh Review shows that "*the result of disestablishment would be that the clerical profession would be lowered, and that men of the highest character, station and ability would cease to enter it.*" To this would be added another element of degradation of the clerical office, there would arise as here, party colleges, where young men would be tempted to sacrifice their intellectual manhood in order to secure, without previous education or any adequate study, a so-called training for the ministry, and they would pass into the service of God's Church as those of a certain college do here, the *bond slaves of a narrow faction*, instead of free men in Christ.

The Quarterly Review, the chief literary organ of conservatives, takes the same ground as its usual antagonist, the Edinburgh, it declares that disestablishment of the Church of England means that *England, as a nation, "repudiates Christianity."* All authorities outside dissent and atheism, look to disestablishment as likely to help chiefly—infidelity and the Church of Rome. The Edinburgh voices this solemn conviction thus:—"It would be the most stupendous triumph which the Church of Rome has obtained for three centuries and would largely increase her power in these islands."

The advocates of this revolution bait their scheme of disestablishment by the plea that disendowment must follow, and that the property plundered from the church would be divided up among the people. It is nothing more or less than a proposal of brigandage. To give colorable pretext of decency to this villainous scheme, the most "audacious and absurd" statements, as the Edinburgh Reviewer calls them, are made to the effect that the State pays the Church. This is asserted here, and it is well to brand this as a falsehood. The tithes were not given by the State, the State simply ensures payment of them as it

ensures payment of all just debts, and no public taxes or rates are appropriated to the clergy. Men who profess and call themselves Christians, dissenters of England, are now bent upon a design of plundering the Church of the gifts of her sons and daughters for over a thousand years. They propose a scheme for turning all the Temples of God built by pious Churchmen, into public halls, possibly into dancing rooms, or lecture and concert rooms where infidel teachers or nigger minstrels may occupy the ground where the Holy Communion has been administered for generations. This is not one jot exaggerated—it is formally set forth as the election programme of the political dissenters, that the endowments of the Church are to be devoted to secular uses, and the Churches and Cathedrals given over to the ratepayers to be used for any public purpose they may be adapted for! When an individual in private life carries into action the principles of those who aim at robbing the Church of its possessions, he usually is consigned to the penitentiary.

In another article we shall deal more in detail with the questions as to the sources of the Church's income and possessions, in proof of the fact that the State never did confer them.

One word of lesson. We contend that the gross immorality, the utter contempt for honor and common honesty, the sovereign disdain of Christian principles, the callous indifference to the shame of being openly allied with atheists and all the avowed enemies of Jesus Christ, in an attack upon what even dissent allows to be an aggregation of Christian Churches, we contend, we say, that this revolting scandal is the natural outcome of the system of sectism, of undenominationalism which we are invited to fall down and worship as being more in accord with "*the spirit of the age*," than the old fashioned simplicity of the Gospel as held since Pentecost by the Catholic Church.

We are not ashamed to meet our enemies in the gate, for the Lord of the city we defend is He Whose Church is assailed by Judas hearted traitors, in company with less shameful ones who make a mock alike of His Cross and Passion.

ON THE NECESSITY OF HEARTY CO-OPERATION OF THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND REGARDING THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG.

BY F. W. S.

No. 2.

I AM aware that it is a much easier task to write about such matters, but it is a herculean task, comparatively, to commence to carry them into execution. There are so many circumstances surrounding any great political change, that the first serious change in administration involves many persons and things into what appears inextricable chaos. Yet, this one thing we have certain knowledge of, that the encroachments of the State are usually slow and insid-