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A

Curious and Diverting SERMON,

Upon that Noxious Vermin, called

LICE.

Being an Antidote against

A NEW HERESY:

OR,

An Ingenious Confutation of the

RELIEF SCHEME.

By a Friend of the SECESSION.

EDINBURGH:
Printed for, and Sold by the AUTHOR.

M.DCC.LXXXV.
[Price TWO-PENCE.]

TO

The Friends of the Associate Interest.

DEAR BRETHREN,

IT affords me inexpressible pleasure that the press has been labouring for a considerable time with valuable productions for the support of our Associate cause. My two worthy and reverend brethren, Messrs. Bennet of Ceres, and Ramsay of Glasgow, have favoured the public with two valuable performances against the Relievers. I have the fullest conviction that these worthy men have the Relievers in perfect abhorrence; as the former maintains in his pamphlet, "that they are deluding "the generation, and relieving them from Christianity:" And the latter with no less justice and charity calls their scheme "an odd pernicious device!" and roundly tells his readers, "that it is founded in modern scepticism and infidelity." Now certainly these Relievers who are relieving the generation from Christianity, and abettors of modern scepticism and infidelity, must be Deists or Atheists, and of consequence enemies to our Solemn League and Covenant, and therefore we are solemnly bound by this covenant to inform the civil government against them, that they may be punished according to the demerit of their crimes. For we swear in the 4th article of the Solemn League, "That we shall, with all faithfulness, endeavour the "discovery of all such as have been, or shall be incendiaries, or "evil instruments, by hindering the reformation, (and certainly "Atheists and Deists are enemies to reformation) that they may "be brought to public trial, and receive condign punishment, "as the degree of their offences shall require, or the supreme "judicatories of both kingdoms respectively, or others having "power from them for that effect, shall judge convenient." And if we suffer these infidels and sceptical Relievers to remain undisturbed without informing government against them, that they may be brought to condign punishment, then we will be chargeable with double perjury, both by violating the 4th article of the Solemn League already mentioned, and also the 5th article, where we swear in the most express terms, "that we "will not give ourselves to a detestable indifferency, or neut-"rality in this cause; and what we are not able ourselves to "suppress and overcome, we shall reveal and make known, "that it may be timely prevented and removed."

DEDICATION.

Having now hinted what my worthy brethren, Messrs. Bennet and Ramsay, have so justly said against these vile Relievers, and what we in the Association are bound to do for suppressing them by virtue of our solemn covenant-engagements, I hope I may be permitted to say, without incurring the charge of vanity, that though these two dear brethren had a very good intention towards the Associate interest in their pamphlets, yet my sermon will set both the Associate and Relief scheme in a much fuller and juster point of light than their performances have done; and I can venture to predict that it will be more universally read, and have a more universal influence.

There are various reasons, dear brethren, for not adding my name to the following discourse.

1. I have herein followed the example of the Rev. Messrs. Bennet and Ramsay, who intended not that Names, but that Truth should appear.

2. This proceeds from my humility and self-denial, as I intended to do good to the Associate interest without being known to be the author of it.

3. I did not wish to be overloaded with your praises and letters of gratitude from all the corners of the Association, which would have offended my modesty had it been known that I was the author of this performance.

4. I did not want to be eaten alive by that vile rapacious Relief vermin which I have so justly exposed by my pen.

I have only to add, that I would recommend the following sermon to the serious attention of those young men, who are pointing towards the ministry in the Associate way, as an excellent pattern for their imitation in method, sentiment, and diction; and I am not without hope that this discourse will pave the way for me to the first divinity chair that is empty in any of the learned universities in the Association.

I am, dear friends and partisans, with downright respect, your

ASSOCIATE BROTHER.

N. B. If the reader enter with judgement into the spirit and scope of the following pages, they will exhibit to his view a just portrait of the real nature and tendency of the Secession scheme, as well as that of the Relief.

LICE.

L I C E.

