

## Reviews.

*A Defence of the Church of England against Disestablishment, with an Introductory Letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P., by ROUNDELL, Earl of SELBORNE. Macmillan and Co., 1887.*

**L**ORD SELBORNE is admirably fitted, both by the legal accuracy of his mind and the lucidity of his style, to answer the vast number of misstatements which have of late years been made respecting the Established Church and all her works, and to convince reasonable men (the women do not need convincing) that to deprive the Church of its present legal position and of its endowments would not only be a political mistake of the greatest magnitude, but would also be a grave offence against public morality, the results of which would prejudicially affect Christianity not only in England, but also through the length and breadth of Christendom.

"The Case for Disestablishment" and other productions of the Liberation Society, and the chapter of "The Radical Programme" dealing with that subject, are in the treatise under review dealt with by a master's hand. Their theoretical arguments and elaborate fictions are brought to a practical issue and met by the plain logic of facts. One by one Lord Selborne carefully examines and effectually disposes of the vague generalities and misleading statements which are advanced in place of arguments, and brings to bear upon them the light of history and truth. Lord Selborne's book might be fairly and aptly termed "Facts *versus* Fiction." With perfect calmness and the utmost suavity he subjects the Liberation Society's perversion of history and unsound reasoning to searching analysis, and drags them with irresistible force, free from violence or passion, to scorching exposure. As he himself truly remarks, "Facts are of more value than assertions and invective, from whatever quarter it comes. I have stated the facts."

The Introduction consists of a letter to Mr. Gladstone, on the subject of one of the many mysterious paragraphs in that politician's address to the electors of Midlothian, better known as the Authorized Programme. Mr. Gladstone wrote that "such a change as Disestablishment cannot arise in England except with a large observance of the principles of equity and liberality, as well as with the general consent of the nation," and expressed his opinion that "a current almost throughout the civilized world slowly sets in this direction." It is delicious to see the manner in which Lord Selborne meets his former colleague point by point, with avowed respect indeed for himself, but with scarcely veiled contempt for his conduct.

It may perhaps be thought that after the barefaced manner in which, by the simple process of shutting his eyes to all expressions of a contrary opinion, Mr. Gladstone has persuaded himself that the whole civilized world is on his side with regard to the Irish Bills, elaborate reasoning and detailed examination to prove the fallacy of his claim to discern its current tendencies are superfluous.

The first part of Lord Selborne's volume is devoted to the question of Disestablishment, the second to that of Disendowment.

He begins by demolishing the contention of the Liberationists that the Church of England is a State Church, the creation of Parliament, and therefore Parliament has an absolute right (as distinct from the power) to put an end to the relation between Church and State. Lord Selborne clearly proves that the Church of England is not, and never was, a

Parliament-made Church. He shows (1) that it owed its origin to the spontaneous missionary efforts of the one Church of Christ, of which it was part; (2) that there has been no breach in its continuity, no new church being formed or established at the time of the Reformation; and (3) that Establishment was a natural process, the Church and State growing up together in union.

Lord Selborne takes special pains to show that the unreformed Church was not, as contended by the Liberation Society, merely "a local branch of the Church of Rome," but the National Church of the country. He goes fully into the historical evidences, and adduces a number of irresistible authorities to prove that the Church was known as the "Ecclesia Anglicana" and the "Seinte Eglise d'Engleterre" in ancient writings. He readily admits, however, that the Popes were always striving to extend their authority, and in the troubled times of King Stephen's and King John's reigns they managed to interfere considerably with the freedom of the English clergy.

At what time precisely, and in what manner, the incorporation of the laws of the Church into those of the realm took place, it is now impossible to say. Lord Selborne remarks:

The Establishment of the Church of England grew up gradually and silently out of the relations between moral and physical power natural in an early stage of society; not as the result of any definite act, compact, or conflict, but so that no one can now trace the exact steps of the process by which the voluntary recognition of moral and spiritual obligation passed into custom, and custom into law.

Lord Selborne somewhat labours the point of the identity of the Church of England before and after the Reformation. He reminds us that the Reformation was not an affair of a day, and that during all the years it was being consummated the Church of England never lost its identity. He thoroughly disposes of the theory that the present Church of England is a Parliament-made Church.

He next discusses the general principles concerned, pointing out that the advantages gained by Establishment are mutually shared both by Church and State, the latter benefiting more than the former by their union. He then disposes of the so-called "religious argument;" and we can hardly wonder that he finds it difficult to check his impatience when he sees the Liberationists, like the Pharisees of old, parading themselves decked in religious garments, the phylacteries of which are culled from the Pentateuch.

