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WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE
and the
DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
In Ireland

By

Jean Morgan Mair

Presented in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts

State University of Montana

1931

Approved:



Chairman of Examining Committee



Chairman of Graduate Committee

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Foreword

One of the most remarkable political transitions in the past century was the change that took place in the career of William Ewart Gladstone who beginning as a Conservative became the leader of the Liberal party with a personal interest which centered in the Irish question.

It is the purpose of this monograph to trace as far as possible from Gladstone's speeches and writings the beginnings and the early developments of his Irish policy. The writer will attempt to show that Gladstone beginning his parliamentary career as a Tory, and also as a sincere and somewhat narrow churchman, took up the study of the Anglican establishment in Ireland with the hope of rendering a service to the Church of England. This study of the position of the Anglican Church in Ireland led Gladstone, despite a continued struggle with his traditions, to broader and broader religious views ending eventually in his bill for disestablishment.

It is the further purpose of the writer to show briefly that Gladstone's study of the religious question in Ireland involved him in the matter of Irish land tenure. Finally, although the limit of this paper does not permit proof, it seems quite evident that the land question brought him inevitably to Home Rule.

As has been indicated the greater part of the material for this monograph is drawn from his speeches as recorded either in the British Parliamentary Debates or in the Annual Register, and from his correspondence as collected by his great biographer, John Morley.

William Ewart Gladstone And the
Disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Ireland.

When William Ewart Gladstone entered the House of Commons in the year 1833 the question of Ireland, particularly that of the Irish Church, occupied the attention of both Houses of Parliament.¹ By the Acts of Supremacy and of Uniformity passed in 1559 the authority of Rome had been thrown off.² Thereafter, the control of the Anglican Church was vested in the crown and a uniform worship was prescribed for all churches in the Kingdom. It is not easy for members of a religious persuasion to regulate their laws and discipline so as to make them palatable to those who do not belong to it, and naturally an attempt to establish uniformity by an Act of Parliament was obnoxious to the Roman Catholics on the one hand, and to the extreme Protestants on the other.

In Ireland where members of the Anglican Church formed

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1. Gladstone had recently been graduated from Oxford and was on the continent when he was called home by the Duke of Newcastle to represent the constituency (Newark) in Parliament. During the campaign he spoke on the Union of church and State, particularly in defense of Irish Establishment, Correction of the Poor Laws, Allotment of Cottage Grounds, Adequate remuneration of labor etc. John Morley, The Life of William E. Gladstone, Vol. I, (London, 1903) p. 90. He was elected Dec. 13, 1832 and took his seat in the newly reformed Par. the following yr.
 2. The separation was completed by 1571.

a very small portion of the population the feeling toward establishment was most bitter. It is estimated that in 1835 there were only 800,000 members of the Established Church out of a total population of more than 8,000,000. The English Church maintained an expensive establishment. Many more bishops and clergymen in Ireland were consecrated than ever were needed. Their benefices were amply endowed beside enjoying large revenues from the estates of the Church. ³

The Dissenter, whether he was Catholic or Protestant, in addition to paying taxes for the general expenses of the national government and a heavy land tax, was required to support an alien church. The Anglican clergy were empowered to collect the chief source of their income in the form of tithes. These tithes were assessed upon all tillage land and by an Act of Parliament in 1823, the tax was extend-

3. Ireland was divided into 1400 benefices, amply endowed with about 600,000 pounds a year. There were 22 bishops who enjoyed incomes amounting to 150,000 pounds a year. With other income, the income of the Church amounted to 800,000 pounds a year for 800,000 souls. According to Killen the first accurate ecclesiastical census was taken in 1834. It showed:

Members of the Established Church (including	
Methodists by request)	852,064
Roman Catholics	6,427,712
Presbyterians	642,356
Other Protestant sects	21,808

W. D. Killen, The Ecclesiastical History of Ireland from the earliest period to the present times, Vol. I (London, 1875) p. 483.

ed to include all pasture land.⁴ The Anglican clergy through officials called "tithe proctors" made the collections. The burden fell upon the occupier rather than upon the owner of the land, and the amount of the tax increased with the increase of tillage. In a speech delivered before the Irish House of Commons late in the eighteenth century, Henry Grattan stated that the amount exacted was almost equal to the entire value of the land.⁵ In times of plenty it was paid, although reluctantly, but in times of distress and crop failures when prices were low the occupier asked for a reduction of the tithe, and if this was refused it meant that he would resist payment of any amount. A miserable cottier could not be persuaded that one-tenth of his little crop should go to the support of the Church of an absentee landlord whose religion was not his own.⁶

Another assessment required by the Church was the payment

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4. Composition for Tithes in Ireland, (4 Geo. IV, c. 99).
 5. George O'Brien, The Economic History of Ireland from the Union to the Famine, (London, 1922) p. 495.
 6. "Tithes are the tenth part of all fruits, praedial, personal and mixed, which are due to God and consequently to His Church's ministers for their maintenance." The Laws of England being A Complete Statement of the Whole Law of England, by the Rt. Hon., the Earl of Halsbury and other lawyers. (London) Vol. XI, p. 742.
Walpole says the church tithe amounted to 1/10 of his crop. Spencer Walpole, A History of England from the Conclusion of the Great War in 1815 (London, 1911) Vol. II, p. 290. From evidence gathered for 1825, O'Brien lists the cottiers' burdens as : rent, tithes, county rates, parochial rates, and support of Catholic clergy, p. 122.

of the parish cess or rate. This was imposed for the maintenance of the Church fabric and for meeting the expenses of religious services.⁷ The amount of the cess was voted by the parish and was not as large nor as objectionable as the tithe. Both taxes, however, were forced upon the Dissenters and Catholics in addition to the demands made upon them for the support of their own churches.⁸ The Anglican clergy called in the officers of the law to make their collections of tithes and in default of payment seized the crops and cattle of the tenants. The injustice of this procedure caused the peasants to resort to acts of violence and open rebellion against the officials. They could not tolerate the seizure and sale of their crops for the maintenance of a clergy whose ministrations they never called upon and whose services they never attended.⁹

7. These church rates were levied mainly on the Roman Catholics. To that fund other operating expenses such as washing of surplices, salary of the sexton and clerk, cost of bread and wine for communion were also charged. Walpole, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 302.

8. The Cess was abolished in 1832. O'Brien, op. cit., p. 502.

9. An illustration of both the force used to collect and the resistance on the part of the occupiers is shown in County Cork. The rector could not collect his tithes so with the aid of his proctor and four mounted, seven dismounted and five special constables under the command of a lieutenant, the army of eighteen men went forth to seize what movable property they could. The peasants resisted and the officials had to abandon the cattle they had carried away. During the clash, two of the officials were killed and another wounded. The rector did not obtain his tithes. Walpole, Vol. II, p. 302.

The antipathy of the Irish toward English domination in her religious affairs was accentuated by the attempt of the Anglican clergy to convert the people to Protestantism. As in England, the only opportunity for elementary education was in the schools maintained by the Church and there only Anglican tenets were taught. By this means it was hoped the Irish children would be brought up in the English belief. A majority of the peasants, even had they been able to afford education for their children, preferred to have them uneducated rather than to have them become estranged from their national belief.

Writing of conditions while a visitor in Ireland late in the eighteenth century, Arthur Young speaks of the loyalty of the Irish people to the Roman Church. He describes the great body of people as being more enraged against, than converted to, Protestantism. The Catholic masses adhered to the church of their forefathers with the steadiest and most determined zeal, while the priests made proselytes among the Protestants in defiance of every danger. It was Arthur Young's conviction that the Irish Church had lost rather than gained through establishment.¹⁰

10. Arthur Young, Tour in Ireland, (Dublin, 1780) He also stated that the English laws and taxes had crushed all industry and wrested most of their property from the Catholics. Walpole, op. cit., p. 240, (Quoting from Arthur Young)

Parliament attempted to conciliate the Catholic faction in Ireland from time to time by removing some of their disabilities. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century acts were passed allowing Catholics to purchase land, admitting them to the Bar, allowing mixed marriages between Protestants and Roman Catholics, repealing the oaths required of electors and enabling Roman Catholics to hold civil and military offices under the Crown. Thus the most galling personal disabilities were swept away, although a Roman Catholic was still ineligible to sit in either House of Parliament and was excluded from the highest offices in the courts and army.¹¹

As was her custom, England followed these concessions with measures for stronger political control. By the Act of Union passed in 1800 which disbanded the Irish Parliament, England converted a Protestant minority into a majority by fusing the Irish Protestants with those in England.¹² The Irish people were won to the support of the measure by bribery and the promises that their chief demands, State payment for Catholic priests, commutation of tithes, and Catholic emancipation, would be their reward.