SUCH is the refined taste of the present age, and so great its itch for novelty, that those trite subjects which are hackneyed in churches every week, are thought but dull and uninteresting, and therefore coldly entertained. In order to avoid this inconvenience, I have made choice of a subject somewhat uncommon. And as this sermon will have the charms of novelty to recommend it, and is studiously adapted to the taste of the present age, I expect, that on this account, it will meet with a cordial reception from the public.

My design in this discourse is to stir up the public in general, and the Association in particular, to be on their guard against that enormous swarm of Relievers who are spreading like a gangrene, and infesting all our borders, as the vermin mentioned in my text overspread the land of Egypt in the days of yore.

As I am a staunch friend to the Association, and greatly approve of their method of preaching, I have observed it with a scrupulous exactness, in the progress of this sermon: so that besides the subject-matter of the discourse, the very method of handling it, will render it peculiarly acceptable to all who belong to the witnessing remnant in this day of degeneracy.

The text naturally divides itself.

1. In the word of the text mention is made of the existence of a species of creatures. I deem it needless to adduce proofs of the reality of their existence, because for ought I know, it has never been called in question by our modern Deists and Infidels.

2. In the word of the text we have the name of these creatures, viz. LICE; a name pretty generally known among mankind, and therefore it does not require any particular explication. It is only necessary to observe, that Lice is the plural number of Louse: from which the reader will easily perceive that I can distinguish the plural number from the singular; but whether I know any more about the learned languages is another question.

3. In the word of the text we have the form of these creatures. They are a sort of little, speckled, many-footed animals, and crawling things, some of a larger, some of a smaller size; some of a brighter, some of a darker hue.

4. In the word of the text we have the nature of these animals, they are blood-suckers, engaged in perpetual hostilities with the human race; and so extremely unmannerly in their behaviour, that they will neither keep at a distance from man-

kind, nor be peaceable in their company. In a word, they are so well known by the inhabitants of this island, as entirely supersedes a more particular description of their temper and character.

The text having now so naturally divided itself*, I observe the following doctrinal proposition from it, viz. That the Relievers resemble Lice.

In handling this doctrine I propose the following method:

1. I shall offer a few preliminary remarks for paving the way to the subject.

2. I shall show in what respects the Relievers may be called Lice.

3. I shall conclude with a word of improvement.

I sollicit therefore the reader's careful attention, while, according to the first Head of my Method, I make a few preliminary remarks for paving the way to the subject. And,

1. I remark, that in handling Associate subjects, it is the common way of the Associate brethren, to have one head of the method consisting in preliminary remarks, by which they mean observations, that have no connection with the subject, but which must be made before they can possibly reach the text and the doctrine contained in it. And if any person be so captious as to alledge that these preliminary remarks seldom pave the way to the text, which is often darkened by them, I answer, that though this may often happen, yet these remarks seldom fail in the hands of the Associate brethren, to pave the way to a discourse, and then they are not in vain. They also afford them an opportunity of laying before their hearers a great many important truths, which they could not mention at all, were they

* But perhaps some critic may object to this division of my text, That if a text consisting of one word, naturally divides itself, it must surely be very ready to fall in pieces. To this I answer, According to our Associate rules every text must be divided, even altho' against itself, before a doctrine can stand upon it. I hope, then, it will be allowed, that if my text cannot be divided into Words, it may at least be split into Letters. Now as grammarians admit, that every letter has a certain power affixed to it, and some letters are allowed to be substituted for words, as A. M. and D. D. I hope every friend of the Association will allow the four letters of my text to stand for the four following words:

L, Latitudinarian, i, is, c, a curse, e, ecclesiastic.

Who does not see now, that my doctrine has a proper foundation on this division of the text?

they to confine themselves to the doctrine of the text, like weak preachers in the Establishment and Relief. And I hold it as a maxim, that those preachers who are incapable of making preliminary remarks, are incapable of preaching long on a text: whereas those that, like our Associate brethren, can make a sufficient number of preliminary remarks, can preach as long as they please upon any subject.

