

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE..... Eph. 2 c. 20 v.

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For the Colonial Churchman.

CHURCH PROPERTY AT THE REFORMATION.

Essay 9—concluded.

Besides these public sales, considerable inroads had been made upon the resources of the Court of Augmentations by "divers acts of the king's grace and favour shewed to his courtiers and others."—Among these, Secretary Cecyll received £100 a-year from the Augmentation Office: also Sir John Zouch had £200 annually from the same source. And the Lady Elizabeth, the king's sister, received for the term of her life the site of the monastery of Missenden in the county of Bucks, with divers other lands, &c. to the yearly value of £3064 17s. 8d." Other great men of the day, such as the Earl of Durham, the Duke of Northumberland, the Lord Russell, the Lord Grosvenor, and William Cavendish, &c. &c. are said to have participated largely of the royal bounty, which was conveyed through the Augmentation Office, and which their lineal descendants enjoy at the present day in the substantial shape of various lands, farms and messuages.

In this manner the Revenues which ought to have been applied to the support of the Reformed Church, and used as a means for disseminating the knowledge of the Gospel among all classes of the community, were wrested forever from the possession of the Augmentation Court, and appropriated to purposes, which, it is very certain, had not been contemplated by the original donors. The cause of the Reformation languished: and a great many parishes where church lands were held, and where tithes were vigorously exacted by lay-impropriators were totally destitute of the means of religious instruction.

The Rev. Bernard Gilpin, the celebrated ancestor of more than one of our Nova-Scotian missionaries, had been called upon to preach before the court of king Edward, and agreeably to the royal command, prepared a sermon for the occasion. In this document, which is still preserved, he tells the king that—"noblemen rewarded their servants with livings appointed for the Gospel; that the devil, by those cormorants that devoured the livings appointed for the Gospel, had made a fortress and bulwark to keep learned pastors from the flock; that is, so to decay learning, that there should be none learned to commit the flock unto. For by reason livings appointed for the ministry, for the most part, were either robbed of the best part, or clean taken away, none almost had any zeal or devotion to put their children to schools, but to learn to write, or make them apprentices, or else lawyers: the two wells, Oxford and Cambridge, were almost dried up. The decay of students is so great that there is scarcely left of every thousand an hundred: if they decay so fast in seven years more, there will be almost none at all. And then indeed may the devil make a triumph of it.—A thousand pulpits in England are covered with dust. Some have not four sermons for fifteen or sixteen years, since friars left their limitations: and few of those harsh harangues were worthy the name of sermons."—*Strype's Mem. vol. II. pt. I. p. 28. 29.*

Such was the state of the church of England in consequence of the great diminution of her revenues, immediately after the Reformation. It would far exceed the limits as well as the design of these brief notices regarding church property, to detail minutely all the circumstances connected with the subject, which occurred during the brief reign of Edward.—Suffice it to say, that if we may judge from the nature of the reward which compensated many of the nobles and commons of England for their share in effecting the reformation of the church from the errors and superstitions of popery, their motives must have originated from other sources than those of pi-

ty and devotion, far less from a sincere desire to propagate the influence of the Gospel in the nation.—Their object seems to have been to appropriate as much as possible of the ecclesiastical revenues to their own individual use, and to the future aggrandizement of their families: and it will be ever a matter of regret that the minority of Edward and the impolicy of the Protector Somerset, afforded such palpable facilities for the accomplishment of their sacrilegious projects. For in this reign it is calculated that the church of England was robbed of more than one half of her ancient revenues.

In Scotland, the property of the Church after the Reformed Religion had been established in that country through the exertions of Knox, shared no better treatment. The disturbed and troublous reign of Mary, and the long animosity of her son James II. afforded the nobility and more powerful commoners of the nation, ample opportunities of arranging the appropriation of ecclesiastical revenues in any manner which was most suitable to their convenience, or best accorded with their individual wishes and plans of future aggrandizement. And, as might be expected, they failed not to take advantage of the circumstances which a combination of events had thus rendered favourable to their designs.

The character of John Knox is known to have been very impetuous; possessed on many occasions, of more energy than discretion. The turbulence of the times under consideration, compared admirably with the boldness of his plans and the singular conceptions which he had entertained of ecclesiastical polity. Roman Catholicism had, through his means, been superseded by the affected austerities of presbyterianism:—Bishops and Cardinals gave place to ecclesiastical superintendents, and various preachers of the reformed church were exercising their ministry in most parts of the land. Still John's thoughts do not seem to have been occupied with any considerations regarding the ancient revenues of the church, which were left entirely to chance, or rather to the supervision of the crown officers.