11. Most of this legislation was achieved through the efforts of Henry Grattan.
12. The Act of Union went into effect January 1, 1801. It was proposed by Pitt and was designed to perpetuate establishment.

covered that the government would be unable to fulfill its promises.¹³ Led by an ardent supporter of Catholic Emancipation, Henry Grattan, additional measures of relief for Irish Catholics continued to be introduced. Parliament refused to grant these demands and the answer of the Irish people was more discontent and renewed outrages against members of the Anglican Church.

Upon the second election of Daniel O'Connell, a Catholic, Parliament, fearing that civil strife would result if he were again denied a seat in the House of Commons, admitted him as a duly elected and qualified member.¹⁴ This hastened the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 which granted political and civil rights to the Roman Catholics of Ireland with certain conditions.¹⁵

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13. George III would not sign the Bill and Pitt was soon forced to resign.
 14. Daniel O'Connell, a strong supporter of Irish rights, worked successfully on the feelings and the antipathy of the Irish toward England. He did not agitate in favor of social reform, but rather for political independence. He craftily bargained for a political career by organizing in 1823 a Catholic Association for the peaceful agitation of public grievances. He was elected to Parliament from County Clare, refused admission because of his unwillingness to take the oath of supremacy, and then was immediately reelected from the same constituency. The ministry was forced to recognize him as a properly elected member of the House of Commons.
 15. In 1828 Parliament repealed the Test and Corporation Acts which made practically everyone eligible to office, but barred Catholics by requiring as a qualification for office, taking the sacrament according to the Anglican form.

Opposition in Ireland to English laws and regulations continued to manifest itself especially during frequent economic disasters. Protestant clergymen in Ireland as dispensers of alms had access to every cottage. This was a real opportunity for the Anglican clergy to become acquainted with the distress and poverty of their parishoners. Unfortunately for their cause, they attempted to use this opportunity to make converts to their faith and thereby caused increasing bitterness among the Catholic population. In this and other ways it was repeatedly demonstrated that the Established Church in Ireland could never fulfill the objects for which it, as a religious institution, was constituted.

Meanwhile O'Connell, joining with the English Liberals in the hope that Parliament would do something to restore peace to Ireland, very ably presented the Irish cause in the House of Commons. At the same time in Ireland he deliberately fed the national hatreds between Celt and Saxon, although he opposed the use of revolutionary methods.

The new Parliament which assembled after the First Reform Bill went into effect could not overlook the state of affairs in Ireland. The King's speech described the misfortunes of the Established Church in Ireland and asserted that the "spirit of insubordination and violence had risen to the

most fearful height."¹⁶ Lord Althorp, a leader in the House of Commons, introduced a bill proposing a tax on certain Anglican benefices, a reduction in the income of Anglican clergymen in Ireland, and the suppression of some bishoprics.¹⁷ The fund accruing from these sources was to be expended for the repairs and the upkeep of the Church property, thus abolishing the need for the parish cess.¹⁸ O'Connell was delighted at the proposal to abolish the cess but his spirits were soon dampened for two days later a Coercion Bill was introduced in the House of Lords.¹⁹

The Coercion Bill passed the House of Lords with little debate but the House of Commons considered it more seriously.²⁰ In order to continue in power the ministry was obliged to sanction the measure and a majority supported it. Friends of conciliation then hastened consideration of the bill introduced

16. Annual Register, (1833), The King's Speech, LXXV, p. 10.

17. Lord Stanley was the Chief Secretary for Ireland at that time. Along with reforms which he hoped Parliament would consider, he thought any relief should be accompanied by coercion. Naturally this made him most unpopular with the Irish radicals and Repealers and he wanted to be transferred to some other position. On the other hand, Althorp, who had travelled on the continent quite extensively before becoming a member of the House, was very sympathetic toward Roman Catholics who were being oppressed in Italy as well as in Ireland.

18. Church Temporalities in Ireland, (3 and 4 William IV, c. 37)

19. Local Disturbances and dangerous Associations in Ireland, (3 and 4 William IV, c. 4)

20. It was introduced on Feb. 15, and passed the third time on Feb. 22.

by Lord Althorp, known as the "Reform of the Irish Church Bill". In order to gain the support of the House of Lords, the clause appropriating funds derived from the suppression of bishoprics had to be stricken out. Although the Lords would not allow the property of the Irish Church to be disturbed, the Bill, with a narrow margin in its favor, became a law and the parish cess was abolished.

Parliament then took up the consideration of the question of Irish Church tithes. In 1823 a tithe bill had been passed providing that a commission might be appointed to arrange for the composition of tithes. Also, with the hope of lessening the burden on arable land, the tithe-paying area was increased by extending it to include pasture land.²¹ Almost every class in Ireland indicated a willingness to subscribe to the measure and it was fairly successful. The Anglican clergy still had great difficulty in collecting their revenues since because of deficient harvests the people could not pay.²² The differences between Roman Catholics and Protestants remained as great as ever.

Not the distress of the common people in Ireland so

21. Composition for Tithes in Ireland, (4 Geo. IV c. 99)

22. Crop failures were so common in Ireland that it was possible to speak of Ireland as being in a condition of chronic famine.

much as the distress suffered by the Anglican clergy because of arrears in the payment of tithes, caused Parliament to appoint Select Committees to consider and report on the subject. Early in 1832, the committees of both Houses reported and recommended that tithe composition should be made compulsory, and also that Parliament should advance money to the Anglican clergy until some better arrangement could be devised for the collection of arrears. Both recommendations were incorporated in laws passed during the next five years. By the terms of the Tithe Act of 1838, the question of tithes was finally settled by transferring the burden from the occupier to the landlord who was to collect it in the form of rent.²³

During his first few years as a member of the House of Commons, Gladstone listened attentively to the debates on the subject of the Irish Church. He made the acquaintance of Lord Althorp, an English champion of Catholic Emancipation, and of Daniel O'Connell, the most skillful agitator for Irish freedom. He was influenced by Joseph Hume's effective defense of the Irish cause, despite the fact that back of all attacks made upon Irish tithes and church rates was a concerted effort to rid Ireland of foreign control. As an Oxford alumnus Gladstone had been educated in the theory that establishment was

23. Act Abolishing Composition for Tithes, (1 and 2 Victoria, c. 109)

essential to the strength of the Empire. During the campaign preceding his election in 1832, he had addressed the electors of Newark on the subject of the Union of Church and State, defending in particular Irish establishment. His maiden speech on that subject in the House of Commons was against Lord Althorp's Irish Church Reform Bill.²⁴ In this speech he said that the admission of Catholics to Parliament and their continued agitation against tithes and rates might weaken the position of the Church, and he admonished Parliament that it must maintain the Church or it "couldn't resist repeal of the Union." He added that he hoped never to see the day when disestablishment would be adopted. Members of both political factions came in for criticism for "excluding the elements of true religion from their considerations."²⁵

As a devoted follower and close associate of Robert Peel, Gladstone observed the political significance which attached to religion and education.²⁶ It soon became evident to him

24. July 8, 1833.

25. British Parliamentary Debates, ed. T. C. Hansard (London) XXVII, (March 31, 1835) p. 5.

26. Robert Peel's ministry began in 1834 and undertook a number of reforms among them being: commutation of tithes; an inquiry into some of the abuses and inequalities of the Established Church; an attempt to remove disabilities of Dissenters. Gladstone described Peel as a "religious man, wholly anti-church and unclerical, and largely un-dogmatic". Morley, Life of William Gladstone, Vol. I, (London, 1903) p. 177.

that measures, even of a religious nature, in the House were designed wholly in the interest of maintaining party control rather than in upholding standards, and that with the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Act and the First Reform Bill, laws affecting the Anglican Church would be made by men of other creeds. Gladstone as a devout Churchman felt moved to bend every effort to entrench more firmly the idea of establishment. He studied and wrote on the subject of Church and State and published his book called "The Church in it's Relations with the State" in December, 1838.

This and other publications in which he attempted to make more clear the position of the Church were well received by the theologians but his colleagues failed to understand or appreciate them. Years later he wrote that at that time he found himself "the last man on a sinking ship"; that when he "bade exclusive support be given established religion, it was just about to die."²⁷ He was endeavoring to help the Church and "dreamed that she was capable of recovering lost ground, and of bringing back the nation to unity in her communion."²⁸ Although for the next few years the time of Parliament was consumed with consideration of measures of eco-

27. W. E. Gladstone, Gleanings from Past Years, (7 Vols., London, 1897) Vol. VII, p. 115.

28. Morley, op. cit., "Some of My Errors", (1894) p. 179.
(From a set of fragmentary notes) Quoting from Morley.

nomie importance, Gladstone continued his study of religious questions, especially in relation to Ireland.