2. I remark, that I will be censured by some of our modern refiners for raising a doctrine from my text. But I desire such to remember, that I am not singular in this; for the most part of my reverend Associate brethren do the same, and I am abundantly able to justify them and myself in this practice, by arguments the most convincing. 1. By raising a doctrine we set the meaning of the text in a much clearer light than the words of inspiration themselves do. 2. By raising a doctrine we are enabled to enlarge the meaning of a text, as I have done in the present discourse; for the text is the single word "Lice," but the doctrine is, "That the Relievers resemble Lice," which the reader must see, is a great improvement and enlargement of the word of the text in the original. 3. By raising a doctrine, we are distinguished from the Latitudinarian Relief ministers, who in their lax way form the heads of their sermons out of the several branches of the text; and for observing such a simple and and unlearned method, they are justly held in contempt by the Associate brethren.

3. I remark, that this sermon will be extremely popular, and meet with a rapid sale in the Associate interest. I have two reasons for this remark. 1. The very design of the discourse will evidence the truth of the remark; for it is intended to expose that vile vermin of Relievers who have sprung up among us; and nothing gives the Association more exquisite pleasure than to see this done. Nor can any Associate minister insist on a topic that is more popular, or fills his audience with higher transports of joy. This is so true, that when, on a particular occasion, one of our clergymen, the Rev. Mr Wordy, in the depth of Associate wisdom, and the meekness of Christianity, railed a whole sermon against a vile Latitudinarian Relief minister, and was so transported with the fervor of his charity and zeal for the Associate cause, that he forgot to conclude the worship with prayer, praise, and benediction. His hearers were so entranced in joy, that they knew not whether they were in or out of the body. And when soon after he received many pious donations of their substance for this truly Associate sermon, he rejoiced in them as the fruit of his ministry, and knew that

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he had not laboured in vain. 2. The very title page of this sermon will contribute eminently to its acceptance and vendibility in the Associate interest, for it is intitled, "An Antidote "against a New Heresy;" which is the very title prefixed to my reverend father Mr Gibb's valuable sermon against the new heresy broached by Mr Dalgliesh of Peebles. Tho' my sermon had no merit in itself, (which yet is not granted,) the Rev. Mr Gibb's title, which in a lucky hour I thought proper to prefix, will set it off to great advantage, and give it a rapid circulation through the whole Associate Synod; and well it may; for I hesitate not to declare, that he does not deserve the name of an Associate, who does not prefer the authority of the Rev. Mr GIBB to that of the Apostle PAUL. And the slightest attention will convince the reader that the Rev. Mr GIBB is justly intitled to this preference; for he has now grown old and grey, and exhausted his strength and talents in supporting the Associate cause, which Paul never did, and I have a strong suspicion, never would, were he to burst his cearments and appear among the living; for from his writings it is too evident, that he was more a Reliever than a Seceder.

4. I remark, that I intend to make very little use of scripture in this discourse, and I have even avoided it, in the choice of my text. I am able to assign the best reasons for this.

1. As I intend in this discourse to show the foundation of the Associate principles, I thought it preposterous to chuse any passage in the whole Bible for my text, as I could not show our principles to have a foundation in it without perverting both the letter and spirit of the passage. But it is perfectly needless to perplex myself with seeking a foundation for our Associate principles in scripture, as one can be found for them elsewhere; for though it may be extremely difficult to prove them founded in the Acts of the Apostles, I am able to prove, to the conviction of all gainsayers, that they are founded in the Acts of the British Parliament; and I am likewise able to show, that the Acts of the British Parliament are far better observed by the British subjects than the Acts of the Apostles; which argues the excellence of the foundation on which our principles are built.