It is only, however, when we take up the question of Disendowment that we can see what are the real aims of the Liberationists. Their object is plunder, pure and simple; but plunder disguised by smooth phrases and high-sounding platitudes; these Lord Selborne thrusts aside, exposes the infamous scheme, and appeals to honest men of all parties and creeds to lay aside their sectarian differences and unite in protecting a great Church from a monstrous injustice. He enumerates the different kinds of Church property—churches, parsonage-houses and glebes, episcopal and capitular estates, and lastly, tithes—and in detail shows that none of them were given by the State, but that, on the contrary, it is to the pious generosity of individuals that the Church owes its present wealth. The argument which "The case for Disestablishment" brings forward—that as the Church is a "National" Church, the property is that of the nation—depends merely upon a quibble in the use of the word "national." Lord Selborne says:

We speak of the aggregate of all the property in the country as *national* wealth. But nobody, I suppose, would contend that the State is the owner of all the property of the Bank of England or of all the property of individual citizens whose fortunes go to make up the national wealth.

The Royal Commission, which was appointed in 1834, is referred to by Lord Selborne merely to correct the misstatements which have been circulated by the Liberation Society with regard to its proceedings. With the concurrence of the heads of the Church, the Commission recommended and Parliament carried out a better distribution of the revenues arising from the episcopal estates; and upon these data the Liberationists maintain that a precedent has been created for taking all Church property, *against* the wish of Churchmen, and using it for secular purposes. The facts have but to be stated for the absurdity of the contention to become apparent.

The third great division of Lord Selborne's work is entitled "The Adversaries and their Case."

Lord Selborne expresses his deep regret that the majority of Nonconformists have assumed the attitude they have on this question, points out that they have equal laws and privileges, and appeals to their sense of honesty to see their mistake. He shows that the Irish Church cannot be fairly quoted as a precedent, since the circumstances of the two cases were entirely different. He warns the State, which he admits has the power, from using it to further unjust ends; and shows the disastrous effects which must inevitably follow disendowment in England. He refutes the charge of failure which has been brought against the Church, and proves by statistics that its work can be favourably contrasted with all or any of the other religious bodies in England. Finally, after protesting against any attempt to separate Wales from England on this question, he ends with an exhortation to Churchmen, which they may well lay to heart. He says:

We are told with loud voices that the Church of England is doomed, that the accomplishment of these designs is coming inevitably upon us. I do not believe in any such doom; I acknowledge no such necessity. . . If we fail it will not be through the power of our adversaries, but through our own faults. . . Since the contest is forced upon us, let us put our armour on and gird ourselves up with a good courage in defence of what we hold most dear.

In an Appendix is given an extract from a sermon lately preached on a public occasion in the principal Methodist church at Toronto, by an eminent clergyman of that church—the Rev. E. A. Stafford. "Standing," says the preacher, "within walls where no one would expect any fulsome laudation of England's Established Church, I think it must be said that that Establishment has contributed many of the noblest elements to the national character." These elements he explains to be the feeling of reverence; the regard for authority; the tender respect for the parental relations; the regard for what is great and inspiring in nature and art which distinguish the English nation.

We strongly recommend every Churchman, lay and cleric, to read, and all who have the means to purchase, a copy of Lord Selborne's most interesting and valuable treatise. C. B. G.

*Gleanings from a Tour in Palestine and the East.* By CHARLES D BELL, D.D. Hodder and Stoughton.

Canon Bell's narrative of his visit to Egypt, Palestine, and Athens was originally written in the shape of letters to friends at home, and the author has, we think, been well advised in giving it a more permanent form and introducing it to a wider circle of readers. There is much in it to instruct and interest a wider circle. It contains, indeed, little that is new, and its "identifications" of Bible sites would perhaps not in every case be endorsed by Palestine explorers. But the narrative is so simple and graceful, and the sacred historical associations of various places visited so well brought out, that no one can read the book without

pleasure or rise from its perusal without feeling that his knowledge of Bible events is become clearer, and that he has caught something of the deep spiritual tone by which the work is pervaded. The verses appended to the chapters display much poetical and devotional feeling, and add a charm to the volume. The author's longing from boyhood to visit the Holy Land, the effect upon his mind of the visit when at last accomplished, and his delight in being permitted to gaze on Jerusalem itself, will strike a chord in the heart of many a devout Christian who has gone through the same experiences :

I count it, O Jerusalem, a joy,  
A life's great privilege to gaze on thee ;  
This hope I fondly cherished from a boy,  
And thou art now a very part of me.

o o o o o o o  
A city richer far than words can tell  
In memories that set the soul on fire ;  
No other spot on earth has such a spell  
To thrill the heart and satisfy desire.