By the time the next crisis in religious affairs occupied the attention of Parliament, Gladstone was well prepared to take a leading part. Peel, hoping to bring about more friendly relations between the State and the Roman Catholic Church in Ireland, introduced a measure in 1844 renewing and trebling the grant to Maynooth College. This institution had been chartered in the year 1795 for the purpose of educating young Irishmen for Catholic priesthood and had received an annual appropriation for its maintenance from Parliament. Parliament also supported Trinity College to which Catholic students had been admitted, but the fees were exorbitant and its courses in theology were devoted almost entirely to Protestant teachings. In addition to the Parliamentary allotment Trinity was richly endowed while the income Maynooth received from the government was entirely inadequate for its support, but still large enough to discourage voluntary contribution.

Peel's policy was vigorously attacked in Parliament. Some members objected to appropriations being made to maintain Catholic education; other objected to funds being appropriated to any particular religion; while still others objected to the principle of all appropriations of money

from the public funds for religious purposes. Each of these groups attempted to question the expediency of any grant to Maynooth or its complete withdrawal, but Gladstone reminded them that the subject before Parliament was merely one of increasing the appropriation.²⁹

Gladstone's position on the subject of the Maynooth grant was difficult. Six years earlier he had expressed his views strongly on the relations between Church and State and their obligations to each other. To support this measure so soon afterward might give rise to doubts of his sincerity and honesty. Nevertheless, he favored the proposal to distribute public funds "drawn from the labor of the whole community for the benefit of all the people."³⁰ He resigned from the ministry and worked for the measure independently.

On the second reading of the bill, Gladstone rose to its defense. He said that while he recognized that "that land is happy in which religious unity prevails among the people", he was "not willing to place religious unity at the head of the list of all social and civil blessings", nor would he "seek to win the approbation of Parliament by pretending to believe that religious profession had no kind

29. Although Maynooth had been founded to provide for the education of about two hundred young men to carry on the work of the Catholic Church in Ireland, it also supplied many priests for Canada and other parts of the Empire.

30. Annual Register, 1845, LXXVII, p. 112.

or degree of bearing upon political and civil duties." He said "he could not remain indifferent to these divisions in religion which unhappily prevailed in Ireland and which he found lay at the root of all social differences and discords. In every case where Parliament was dealing with the interests and feelings of persons or of classes outside their own environment, the members ought to endeavor to assume the position of those persons, in this case the Roman Catholics of Ireland, in order to judge the situation from their point of view."³¹ In closing he called attention to a petition from the Synod of Ulster stating that since they received pecuniary assistance from the State, both for the support of their ministers and likewise for the instructors in their theological academy, they were asking that like advantages be accorded to the Roman Catholics of Ireland.

The Maynooth Bill passed and was immediately followed by a measure providing for the establishment of new colleges which offered good and cheap education to Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Dissenters, without distinction.³² Undoubt-

31. Hansard, Second Reading of the Bill, LXXLX, (Dec., 16, 1847) p. 1300.

32. The measure provided education for the middle classes of Ireland and provided for the founding of three colleges in the north, west, and south of Ireland; they were to be supported by the government, and the Crown was to "abstain from all interference, positive or negative, with the conscientious scruples of the students in matters of education". Walpole, op. cit., pp. 121, 122, Vol. V.

edly these measures tended to remove the educational inequality which was one of the greatest causes for Irish discontent. The Maynooth grant continued until Gladstone's Bill for Disestablishment of the Irish Church was passed.³³

In addition to pressing political duties, or while enjoying a short respite from them, Gladstone continued his study of religious problems.³⁴ He began to doubt whether the Church could be most effectively served by parliamentary legislation. If the Church could no longer help herself nor help others, was not parliamentary support useless. He resented the attempt to strengthen her position by the use of coercion as had been done in Ireland. His resentment was greater since the composition of Parliament was rapidly changing. It had first ceased to be Anglican, then it had ceased to be wholly Protestant and with the removal of Jewish disabilities in 1858, it would even cease to be wholly Christian.

Gladstone's address in favor of admitting Jews to sit in Parliament gave him an opportunity to make public his changing views on the question of Church and State. He

33. 1869.

34. Only the Church hold him in Parliament. Morley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 375.

replied to members of the Opposition by saying that there was no necessity for excluding the Jews from Parliament for he was confident that everyone of the members felt perfectly sure that the majority would always continue to be Christians. "So long as Parliament continued to bear the character of political guardians of the Church, it might not be uncommon to hear Gentlemen who did not belong to her communion say that they did not look upon it as a matter for their concern." However, he felt "that since the Act was to be done in the interest of civil and social justice, it could involve no disparagement to the Anglican faith and could never lower the Church in public estimation."³⁵

An attempt of the Roman Catholic Church to set up a hierarchy of bishops in the British Isles in 1850 caused many members of Parliament to view the movement with concern as an invasion of temporal as well as of spiritual power. The ministry introduced an Ecclesiastical Titles Bill forbidding Roman Catholics, under penalty of law, to take titles from any territory within the United Kingdom.³⁶ Although the House was almost solidly against him, Gladstone protested against meeting spiritual dangers with

35. Hansard, XCV, (Dec. 16, 1847) p. 1300.

36. Irish Branch of United Churches of England and Ireland (14 and 15 Victoria, c. 71)

legislation of a penal character. He asked if they were not "interfering with the rights of religious bodies". The fact that the Roman Catholics recognized a foreign authority for their spiritual head, he said, did not justify Parliament in withholding from them a freedom and a privilege which was really religious. He could not justify the interference of Parliament unless it could be proved that the bishoprics were founded for temporal purposes.³⁷

The provisions of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill and the support given it when it was introduced in the House of Commons, created fresh discords between the Irish people and the English. Gladstone cautioned the members of the House that "it was the absolute duty of the government to adopt a system of equal dealing in regard to England and Ireland." He admonished the members that they could not "turn back the tendencies of the age toward religious liberty; it was their duty to forward those tendencies."³⁸ The Ecclesiastical Titles Bill passed but remained a dead letter and was struck out of the statute book twenty years later.³⁹

Gladstone's public defense of both Jews and Roman Cath-

37. Hansard, *op. cit.*, CXV (Mar. 25, 1851) p. 578.

38. *Ibid.*, pp 572, 596.

39. During Gladstone's first administration, 1871.

olicies in these measures caused his friends to look with alarm at his departure from his traditional viewpoints. High and Low Churchmen had joined in defending the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill and he, upon whom they had relied as one of the recognized leaders in Anglican affairs, had used his strength and influence, not only in the cause of religious liberty, but also in the interest of religious equality. Despite the fact that Gladstone knew his political career might be endangered, his progress away from his early attitude and toward greater liberalism in church matters was now well begun.

Association with noneconformist clergy on various religious problems interested Gladstone in their attitude toward establishment. Many of them hoped that with his political influence and his comprehension of the differences which lay between their ways of interpreting the services of the Church, he might be able to effect a compromise. It must be remembered that members of his own Anglican Church in Scotland were Dissenters from the established Presbyterian Church of that country. This fact probably hastened his progress toward liberalism. His Irish acquaintances recognized his devotion to their cause. One of the leaders, Joseph Hume, after listening to his speech on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, asked

for a copy so that it might be read by Dissenters whom he said knew nothing of religious liberty.

The religious ideas of some of his friends were also being disturbed. Even at Oxford, where for so long the connection between Church and State had been firmly entrenched, opinions had sprung up that seemed to be rending the Church in twain. Some of his closest friends had gone over to the Roman Church, others remained as intolerant as ever.

Gladstone was not by nature tolerant, but his regard for formal differences in matters of church government and conventions led him to hope, as the Dissenters did, to reform it from within.⁴⁰ Finally he diagnosed the conflict he was having within himself by writing afterward that his "opinions went one way, and his lingering sympathies the other."⁴¹ His opinions looked toward liberalism and his traditions kept him with the conservatives.

His sojourn in Italy in 1850 contributed materially to his progress toward liberalism. He thought first of

40. Gladstone wrote that he was brought up to believe that salvation depended absolutely upon the reception of a particular and a very narrow creed. He wrote in 1865 that "long, long have I cast those weeds behind me". Morley, op. cit., p. 137.