On the death of the Earl of Mar in 1572, the infamous Morton assumed the regency, supported openly by the interest of England. One of his first public acts was, to secure for the exigencies of the state, all the available revenues of the suppressed monasteries and abbeys, together with any other source of income which the prostrate state of the church presented to his ambition. Accordingly, two-thirds of all lands, and messuages, and property of what kind soever belonging to the Church, were by act of parliament, made over to the state, and afterwards, as it is well known, bestowed on the friends and relations of the Regent. The remaining third, it was proposed, should be sold, and the proceeds vested in a fund under Morton's controul. This latter proposal, however, did not take effect; so that the reformed church of Scotland was stripped of two-thirds of her former revenues, and was by no means secure of the remainder.

John Knox, when it was too late, perceived his error, in not turning his attention sooner to the temporalities of the church. He remonstrated with the parliament, and sent them a long petition, praying that the reformed clergy might still have the benefit of the acknowledged property of the church before the reformation. But that body, with characteristic penetration, saw no reason to conform to the terms of the petition. They unanimously passed a resolution—"that the object of John Knox's petition was a devout imagination, which could never be realized to the said John."—See Aikman's Scotland, vol. III. 8. 96. 172, &c.

To trace with equal minuteness the fate of ecclesiastical property from the Reformation to the period of its final adjustment in England, Scotland and Ireland, would far exceed the limits to which these remarks are necessarily restricted. The settlement

of it in England under Elizabeth, in Ireland under Charles II. and in Scotland under Queen Anne, is a matter of history and public legislation; and becomes therefore the province rather of the lawyer, than of the divine. For this reason, I will pursue the subject no further at present; intending to confine any future remarks I may have to make on Church Property, to the ways and means by which her interest is upheld in the British Colonies. CRITO.

For the Colonial Churchman.

"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes."—119th Psalm.

How natural it is for youth in general to be cast down when afflicted by the invisible hand of Providence. I recollect some time since, a youthful friend whose heart was wholly centered and fixed on this world, who was very suddenly checked in his career of pleasure, by being laid down on the bed of sickness with scarcely one moment's warning from Him from whom all afflictions are sent. When I first saw him in his affliction, he murmured and complained at his sufferings, and at his being interrupted in the enjoyment of his anticipated pleasures. Having continued ill for some time, his minister called frequently to see him, and endeavoured to administer spiritual instruction to him, but for some time his kind advice was unheeded. He did all in his power, for a time, to avoid serious conversation. At last, however, he became more calm, and his mind began to waver as if halting between two opinions, as to whether he should be guided by the advice of his minister or not. His mind, fortunately for himself, did take the right turn; he was guided by the advice of his minister and his bible, and very soon afterwards he saw plainly the hand that afflicted him; and he told me that it was then, and not till then, that he felt that his sickness was ordered by an all-wise Providence, for his own good. He was restored to health once more, but he entered the world again, not setting his heart upon its pleasures as he ever did, but as a christian, preparing to become "an inhabitant of that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." He afterwards lived and died a christian, and his body is now mouldering in the silent grave, and his spirit has winged its flight to the God who gave it.

Youthful reader, whenever you may be afflicted in mind, body, or estate, which at some time or other, you assuredly will be, "for man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," always keep in mind, that such your affliction of whatever kind it may be, is ordered by a merciful Providence, who guides and directs all things in this transitory world,—and is intended for your own good: for the truth of which refer to your bible, and constantly pray to your God to soften your hardened heart, and remove the veil from your eyes, that you may be enabled so to read, that you may understand it. And when you once understand the contents of that blessed volume, you will not, youthful reader, ever murmur or complain at any of God's dispensations, for it will teach you to look beyond the clouds and sufferings of this life, to the sunshine of eternal glory. B.

1st October, 1836.

Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.—At the anniversary festival of this Society, recently held at Freemasons' Hall, the Secretary announced an augmentation of the annual receipts and expenditure, and a proportionate increase to the distribution of books since the last report. The receipts during the year were stated to have amounted to upwards of eighty thousand pounds, and the circulation of books and tracts to nearly two millions and a half, of which more than three hundred and seventy thousand were Bibles, Testaments, and Common Prayer-books.—*Watchman.*