2. It is well known, that the most polite and fashionable people of the age are disgusted with scriptural discourses, and as I intend to edify them by this publication, I have carefully avoided what I knew would offend them, ever mindful of the important maxim, "that in order to edify mankind we must "please them;" which maxim I would recommend to the serious attention of intruders through the nation, who having

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their eyes a little blinded by the bright glare of the presentation, and the refulgent warming rays of the golden benefice, read the maxim thus, "that in order to edify mankind, we must displease "them." But after all, I have the charity to think that this most useful and beloved race of men sincerely intend both to please and edify, if not mankind, yet themselves. 3. As our fine modern preachers, whom the Rev. Dr Carlisle calls, in his printed sermon, "the rising hopes of our Jerusalem," are unanimously of opinion, that scriptural quotations mar the beauty of a finished composition, and as I would have this performance of mine to be viewed in that light, I am therefore determined to quote scripture as seldom as possible, and shall never do it but when my subject cannot be illustrated otherwise.

5. I remark, that I do not intend to confine myself to the literal sense of my text, but to handle it in an accommodated way. This is a very common method of handling subjects among the Associate brethren, and answers valuable purposes; for it enables them to say a great many things upon a subject, which are not contained in it, which is the case with what I have already said, and am still to say on my subject. Besides, this method puts it fully in their power to expose persons of unsound principles, as I am about to do with these vile vermin of Relievers in my sermon.

6. I remark, that though some snarling captious critics may censure me for chusing such an extraordinary text, and handling it in such a vague and loose manner, yet the envenomed arrows of their detraction and malevolence must fall pointless to the ground, when it is known that this method of preaching, which I have observed, is not uncommon among those of our way, and has been practised with great success by some burning lights in our Association, who to this day are living ornaments of it, and shining in the zenith and meridian of glory. Under the patronage of such illustrious names and examples I shall be crowned with glory, and rise superior to the censure of the invidious, and the weak. But for my own vindication, and for the honour of some illustrious names, I must produce particular authorities. And that I may mark distinguished merit with distinguished honour, I shall begin with the reverend Primate of the Association; preaching at a certain occasion, he chose for his subject, "But especially the parchments." The method he proposed for handling the subject was, 1. To shew negatively what was not contained in the parchments. 2. To shew positively what was contained in them. On the first head he proved very judiciously, that neither the Revolution settlement, Porteous'

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paper, nor the Burgher oath were contained in these parchments. On the second head he showed positively, and proved by many irrefragible arguments, and to the full conviction of the whole associate assembly on that occasion, that the second Reformation period, the Westminster Confession, the Covenants, National and Solemn League, the Excommunication of the Burgher ministers, the new constitution of the Associate synod, and the Judicial Testimony, were contained in the parchments; with many more important truths, which have escaped my memory. In a word, he threw more light on this text than was ever done by any other person, and on this account (as merit leads to preferment) he obtained the pre-eminence among the brethren. The improvement was edifying to the assembly, for it was suitable to the doctrinal part of the subject.

Another Reverend Father of our Associate interest, preaching once at a sacramental occasion, chose for his text that savoury expression, "By this time he stinketh." He learnedly proposed, in handling the subject, to state a comparison between dead Lazarus and the covenanted reformation, in the following respects. 1. He observed, that as Lazarus died: so the covenanted reformation was dead in these lands, O! 2. He observed, that as Lazarus was buried: so the covenanted reformation was buried in Britain, O! 3. He observed, that as when Lazarus was buried, there was a stone laid upon his grave: so the covenanted reformation in these lands was interred under the grave-stone of sundry parliamentary acts and deeds, O! 4. He observed, that as the two sisters of Lazarus wept at his grave: so the friends of the covenanted reformation were weeping on account of its present buried and lifeless condition, and could not be comforted, because it is not enforced upon all ranks in these lands by all civil pains, O! 5. He observed, that as the sister of the deceased thought he was stinking: so the covenanted reformation was stinking in this generation, O! 6. And lastly, He observed, that as Lazarus revived, and came out of his grave, to the great joy of all his connections: so the covenanted reformation would in due time be revived to the inexpressible joy of all its friends, and all ranks of men in Britain be obliged to embrace it under penalty of the confiscation of their goods, the imprisonment of their persons, and further punishment, as his Majesty and honourable estates of parliament shall think proper to inflict. Euge! In the conclusion of the sermon, he applied his doctrine so powerfully, that both the preacher, and the whole assembly, were in the same condition in which Lazarus is represented to have been in the text, which show-