41. Morley, op. cit., p. 417, Vol. I.

Italian affairs only in terms of local freedom and of local reforms, while in reality what he saw was evidence of a greater movement - Nationalism. In the demoralizing conditions of the Neapolitan prisons, Gladstone learned of the injustice inflicted upon unfortunate persons who for some unproved political offense were undergoing degrading and murderous penalties. It was inevitable that his eyes would be opened to similar injustices within the United Kingdom if he would but look at them. Years afterward he wrote that the impressions he received in Italy determined his "place in the present" and his "direction towards the future."⁴² He found a parallel between conditions in Italy and Ireland and thereafter repeatedly protested against the Coercion Bills for Ireland.

Problems of national education in Ireland, public school instruction throughout the United Kingdom, bills providing for the elimination of religious tests at Oxford, all necessitated a change of thought and procedure in men's minds. With the extension of the franchise, the laboring classes would be demanding longer duration of education

42. Morley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 2. Memorandum dated July 16, 1892.

for their children. All these questions involved fundamentally the separation of Church and State. In the debates on each of these educational subjects, Gladstone spoke repeatedly in favor of more liberal legislation.

In Ireland the people themselves were divided on the subject of national education. Although the Roman Catholic clergy supported the measure to take control of education out of the hands of the Anglican clergy, after it went into effect they agitated for secular schools where more religious instruction would be given in the Catholic belief. This agitation kept alive the religious grievances of the Catholics against establishment. In 1864 the Irish National Association was publicly inaugurated. At its first meeting it stated that the Episcopal Church was maintained "in defiance of the will of the great majority of the Irish people", and was "a badge of national servitude offensive and degrading alike to all Irishmen."⁴³

With the passage of the Bill for national education which now vested control in the State, many Anglicans were forced to concede that establishment was weakening. A proposal was made to endow all denominations in Ireland with

43. Killen, Vol. II, op. cit., p. 58.

a view to a more judicious distribution of revenues.⁴⁴ Although both Roman Catholics and Presbyterians had accepted endowments for educational purposes at Maynooth and at Queen's Colleges, some members of the Roman Catholic clergy objected to a subsidy from the Government for two reasons; first, because they might incur the displeasure of their adherents by obligating themselves to the state, and second, because they could expect no great financial benefit since the amounts would be voted by the Protestants of Great Britain.⁴⁵

These speculations were set aside when Gladstone declared the intention of taking up the question of the Irish Church in Parliament. That he had been preparing for its dissolution is evidenced from his private correspondence of this period. In a letter to the Bishop of Oxford (1863) he said that "the whole of his public life, for twenty years or more, with respect to matters ecclesiastical had been a continuing effort, though a very weak one, to extricate the Church in some degree from entangling relations without shock or violence."⁴⁶ Another letter indicates clearly

44. This was the idea held by most of the Conservatives.

45. Walpole, op. cit., pp. 121-122, Vol. V.

46. Morley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 159.

that he had decided the time was ripe for disestablishment. He wrote that "he would treat the Irish Church as a religious body with the same respect and consideration as the Church of England," and he "would apply to it the same liberal policy as regards its freedom of action." But, he emphasized, he "was not loyal to it as an establishment." He said he "could not renew the votes and speeches of thirty years back." He brought the letter to a close by expressing his conviction that he "could not look upon its present form of existence as more favorable to religion, in any sense of the word, than it was to civil justice and to the contentment and loyalty of Ireland."⁴⁷

All through February and March, 1865, Gladstone worked on the question of the Irish Church. A letter to his son written soon after said that he was "convinced that the only hope of making it possible for the Church to discharge her high office as stewardess of divine truth, was to deal tenderly and gently with all points at which her external privileges grated upon the feelings and interests of that unhappily large portion of her community who had almost ceased to care for her".⁴⁸

47. Morley, op. cit., Vol. II, p. 141. To Robert Fillimore, an old Oxford associate, Feb. 13, 1865.

48. Op. cit., To W. H. Gladstone.

On March 28, 1865, Gladstone introduced a motion in the House of Commons stating first, that in the opinion of the House the present position of the Irish Church establishment was unsatisfactory; and second, that it called for the early attention of Her Majesty's government. Someone immediately replied that it was an indirect attack upon the English Church. He answered that opposition by saying that "it would be a miserable excuse if they were to say that they thought the English Church in Ireland ought to be maintained because it was established by Parliament." They must bear in mind that when it was established Parliament was unable to foretell the problems which it might encounter.

Then he quoted figures to show that the Anglican communion counted in its membership only a very small number of the Irish people. He argued that it was a "mistake to suppose that the exclusive establishment of one religion was in all circumstances favorable to the progress of that religion". In other times it had been said "that the exclusive establishment of the Protestant Church in Ireland was necessary for the maintenance of loyalty and order in that country." Declaring this statement to be untrue, he warned them that they were actually incurring danger when

they used the civil government to propogate a particular form of religion regardless of other circumstances. He contended that there could be "no more fatal error on the part of those charged with the government of a country than to do acts or make provisions which implied that loyalty to the laws, to the throne and to the institutions of the country was the particular and exclusive property of a small minority of the people".⁴⁹

An argument which was commonly advanced was that tithes were not paid by the cultivator of the soil but by the landlords, and therefore these might be used exclusively to the maintenance of the system which, in the great majority of cases, was the religion of the landlord. Gladstone contended that in reality these tithes were property subject to legislation and, contrary to the general opinion, the appropriation was not determined by the Church but by Parliament. The fact that the appropriations were so determined was one of the elements in the present situation of the Church in Ireland which put her in a false position.

When a radical member of the House proposed immediate action in the case of the Irish Church, Gladstone voted

49. Hansard, CXXVIII, (Mar. 28, 1865) p. 428.

against the proposal. The time and attention of Parliament was occupied just then with political matters and he believed that when the time was ripe for the consideration of the Irish Church all other business should be set aside for it.

With the outbreak of Fenianism in Ireland in 1867, and its attendant outrages in Manchester and in London, the vast importance of the Irish controversy came home to the popular mind. The state of Ireland became the question of the day. The Conservatives, led by Disraeli, favored a plan for concurrent endowment, meaning that Parliament would appropriate funds for the unendowed clergy in Ireland similar to the amounts received by the Anglicans. This was the policy of compromise. Gladstone resolved to meet it with one of religious equality. He was resolved upon an Irish policy based on Irish lines.

Soon after he rose to defend the English Church and likewise to attack establishment in Ireland. He recognized three grounds on which establishment might be justified. In the first place, on religious grounds, if establishment could be maintained on the basis of truth; second, if the Established Church were the church of the bulk of the population; or third, if it were the church of the mass of the poorer portion of the population. Gladstone said that in former days the established Church was maintained on the

grounds of truth. If this view still prevailed he asked how the Anglican members of Parliament justified their appropriations for Maynooth where they were educating a priesthood who taught that truth was not to be found in the Church of England. He contended that figures could be used to show that in more than a hundred parishes the membership of the Established Church was in the minority.⁵⁰ In Ireland the religion of the Anglican Church was the religion of the few and this few were of the wealthy landowning class. Parliament therefore could not maintain the Established Church in Ireland on the ground of truth, on the ground that it was the Church of the mass of the people, or on the ground that it was the Church of even a majority at the poorer portion of the population.

Gladstone commended the Irish on their patience in tolerating establishment for so many years and asked the members of Parliament whether they would tolerate so long an alien church in their own community. He repeated that neither an Englishman nor a Scotchman would endure such a state of affairs as existed in Ireland. He concluded with the anticipation that the time was not far distant when the Parliament

50. "Two cases of benefices - Newton-Lennan in Linsmore diocese in 1867 has a population of 4 Anglicans and 1143 Roman Catholics. Kilmoylan with Cumber in 1869 had 4 Anglicans and 2769 Roman Catholics." Hansard, CXCI, (March 30, 1868) p. 486.

of England would feel it its duty to look that question "fairly and fully in the face"⁵¹

In March, 1868, an Irish member of Parliament, John Francis Maguire, introduced a series of resolutions concerning the state of Ireland. His denunciation of the evils of the Irish Church was so severe that the parliamentary leaders felt compelled to express their opinions. The Secretary for Ireland, Lord Mayo, hinted at solving the problem by equalizing all religious denominations. John Bright, an ardent Liberal and close friend of Gladstone, strongly denounced Irish establishment. On the fourth night of the debate, March 16, Gladstone endorsed the opinion expressed by Bright and declared that the time had come when the "Church as a State Church must cease to exist." He asserted that religious equality must be established, but decidedly condemned the plan for bringing other denominations up to the level of the Anglican Church as entirely unpractical.⁵²

On March 23, in the House of Commons Gladstone gave notice of three resolutions which he intended to introduce. The terms of the resolutions were as follows:

51. Hansard, CLXXXVII, (May 7, 1867) p. 131.
52. Ibid., CXC, (March 16, 1868) p. 1770.

1. That in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment, due regard being had to all personal interests and to all individual rights of property.