The verses suggested by the visit to Bethlehem breathe the true spirit of Christian devotion :

O happy dawn of this great day !  
O first blest Christmas morn !  
Which unto men the message brought  
The Saviour Christ was born.  
Glad tidings of great joy indeed—  
None richer could be given,  
And none more welcome God Himself  
Could send to us from heaven.

Naturally the author's attention was much directed to the work of Protestant Missions in Palestine, and of them he speaks appreciatively, intimating that "they are doing good work, and must make their influence felt in time." No country is more interesting from a missionary point of view than Palestine at the present time, when so much is being done in the way of medical missions, schools, and other institutions for both Jews and Gentiles. That it is a hard and trying field of labour is the verdict of all who have any experience of it. A missionary who had laboured in Equatorial Africa told Canon Bell that "after three years' work in Palestine he was compelled to confess that the country seemed to him less hopeful in a missionary point of view than any part of Central Africa."

Nor is this surprising, if its past history and present political and social state be taken account of. Mohammedans and their Government alike corrupt, bigoted, and often fanatical ; Christianity corrupt, and represented by some half-dozen churches, rivalling, and too often contending with one another ; Jewish communities practising a religion far different from that which Moses and the Prophets taught, and hardened by centuries of ill-treatment into hatred and contempt of the religion of Christ ; and all of these placed in such circumstances that free inquiry is rendered impossible for those who are not brave enough or independent enough to risk loss of the means of livelihood, social and official persecution, and it is to be feared, in some instances, even death itself. Under such conditions it would be idle to expect the rapid and visible results which may reasonably be looked for where Christian work is carried on among barbarous tribes having no literature, no elaborate system of religion handed down through centuries by men of learning whom they have been taught to revere ; nothing, or almost nothing, to unlearn. Yet much has been accomplished amongst the Jews by the efforts of the

London Society, and amongst Christians and even Moslems by the Church Missionary Society and other agencies; and those who know Palestine well are aware that a far greater change than appears on the surface has taken place during the past generation in the religious thought of all classes of the population. There is a shaking amongst the dry bones.

The question of the perpetuation of the Jerusalem Bishopric is one of great interest just now, since the see has been long vacant; and it is felt on all hands that a decision must soon be arrived at.

That the joint Anglo-Prussian Bishopric will be maintained no one now believes, and few, at least amongst the Germans, desire; but it would be a sad blow to the progress of Scriptural Christianity in the Holy Land if the bishopric were discontinued, or an English bishop appointed whose views would render it difficult for him to work cordially with the agents of Evangelical Societies stationed there. "He must be a man," writes Canon Bell, "of like evangelical views with those who preceded him, and one who can work in harmony with the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, to whom belong the church on Mount Zion, and the Mission schools and college. Otherwise there will be discord and jealousy, and the cause of religion will suffer." Many of the circumstances connected with this bishopric form a curious episode in Church history. Men of undoubted piety, learning, and Christian devotion have discovered objections to it which will certainly seem strange to future generations. The erroneous view from which opposition to its establishment sprung was chiefly connected with the position of the Greek Patriarch, who is even now spoken of by a certain few as if he alone were the rightful bishop of the country, and all others intruders. Yet this is by no means the case, for it is well known that the Armenians, Syrians, Copts, and Abyssinians, not to speak of the Latins, hold an ecclesiastical position in the Holy City and the Holy Land quite independent of the Greek Church and its spiritual rulers. Those good Christians and sound Churchmen who established the Anglican Bishopric recognised the true position of ecclesiastical affairs in Palestine when they addressed their "letter commendatory" with which they furnished Bishop Alexander to their "Brothers in Christ, the Prelates and Bishops of the Ancient and Apostolic Churches in Syria and the countries adjacent," and not to the Greek Patriarch alone; whilst they instructed the new bishop to maintain relations of Christian charity with "other churches represented at Jerusalem, and in particular with the orthodox Greek Church," thus recognising the importance of the position held by that Church, just as it was, and still is, recognised by other Eastern Churches, without confessing any superiority or right of jurisdiction outside its own fold. Bishoprics in Jerusalem are national rather than territorial. The question is in some respects a critical one for the future of Christianity in that quarter. That the Anglican Bishopric affords an opportunity of exercising an important and beneficial influence on the Churches of the East and on the Missions being carried on there amongst Jews, Moslems, and Christians, no one acquainted with the state of the case can doubt, and we can but echo the hope expressed by Canon Bell that a man of the right stamp and holding right views may be chosen for that difficult and honourable office.

THOMAS CHAPLIN.