showed that he was impressed himself as well as the audience; which every good preacher should be, agreeable to the well-known oratorial maxim, "Si vis me flere, dolendum est tibi;" by which the reader will perceive that I understand scrapes of Latin. In a word, the effects of this savoury discourse might not only be seen, but smelt, which cannot be said of every sermon. And, if I am not misinformed, many who heard this sermon retain something of the savoury odoriferous impressions of it to this day, tho' several years have elapsed since it was delivered. Like Arabia's spicy groves, they still send forth a pleasing perfume. I doubt not but those who heard this excellent Associate sermon will think themselves under the strongest obligations of gratitude to me, for refreshing their memory, and be exceedingly pleased with the particulars of it I have mentioned, as I really myself am with the relation of them.

After all, I own that to persons of little ingenuity and penetration, the propriety of preaching on this text at a sacramental solemnity, will not so readily appear. But after I consider the ingenious method which the reverend preacher observed on this subject, I am obliged to retract an assertion too rashly delivered in a former part of my discourse, viz. that our Associate principles are founded in the British Acts of Parliament: for my Reverend Father has proved to my conviction, that they are founded in his text, "By this time he stinketh;" and that the Acts of the British Parliament, instead of being the support of our Associate principles, are rather supported by them, as they are the grave-stone that is laid upon them.

Another Reverend Father of the Association preaching before the Associate synod, chose for his text the word, "Tekel," which however was a notorious violation of the venerable Acts of the Associate synod; for it was a text which the hearers could not understand, tho' it required little capacity to understand any thing that was said upon it, as the sermon was much better adapted to the capacity of the audience than the text. It was truly a most admirable sermon, and did signal honour to the preacher, and all the members of the Associate synod; for his method was to weigh himself and all the ministers and elders of the Synod in a balance, which he did accordingly, and found them wanting.

I had almost forgotten to take notice of another Reverend Father in the Associate interest, who, from the very high sense he is known to entertain of his own importance, would never have forgiven me, had I passed him over in silence, without doing justice to his character. In delivering an expository lecture

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on "the man among thieves," he found all the principal doctrines of the Bible contained in this passage, the real design of which is to teach humanity to the distressed part of mankind, to whatever nation they belong. But as he well knew that teaching the duties of humanity and love to mankind, especially to any without the pale of the Associate interest, is esteemed legal doctrine in the Association, he discovered both inimitable sagacity and great regard to truth in giving this legal passage of scripture an Evangelical turn. When he delivered this expository lecture, it is impossible for me to give the reader à just idea of the dignified mein, and manly gesture, the modest confidence, and intrepidity, the nervous, masculine, and energetic diction of the sacred orator on that occasion.

I have been the longer in illustrating my sixth remark, that I might show that the peculiarity of my subject, and method of handling it, is not uncommon among my Associate brethren, and also that I might do judice to some illustrious names, which had I neglected to do, the very stones might have cried out.

And now to conclude the first head of my Sermon: As my reverend and dear brother Mr Ramsay of Glasgow has done a most valuable service to the Associate cause, by justly exposing the characters of the Relief ministers in his pamphlet: so I have eminently contributed to the support of our cause, by justly celebrating the characters of the Associate brethren. As Mr Ramsay has sunk the characters of the Relief ministers greatly below their merit: so I have exalted the characters of the Associate brethren greatly above their merit; and the unprejudiced will allow, that it is as meritorious to err on the side of panegyric as detraction. It is a pleasing reflection to me that Mr Ramsay and I have done so much for the support of the Associate cause. In this great point we have met at last, tho' we have moved towards it in different lines of direction, as all the diameters of a circle meet in the centre. And I am persuaded he will think me a man so much of his own views, sentiments, and complexion, that when the Rev. Mr Jamieson departs this life, he will strain every nerve to procure me to be his colleague. I know nothing for which he can blame me, except in this, viz. that I have only celebrated the excellencies of the Associate brethren, without taking notice of any of their defects; but I am justified in this by the Judicial Testimony, for which I know Mr Ramsay has a supreme regard, as the only foundation of his belief; for in that valuable composure, all the excellencies of the covenanted reformation are jointly celebrated, while not a single one of its numerous imperfections is specified.