2. That subject to the foregoing considerations, it is expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage, and to confine the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Ireland to objects of immediate necessity or involving individual rights, pending the final decision of Parliament.

3. That an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to pray that with a view to the purposes aforesaid, Her Majesty will be graciously pleased to place at the disposal of Parliament her interest in the temporalities in archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other ecclesiastical dignities and benefices in Ireland and in the custody thereof.⁵³

In the meantime Lord Stanley moved an amendment to the effect that disendowment and disestablishment ought to be reserved for the decision of a new Parliament. The time for the discussion of Gladstone's resolutions and the Stanley amendment was set for the following week and began on March 30th. Gladstone asked the members of the House first of all "to consent to the disendowment of the Established Church in Ireland". He maintained that to "relieve the Church from a position which was odious and dangerous and which was socially unjust would strengthen her

53. Annual Register, 1868, CX, p. 60.

foundations". He said that he was certain that the cessation of control should be effected in a manner worthy of the nation, and he assured them that a plan could be evolved giving satisfaction to every proprietary and vested right. After every claim was satisfied Parliament would have to "contemplate a residue" which he said should be treated as an "Irish fund applicable to the exclusive benefit of Ireland".⁵⁴

Looking at the financial result of the measure, Gladstone estimated that if the entire property of the Irish Church were sold in open market, not less than three-fifths, possibly two-thirds, would remain in the hands of the members of the Anglican communion. By freeing the other two-fifths or one-third of the land from clerical control, conditions in Ireland would be considerably improved, and the Anglican Church would no longer hold its remaining property amid an estranged and alienated population, but "with the cordial goodwill of all sects, all parties and all persuasions both in England and in Ireland".⁵⁵

Gladstone asked the House of Commons to look at the condition of the clergy in Ireland. There were three classes:

54. Annual Register, loc. cit.

55. Hansard, CXCI, (Mar. 30, 1868) The Established Church, p. 477.

"first, ministers of the Established Church who for their misfortune had much pay and little work; second, ministers of the Presbyterian persuasion who had little pay and much work; and last, the Roman Catholic priests and ministers of the minor Protestant sects who had no pay at all and much work".⁵⁶ He asserted that all through the distress and famine in Ireland, which had fallen hardest on the Roman Catholic population, the Anglican clergy had been able to pursue their vocations in "perfect tranquility."⁵⁷

Gladstone reminded Parliament that there was a wide amount of sympathy in Ireland with Fenianism and a disposition to embrace it if there was hope that it might succeed. The aim of this movement was to throw off British rule by intimidation and force. He declared that when there was so much disaffection in Ireland that to preserve order the government had to maintain an army, and a police force organized as an army, it was a situation akin to war. He felt that the system under which Ireland had been governed during the past century was so perverted that the Established Church could hardly be called a religious institution,

56. Hansard, op. cit., p. 933.

57. Ibid., p. 484.

and he was convinced that violence in Ireland was the logical outcome of repressions of religious as well as of civil rights. The Established Church regarded in its theory and in its aim was beautiful and attractive. What it actually had come to be in Ireland was but an appropriation of public property, an appropriation of the fruits of labor to certain purposes. He was unwilling to be responsible for the continuance of such a state of affairs and he meant to use every effort in his power to clear the conscience of England. When England faced a condition such as that existing in Ireland, an establishment could not be maintained without a violation of what the bulk of the people believed to be the principle of civil justice. This being true the extinction of establishment and not its extension was the way to give a true religious character to the country.

He asserted that it was time that the British government abandoned the doctrine of exclusive loyalty secured by exclusive privilege. He was unwilling to recognize any distinction between one class of the population and another, except the distinction of obedience and disobedience to law. He denied that Parliament had a moral right to draw a distinction between one and another religious persuasion. Moreover, from the purely practical standpoint, they had had

enough bitter experience with that policy. Finally, he freely admitted that the settlement of the Church question in Ireland was not a panacea for all the evils of that country, where for centuries "perverse ingenuity had been at work to deprave and disturb" the political state and social conditions and he pledged himself with the help of Parliament to remedy the ills of Ireland.⁵⁸

John Bright supported Gladstone's resolutions contending that establishment was only justified on two pretenses - religious and political. The conversion of the Irish people to Protestantism he said had been a dismal failure and under the present conditions anarchy, subdued by force, made political control equally a failure. He pointed out that if such a condition as this had existed in any of the colonies Parliament would have abolished it long ago. He stressed the fact that a change was desired by an influential and wise minority of Irish Protestants and concluded by admonishing Parliament not to increase the discontent.

In answer to criticisms of his resolutions, Gladstone reiterated the fact that the "Irish Church could

58. Hansard, op. cit., (April 30, 1868) p. 1667.

never fulfill any of the objects for which it, as a religious establishment, was constituted".⁵⁹ It was not the church of the nation, but the church of a fraction, one-eighth or one-tenth, of the people. It was not the church of the poor, for nine-tenths of the land was in the hands of its members. It was "not supported on the high ground of truth because of Maynooth".⁶⁰ It had entirely failed in its object. England had obtained in Ireland external peace and order by the use of her gigantic power, but peace and order were only on the surface.

Answering a member of the Opposition who had said that it was "the glory and privilege of the State to maintain the light of the Reformation in Ireland", Gladstone admitted that this sounded very well but pointed out that there must be other glories and privileges of the State as proved by the fact that they were paying some thirty thousand pounds a year for the maintenance of Maynooth College, whence something like a hundred priests were sent forth annually "to teach that the Reformation was no glory and no light, but that all glory and all light were in the Roman fold."⁶¹

59. Hansard, op. cit., p. 1651.

60. Ibid., p. 1651.

61. Ibid., (Mar. 30, 1868) p. 936.

Shifting his ground, Gladstone asked Parliament to consent to the disendowment of the Established Church in Ireland for the welfare of England and English institutions. He maintained that to relieve the Church of England from a position which was politically odious and dangerous, and which was socially unjust, would strengthen her foundations and give her fair play in the exercise of her great mission. He asserted that there were three definite reasons for moving the question of disestablishment just then. First, public opinion which had made a remarkable advance in religious liberalism; second, the attitude of the government which itself had opened the question of religious condition in Ireland; and third, the state of Ireland where peace was maintained only by the overwhelming power of England. He urged the House to accept the resolutions as part of a policy to "add strength and glory to the empire".⁶²

A few days later, Gladstone moved a resolution which provided for the arrest of episcopal appointments with a view to reserving to the new Parliament the final disposition of the question. This was the Suspensory Bill, the more important clauses of which were; first, that in event that any vacancy occurred "in any dignity or benefice no

62. Annual Register, 1868, CX, p. 82.

successor should be appointed, and that the income should be held by the Established Church to be disposed of as Parliament might direct", and second, that Parliament should "make no grants for the building or repairing of any church or glebe houses."⁶³ This act was to be a temporary measure to remain in force until August first, 1869. A third resolution providing for the abolition of the Regium Donum and the Maynooth grant was brought in on the same day.⁶⁴

A short time later, speaking on the Suspensory Bill, Gladstone renounced emphatically all ideas of endowing any other religious communion in place of the Irish Church since he was opposed to any form of salaried or stipendiary clergy. Establishment in Ireland had been a failure; three centuries had proved the hopelessness of fulfilling there the work for which establishment existed. On the other hand he asserted his confidence that the Anglican Church in Ireland would successfully maintain itself, and expressed his astonishment that some Anglicans were so devoid of faith in the religious principles they professed as to entertain apprehensions that those who held their faith and religion in Ireland were "not competent to direct themselves in their religious affairs."⁶⁵

63. Annual Register, 1868, CX., p. 99.

64. The Regium Donum was a small endowment given the Presbyterian clergy in Ireland.

65. Hansard, "Second Reading of the Suspensory Bill", CXCII, (May 22, 1868) p. 723.

Gladstone concluded his defense by stating that it was his conscientious conviction that the existence of the Established Church in Ireland was "hostile and injurious to the interests of Parliament". He urged that in a civilized age, people should be brought to conceive that it was possible for others to honestly and conscientiously differ from them; for until that lesson was learned, "there could be but little progress in true civilization".⁶⁶ Although the Suspensory Bill passed the House of Commons it was defeated in the House of Lords. Therefore Parliament was dissolved and a general election followed in November. During the campaign the question of the Irish Church was discussed in all of the constituencies of the United Kingdom and a majority of the new Parliament chosen in the election were favorable to disestablishment. The constituency of South-West Lancashire, which was strongly Church of England, failed to reelect Gladstone, but anticipating the defeat, his friends had aided in his election for Greenwich.