I am alſo juſtified in this by the conduct of that great Chriſtian Emperor, who had ſuch an extraordinary degree of charity for the churchmen of his time, as to declare, that tho' he ſaw a clergyman in the very act of adultery, he would rather throw his mantle over the reverend teacher, than either believe that he was guilty, or detect his crime.

Further, as Mr Ramſay, in the firſt part of his pamphlet, has not come within a thouſand computed miles of his ſubject; ſo, after his worthy example, I have, in the firſt head of my diſcourſe, kept at the ſame diſtance from my ſubject; ſo that if ever we be joined as colleagues, we will entirely accord in our manner of preaching.

My ſecond head of diſcourſe is to ſhew with how much juſtice and propriety the Relievers may be called Lice.

1ſt, They are very juſtly called Lice, in reſpect of their multitude. Lice, tho' a little ravenous in their nature, differ from other rapacious animals in this reſpect, that whereas other beaſts of prey generally ſtalk alone, or by pairs, they are found commonly in herds and numerous bands; and move in ſuch thick and cloſe array, that in their marches, they not only trample the human race under their feet, but often trample upon one another. They are a very prolific little race of animals, and generate ſo ſpeedily, that tho' in the beginning of the week, there may be but very few of them on the human body, probably before the end of it they will be encreaſed to hundreds or thouſands; ſo amazing is their increaſe in a ſhort time! In like manner it is both alarming and amazing, that theſe animals called Relievers ſhould encreaſe to ſuch a prodigious ſwarm in ſo ſhort a time; for it is but a very few years ſince they were known to be a people, or to have ſo much as an exiſtence in the nation, and now they have multiplied into a prodigious number. And how mournful is it, that, within the ſpace of the laſt year, no leſs than eight miniſters were ordained among theſe vermin, and moſt of them in new congregations. And it is well known, that, when they herd and ſwarm together at communions, they aſſemble in ſuch numbers, that, like the locuſts ſent upon the land of Egypt, they cover the very face of the ground.

2dly, The Relievers may be called Lice, as they are ſuch troubleſome and vexatious animals. It would be offering an inſult to the underſtanding of my readers to ſuppoſe them ignorant of the nature and character of Lice, and how exceedingly uneaſy theſe little noxious animals proves unto mankind. Or if any of my readers have not experienced trouble and uneaſineſs,

in their own persons, from these vermin, they may bless their stars, in being so happily exempted from the common lot of humanity. In like manner these vile Relievers grieve the very spirits of the Association, as they intercept great swarms of people, who are emigrating from the Established Church, on account of legal doctrine, and violent settlements; and who, were it not for them, would settle in the territories of the Associate interest; and it must grieve any ingenuous mind to see the food snatched by these rapacious Relievers, from the very lips of the witnessing remnant, when they are gaping to receive it. This is for a lamentation, and the most grievous heresy, that these Relievers have fallen into.

2dly, Lice are Latitudinarians in their terms of communion, like these Relievers; yea, I think it evident, that they are larger in this respect than Relievers themselves; for to do the Relievers justice, (and, we ought not to wrong the Devil himself, nor any of his servants,) they only plead for holding communion with visible saints; whereas Lice have no scruple of conscience to hold communion promiscuously with all men, whether they be visible saints, or visible sinners. Yea, I can inform my readers, that, as far as I know, there is not a single person in the whole Associate body, who holds not only occasional, but constant communion with Lice. And here I cannot but blame the people of the Association for visible and glaring partiality, in refusing to hold communion with Relievers, on account of the laxness of their terms of communion, when it is fact that they hold communion with Lice, which are more erroneous in that respect than they. I give it, therefore, as my advice, that, at the first meeting of the Associate Synods, all the Lice in the Associate interest be brought to the bar, and by the unanimous appointment of all the members, be cast out of their society, and laid under the higher sentence of excommunication. I entertain no doubt, but this will be done by the Antiburgher Synod, as they formerly laid their Burgher brethren under the same sentence, for a much smaller crime than these little blood-thirsty animals are daily guilty of.