Gladstone was the acknowledged leader of the Liberals and when the election placed that party in control of the House of Commons, as had been anticipated, he was summoned by the Queen and intrusted with the formation of a ministry. After several conferences with the Queen and also with mem-

66. Hansard, op. cit., p. 803.

bers of the clergy he set to work to draft the Irish Church Bill. In the course of his speech at the reassembling of Parliament February sixteenth, he expressed his regret that in view of the interest manifested in the question of the relation of landlord and tenant in Ireland, the House of Commons would have to leave the consideration of that phase of the Irish question for another time.

On March first, he brought his plan before the House of Commons. By accepting his previous resolutions, Parliament had consented to the disestablishment of the Irish Church and that action had been endorsed by the constituencies. The problem before him was to dispose satisfactorily of the funds accruing from the sale of church property. Technically and legally there would be immediate disendowment. Disestablishment would be postponed until January, 1871. At that date the union between the Church of England and of Ireland would be dissolved and ecclesiastical laws would no longer be binding except as they would be understood to exist as terms of voluntary contract between the clergy and laity until altered by the new governing body of the Church.

The Ecclesiastical Commission to be appointed immediately would, as its chief duty, ascertain the amount of vested interests held by each incumbent of a benefice. So long

as a clergyman discharged his duties, the Commission would pay him for his interests, or if he preferred he might have it commuted into an annuity for life, in both cases the amount paid to curates was to be deducted.⁶⁷ The only "marketable property" retained by the Church would be the private endowments, buildings which might be retained if they were to be used for public worship, and certain historic religious edifices for public use.⁶⁸ Buildings no longer used for public worship were to be disposed of by the Commission.⁶⁹

The educational grants to Maynooth and the Presbyterian colleges in Ireland were to be discontinued but there would be an evaluation of all interests in these grants and for this compensation would be made. Thus educational equality

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67. The incumbent was secured in his title with three exceptions:
- a. Titles to the tithe-rent charges would be vested immediately in the Commissioners.
 - b. Freeholds of churches wholly in ruins would be taken from the incumbents.
 - c. Peerage rights of Irish bishops would cease at once. Annual Register, (1869), CXI, p. 25.
68. Private endowments were money contributed from private sources since the year 1660, and Gladstone pointed out it would not include churches and glebe houses. Annual Register, loc. cit.
69. The churches not in use, and not capable of restoration for public worship were to be handed over to the Board of Public Works with an allocation of funds sufficient for maintenance. The glebes were turned over to the Governing Body of the new Church composed of both laity and clergy. On its payment of building charges they would be allowed to purchase a certain amount of glebe land around the glebe houses at a fair valuation.

would be completed. The Regium Donum was abolished and compensation was allowed to Presbyterian clergymen on the same basis as to Anglican.

The Ecclesiastical Commission was empowered to handle the tithe-rent charges formerly held by members of the clergy or by any ecclesiastical corporation. These might be sold to the occupier of the land under an arrangement such that he would eventually become the owner or if he did not, the property would be thrown on the market for open sale.

The financial result of these operations, Gladstone, estimated would yield:

Tithe rent-charge	9,000,000 pounds
Lands & perpetuity rents	6,250,000 pounds
Money	<u>750,000</u> pounds

Making a total of 16,000,000 pounds - the present value of the property. The Bill would dispose of 8,650,000 pounds as follows:

Vested interests of incumbents	4,900,000 pounds
Curates	800,000 pounds
Lay compensation	900,000 pounds
Private endowments	500,000 pounds
Building charges	250,000 pounds

Commutation of Regium Donum and
Maynooth 1,100,000 pounds
Expense of Commission 200,000 pounds 70

After these obligations had been met, the vital question would be the disposal of the surplus. Gladstone asked what should be done with it. He insisted that it should be used for Ireland and specified that it should not be appropriated for religious purposes. Also he asserted that the disposition of the amount should be final and not open the door to a new controversy later on. He proposed that the most generous thing they could do would be to appropriate the money to relieve "unavoidable calamities and suffering" not provided for by the Poor Law.⁷¹ He contended that so much money was needed to relieve want and suffering that he would use this new revenue for worthy charitable purposes. This plan would relieve the poor Irish occupier of the more obnoxious taxes which fell heaviest upon him and at the same time make more funds available for the maintenance of charitable institutions and in addition extend aid to some who were not being provided for under the present system.

He showed the House that it was costing the government

70. Bill for Disestablishment of the Irish Church (32 and 33 Victoria, c. 42)
71. Annual Register, (1869) CXCII, p. 27.

from 120,000 to 140,000 pounds a year for the care of lunatics alone.⁷² Out of the surplus, he proposed to increase the allowance for that group, including also asylums for idiots, to 205,000 pounds. As the Poor Law in Ireland functioned then, there was no provision for two groups of unfortunates, the deaf and the blind. He would appropriate the sum of 30,000 pounds to provide training schools for those groups.⁷³ He also proposed that Reform and Industrial Schools should receive 10,000 pounds for their maintenance.

There was also an urgent need in Ireland for a supply of properly trained nurses for the care of the poor. The Poor Law Guardians naturally could not meet this need out of their meager funds, and Gladstone proposed to allot the sum of 15,000 pounds a year for providing training schools. The infirmiary system which was charged upon the County Cess was a burden upon the poorest occupier of the

72. Hansard, op. cit., CXCV, (March 1, 1869), p. 459.

73. "The number of deaf and dumb under twenty years of age and capable of education (1861) was 1300; the number of blind, 649. Thus approximately there were 2,000 whose condition marked them for assistance and whose cases could be met by mere increase of public taxes. In Ireland unless they were orphans or children of a father who was in the workhouse, they could not be sent to be educated out of the rates". He admitted that even in England there was no law providing for these classes of persons, but in England voluntary alms were quite generous and conditions were much better. Hansard, CXCVIII, (July 16, 1869), p. 56.

land.⁷⁴ He would appropriate the remainder amounting, to 51,000 pounds, for the county infirmaries. With the satisfaction of all these requirements Gladstone felt that they would be able to combine very great reforms. They should be able to apply strict principles of economy and good administration to all departments and redivide Ireland into districts around the county infirmaries which would make them more accessible.

Gladstone welcomed the opportunity to relieve the poor Irish occupier of his unjust burden and at the same time to provide a more ample, a more uniform and a more regulated source of income for the relief of human wants and afflictions. On the other hand he realized that Parliament must ask a zealous body of clergymen to undergo a great transition and a powerful and intelligent minority of the laity "to abate a great part of the exceptional privileges" they had enjoyed.⁷⁵ He assured those privileged classes that he was seeking neither to injure them nor to blame the clergy entirely for errors in English policy towards Ireland. However, the time had come when an end must be made of the union between the Anglican Church and the State,

74. The amount charged entirely upon the land steadily increased principally because its appropriations also included such items as salaries of county officers, police, etc., and there was not much left for charity.

75. Hansard, op. cit., CXCIV, (March 1, 1869) p. 463.

and both groups were being given a fair consideration in the readjustment process.

As before, John Bright supported Gladstone's program in its entirety. He answered Disraeli's objections to disestablishment and disendowment by charging that the Irish Church was a "church of conquest", in fact the "most flagrant violation of the Protestant Reformation in Europe" and that it was only maintained by British power, against which the Irish people had never ceased to protest. He said establishment had failed completely. It had "made Ireland not only the most Catholic but the most Roman of countries, and it had made Catholicism not only a religion, but a patriotism, for which multitudes of Irish were ready to die."⁷⁶

Mr. Gathorne Hardy, a leader of the Conservatives in the House, denied that the Church was a "badge of conquest" and asked what it had done to deserve destruction? He asserted that it had "kept alight in dark places the lamp of the Reformation". He analyzed the Irish question as not having been caused by the Church but by the State and he predicted that disestablishment would fail and that this would mean a renewal of discontent in Ireland.⁷⁷

76. Annual Register, op. cit., (1869) CXI, p. 35.

77. Ibid., p. 44.

The debates engendered by the Bill did not foster so much opposition as had been witnessed during discussions on some less significant questions. Disraeli and his followers, although they opposed the Bill in principle and in certain particulars, lacked earnestness in their speeches. Disraeli wrote to a friend that he "said very little and that merely as a politician, on the possibilities of the House of Lords". His speech arguing for a continuance of the union of Church and State and declaring that Gladstone's plan disturbed "property which had been sanctioned by three centuries", caused Mr. Lowe to characterize it as "showing that establishment ought to be put an end to".⁷⁸ With Gladstone's party in its full strength supporting the program, the Bill passed the House of Commons.⁷⁹

When the House of Lords took up the discussion of the Bill in June considerable feeling had been aroused over a letter which had been written and published just previously

78. Annual Register, *op. cit.*, (1869), CXI, p. 41.

79. While the Irish Church Bill was being debated in the House of Commons, the Lords were discussing recent outrages which had occurred in Sheffield and in Ireland. The Fenian conspiracy directed the public mind to conditions in Ireland and helped prepare it for the Church Bill. One of the Lords even suggested that the question of Land should have been dealt with rather than that of the Church.

by Mr. Bright. Lord Granville who had moved the second reading of the Bill was a member of Gladstone's ministry and he assured the House that no member of the government had seen the letter before publication and therefore would not assume responsibility for it. Even Bright when questioned repudiated any intention of a threat against the House but a phrase such as "it would be well if the Peers could bring themselves on a line with the opinions and necessities" of their day otherwise they might "meet with accidents not pleasant to them" made them give the measure more careful consideration.⁸⁰ Lord Granville expressed the conviction that the dominant control of the State over religious affairs in Ireland must cease, although many still held out for concurrent endowment.

What concerned the Lords most was the amount of property with which the disestablished Anglican Church in Ireland would be left to face the future. Several Bishops carried on the debate and many amendments were added, one to the effect that as much as fourteen million pounds should be settled on the Church. In conversation with the Queen, Gladstone said that the House of Commons would never accept so large a settlement and the "first effect of persistence

80. Bright's letter dated London, June 9, was read by the chairman of a meeting of his constituents at Birmingham. Annual Register, (1869) CXI, p. 41.

in such a course would be a stronger move against the episcopal seats in the House of Lords than had been seen for more than two hundred years."⁸¹

The House of Commons considered the amendments but Gladstone was willing to make only a few minor changes in the Bill. He advised the Queen and the Lords what concessions the ministry would be willing to make stating very definitely that it would oppose concurrent endowments in any form and emphasizing again that the residue should not be used for religious purposes. Under the leadership of Lord Cairns and with the help of Lord Granville, some slight compromises were effected and accepted and the bill returned to the House of Commons where it was passed on July twenty-second and received the royal assent four days later.⁸²

81. Morley, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 271.

82. "Thus, the Irish Church Act 1869 (32 & 33 Victoria c.42) dissolved the union created by Act of Parliament between the Churches of England and Ireland, but left the Church of England untouched, and while it abolished in Ireland the existing ecclesiastical corporations and all jurisdiction of ecclesiastical courts, and vested all property of any ecclesiastical person in the commissioners appointed by the Act, it preserved the continuity of the Church, by enacting that the existing ecclesiastical law, articles, doctrines, rites, rules, discipline, and ordinances of the Church, with such modifications as should after the disestablishment of the Church be made according to the constitution thereof, should be deemed to be binding on the members for the time being thereof, as if such members had mutually contracted and agreed to abide by and observe the same, and should be capable of being enforced by the temporal courts in relation to any property reserved or given to or taken and enjoyed by the Church under the Act, as if such property had been expressly given upon trust to be held, occupied, and enjoyed by persons who should ob-

Thus the Irish Church as an establishment ceased to exist and Gladstone had met one of England's most difficult problems.

(Footnote 82 - continued) serve and keep and be in all respects bound by the said ecclesiastical law, articles, doctrines, rites, rules, discipline, and ordinances." The Laws of England, Vol. XI, p. 361.

There is ample evidence, gathered from the private correspondence of Gladstone's day, to assure us that beneath all the complexities of his political career his love for the Church was a tremendous force in his life and that his loyalty to it never wavered. He went into Parliament as a young man to "defend the Church".⁸³ His early religious training having been extremely narrow embraced the idea that the "extension of religious principles beyond Anglicanism was associated with irreligion". In England, as in continental countries where there was a State Church, the conservative element rallied to its support for within it was to be found the elements of authority which harmonized with conservative ideas. As a conservative Gladstone believed in the principle of authority in all matters of Church and State and as a deeply religious man he believed that government existed for the propagation of truth.⁸⁴ Consequently he felt that the Conservative party had a religious mission to perform and he hoped that someday he might be its leader and help it to perform that mission.

83. He wrote in an autobiographic note in 1897, "The primary idea of my early politics was the Church". Morley, op. cit., p. 170, Vol. I.

84. One of the obligations put upon the State as asserted in his book. Morley, Vol. I, p. 172.

While Gladstone was still in college the government had been forced to concede parliamentary seats to the Roman Catholics of Ireland.⁸⁵ From that moment Irish members of the House of Commons used every opportunity to press their demands for religious liberty and religious freedom. No matter what the issue, whether it was a question of tithes, of church rates, or of higher education the Roman Catholics never failed to introduce the subject of the disestablishment of the Anglican Church into their discussions.

Questions such as the Irish Church Reform Bill, the removal of Jewish disabilities, the admission of Dissenters to the Universities involved the Church in the political field. During his early years as member of the House of Commons, Gladstone strongly denounced all these movements which threatened Anglican domination.⁸⁶ Perhaps in order to convince himself as much as anyone else of the erroneous ideas held by those who favored such measures, he wrote and published his book on the subject of relations between Church and State. It was received indifferently by those with whom he was politically associated and he set about to find out their point of view. He records in his diary

85. The Roman Catholic Emancipation Act was passed in 1829.

86. He said that "the profession of the Jews was of itself in the nature of a disqualification for legislative office in a country where Christianity was interwoven with the institutions of the State". Hansard, op. cit., LVII (March 31, 1841) p. 754.

even at this early date evidences of doubt as to whether it was best for the Church to be involved in matters which caused such strong feeling on the part of its own members. He began to question in his own mind whether the Church could afford to become involved in political situations which were outside her field of service. To Gladstone such questions appeared in the nature of a challenge and he determined to attempt to adjust the relation of the Church to the State. As soon as he had set himself to this task he was confronted by conditions that existed in Ireland and his faith in establishment began to waver.

The struggle which was going on within him was not made public until the Maynooth College question was being debated in the House.⁸⁷ Realizing at that time that in view of the principles set down in his book published only a few years before he could not justify his position in the eyes of either his colleagues or his constituents, he

87. The Maynooth question in 1845. In a chapter of his autobiography he describes the offense of which he was guilty by writing that he, the person who had "accepted a foremost share of the responsibility of endeavoring to put an end to the existence of the Irish Church as an Establishment", was also "the person who, of all men officials, perhaps in public life, did, until the year 1841, recommend, upon the highest and most imperious grounds, its resolute maintenance."

supported the measure and then immediately resigned. The Maynooth affair led him nearer to disestablishment. He believed that the State existed for the propagation of truth and that since Maynooth did not teach that truth was to be found in the particular church supported by the State, the connection between them should in all fairness to the Church be severed. He perceived that he must choose between either supporting absolutely the State Church or aiding Roman Catholic religious education at Maynooth for it was not logical to attempt to follow both courses.

Within a few years after the Maynooth question was disposed of, Gladstone was drawn into debate on two problems which involved the Church as a State institution: the admission of Jews to Parliament, and the so called "papal aggression".⁸⁸ In the former matter he reversed his earlier opinion saying that since Parliament had made concessions to other religious denominations, meaning Unitarians and Roman Catholics, and since the Jews had been granted some civil rights, the privilege of membership in the House of Commons should be extended to them. By this attitude he gave evidence of his growing religious liberalism also of

88. The movement for the redivision and for the remaning of the Catholic bishoprics in the United Kingdom was described as "Papal aggression" and caused Parliament to pass the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

a changed attitude toward the Church for he knew that Jewish members of the House would have equal votes with Anglicans in directing affairs of the Anglican establishment. In attacking the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, he maintained that the Catholic Church by the reorganization of bishoprics in the British Isles was pursuing a course "long desired by the lay Catholics for diocesan bishops" and that it was a subject wholly within the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church and not within the province of the State.⁸⁹ By this stand, he again showed his liberal religious tendencies and also his increasing dislike for the intrusion of politics into the field of religion, especially since Parliament had ceased to be Anglican.

At the same time he testified to his steadfast Anglicanism by expressing his resentment against the continued criticism which was directed against the Church of England in consequence of its political affiliations and he asserted that it was his duty as a devout churchman to do his best to free her from such entanglement. He did not openly avow at this time that he had in mind disestablishment as the method by which this liberation from entanglement was to be brought about for as a statesman Gladstone knew that he

89. Hansard, op. cit., CXV, (March 25, 1851), p. 565.

must be able to depend on the support of his colleagues when he proposed a change as fundamental as this. It was not until the growing seriousness of the Irish situation, the sympathy aroused by the national liberal movement in Italy and the political and social problems of England herself had prepared Parliament for radical reforms, that Gladstone proposed what he felt to be the solution for the Church problem in Ireland. Not until 1865 did he announce his belief that disestablishment was the only salvation for the religious situation in Ireland, and for the Anglican Church itself.

He offered no definite plan of action until three years later when he addressed the House at length on the "State of Ireland" and proved to the satisfaction of his followers that the time had come for a definite separation of church and State.⁹⁰ He convinced the House that by removing the Irish opposition to which the Church had been subjected for so long, her position in England would be strengthened and her dignity would be restored. The election of 1868 put the question before the country and when his position received popular support Gladstone as prime minister, carried through the plan for disendowment and

90. March 16, 1868.

disestablishment successfully.

That Gladstone later became thoroughly opposed to establishment is proved by his speech on the Scotch Church in 1873 when he said that from his own experience he had evolved the following observations, "first, establishment by law violated religious equality; second, it deprived that Church of self-government; third, it imposed upon Parliament duties which it was not qualified to discharge; fourth, it was harmful to the religious and political institutions of the community; and fifth, that therefore an establishment ought not to be maintained".⁹¹

The disposal of the former holdings of the Church involved Gladstone in the Irish land problem about which he confessed that to begin with he knew very little.⁹²

The question of Church tithes had formerly been settled by transferring the responsibility for their collection by the Anglican clergy to the landlord to be paid in the same manner as other taxes. By this method the Anglican clergy-

91. Hansard, op. cit., CXXVI, (May 16, 1873) p. 37.

92. He wrote to Bright that he had the advantage in learning the Irish land question, that he did not set out with the belief that he knew it already and added that he would make every effort to acquire a mastery of the subject. Morley, op. cit., p. 282, Vol. II.

man became virtually a landlord and Gladstone believed that as a rule a clergyman did not make the best of a landlord. With arrears in payment of Church and other taxes charged against him, the tenant despaired of ever becoming free from debt and eventually becoming owner of the land to which he was so firmly attached.⁹³ In order to improve the condition of the tenants in Ireland, Gladstone incorporated in the Church bill a proposal to the effect that the former Church holdings be taken over and sold by the government with a preference in the opportunity to purchase given to the occupier. Thus Gladstone became involved in the whole land question. He soon realized that any effective program would involve the vested interests of many Englishmen and might result in a complete social revolution, not only in Ireland but in England as well. Since all legislation had formerly been in the interest of the landlord, he asserted that it was becoming increasingly necessary to prescribe by law in certain respects the terms and conditions on which land should be held in Ireland. He proposed, following Bright's sugges-

93. "Irish arrears extending over a long period are bad debts and they are bad debts kept alive, not because there is any rational hope or even any hope at all, of their being ever recovered, but because they constitute an instrument of power in the hands of the landlord to be used whenever he may feel disposed."

Hansard, op. cit., CCLXXII, (July 13, 1882) p. 303.

tion, that the tenants should be able to become owners of the land and that it was to the interest of the government to make possible the purchase of it.

Of the various types of landholding, he believed that of yearly tenancy was the most disastrous. With no contract, the occupier might be legally ejected either for his inability to pay the rent demanded, or in many instances where he had made certain improvements the value of the holding was increased and consequently the rent, disregarding entirely the source of such improvements.⁹⁴ Due to economic conditions much of the arable land was converted into pasture and also many farms were consolidated, two policies which stripped the peasant of his means of livelihood and at the same time offered him no other choice of profession.⁹⁵

The Irish people looked upon the landlords as one of the last traces of English conquest and alluded to them as

94. The Ejectment Law (1816) enabled a landlord to evict an obnoxious tenant in two months and at a cost of two pounds, whereas a similar process by an English landlord would take twelve months and cost eighteen pounds.

95. "The landlord obtained a higher rental and large profits from turning the land into pasture, and producing butchers' meat, butter, cheese and milk and at the same time, though that might be highly profitable to the landlord, the result might be to make such a diminution in rural labor as would be felt to be most unjust to the laboring classes". Hansard, LXXV, (June 25, 1844), p. 1415.

a "garrison".⁹⁶ The method of wholesale eviction caused innumerable threats and outrages against the person and property of the landlord who naturally appealed to Parliament for protection. This accounted for the almost continuous policy of coercion maintained in Ireland.⁹⁷

Gladstone acknowledged the difficulties involved in making adjustments satisfactory to both landlord and tenant, but he reasoned that there should be some legal provision for the rights of the tenant both as to eviction and as to compensation for improvements which he had made and which he could not take with him. His investigations revealed that these rights were acknowledged in the province of Ulster and he was able to prove that in addition to having a satisfied tenant class, the landlords of northern Ireland had profited by increased rentals in spite of the fact that the land itself was not as productive

96. "The landlords are our garrison in Ireland. We planted them there and we replanted them. In 1641, 1688, and again in 1798 we reconquered the country for them. We had used the whole civil government of Ireland as an engine of wholesale corruption and we extended that corruption to what ought to have been a sacred thing - namely the Church which we maintained and supported in the land. We did everything in our power to irritate and exasperate the Irish people by the whole of that policy." Hansard, CCCIV, (April 16, 1886) p. 1788.

97. The Writ of Habeas Corpus was repeatedly suspended and the Lord Lieutenant given power to suppress meetings, forbid the carrying of firearms, etc.

agriculturally as that in other counties.⁹⁸ He proposed therefore to legalize the so-called "Ulster custom" and then extend it wherever it would be applicable. Where it could not be applied at all, he thought it would be possible to establish a scale of compensation both for eviction and for improvements which would satisfy the occupier and from which the landlord might free himself if he chose to make a long term lease instead.

These principles were included in the Land Bill which he introduced into Parliament in February, 1870, and which with a few minor adjustments was passed during that session.⁹⁹ As finally accepted by Parliament, the Land Act provided first, that if a tenant left a farm, he would receive compensation for all improvements, if such improvements had increased the value of the land; second, if he had paid the rent regularly and fully and then was dismissed for any other reason, he could collect damages; third, if the landlord was forced to sell, the tenant should have the first

98. He was able to compare the land rentals of 1779 and 1869 and proved that in the so called "tenant-right" counties rents had increased three fold while in all others it had scarcely doubled in ninety years.

99. The Landlord and Tenant Act, 1870 (Ireland.)
(33 and 34 Victoria, c. 46.)

opportunity to buy the farm. Finally, the government was to establish a sort of farm loan department from which he might borrow the necessary funds for the purchase.

In the years following, Gladstone was slow to realize that despite the good intentions of the framers of the Land Act, it had done little to improve Irish conditions. On the other hand his never flagging interest in Ireland and his continued study of her problems at last convinced him that further reforms were necessary.¹⁰⁰ It was this conclusion that led him to the Land Act of 1881 but even as late as this he had not satisfied himself that nationality was the core of the Irish difficulty. From the time of the passage of the second Land Act until his resignation in 1885 he resisted the efforts of Charles Stewart Parnell and the National League to force the Home Rule issue, but his return to power in the same year made him at last come out definitely for Home Rule.¹⁰¹ It was not until this late date that Gladstone seems to have realized the true significance of a statement made by Lord Russell on the floor of the House

100. He said later that he would not admit failure of the Land Act of 1870 to solve the Irish problem; he "would admit the success to be incomplete". Hansard, CCLX, (April 7, 1881) p. 926.

101. The Third Reform Bill had considerably changed the political situation in the House of Commons. The newly enfranchised Irish electors had increased the Nationalist Party from 61 to 86.

of Commons in 1840: "The true key to our Irish debates was this: that it was not properly borne in mind that as England is inhabited by Englishmen, and Scotland by Scotchmen, so Ireland is inhabited by Irishmen".¹⁰²

102. Morley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 130

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