4thly, The Relievers may be called Lice on account of their Pride, especially that of their ministers. Lice are very proud ambitious animals; they are not satisfied with low places, but aspire to the most eminent stations of the human body, and fix their residence in the head. In like manner the Relief ministers are a set of proud self-conceited animals. As an evidence of their intolerable pride, they refuse to yield to the force of truth, nor will they give up their erroneous tenets, which the witnessing

ing remnant boldly and stoutly assert to be wrong, except, forsooth, it be shown from Scripture, that their principles are heretical, which, to my great sorrow, the whole genuine friends of the Association find it to be an impracticable task. But tho' the Associate body cannot prove the principles of the Relievers to be erroneous from Scripture, they can prove them clearly to be so from the Judicial Act and Testimony, in which all Latitudinarian and Sectarian tenets are condemned in the lump. And it is known to be an established and received principle among those of our way, that Scripture is not to be believed upon its own authority, but as it is expressed in the Confession of Faith, confirmed by our Solem Covenants, and more fully declared and explained in our Judicial Testimony. How intolerably proud therefore must these men be, who will not submit their judgement implicitly to the authority of the church, and her standards, as the primary foundation of faith; but have the presumption to call the Bible their testimony, and maintain, with that ignorant and erroneous divine Dr OWEN, that the divine authority revealed in the word is the formal reason of faith, and that we are only bound to believe any doctrine to be divine, because it is revealed in scripture as the object of faith. But the pride which reigns in the hearts of these Relief ministers, appears on the very surface of their bodies like Lice, which delight to appear on the outward man, in the heat of summer. They will not enter the pulpit, or be seen on the street, but they must have their heads powdered like macaronies. They all to a man preach with bands, like intruders and legal haranguers on the Establishment. Yea, they are clothed with pride, as with a garment down to the foot; for they preach with long, loose, flowing robes, which they call gowns, that are nothing but rags of Rome, and show that those who wear them are but too friendly to the Romish superstition. And I am apt to think, from this circumstance, that these very men had an active hand in first suggesting the idea of the Popish Bill to the British Parliament: such friends are they to liberty. Whereas such avowed enemies are the Associate brethren to the genius and spirit of Popery, that (to their praise be it spoken, and their modesty not offended.) they wish to see all Papists hanged, drawn, and quartered, and every sectary exterminated out of Great Britain, but the Association only, which is the only true church, and therefore only to be tolerated: Come see their zeal for the Associate cause!

1 5th. and Lastly, The Relievers may be called Lice, because, as, when the body is not kept clean in its clothing, these vermin

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increase prodigiously; so, when the church is defiled by laxness and impurity, as is mournfully the case in this day of backsliding when swarms of these Relievers pour in from every quarter, as the flood of water did once upon the earth, with this difference that a great part of the water which deluged the world, came down from above; whereas I can with certainty inform my readers, that not one of these Relievers came down from above, whatever other way they found of creeping into the world. To me it is most probable, that they came out of the abyss, like the central waters in the flood, as Satan is represented by our celebrated Milton, to have ascended from the burning lake, and pursued his journey through the darksome regions of chaos till he arrived at this new created earth, where he was soon but too successful in seducing mankind from the truth, as the Relievers now are after his example.

For the further illustration of this part of my subject, I observe, that when the church was kept clean and pure from all malignants, incendiaries, and enemies to reformation; when persons were not only debarred the privilege of church members, but could not even be admitted into the army or navy to fight for their king and country, without swearing the Covenants, as was the case in that ever-memorable second period of reformation, beeween 1638, and 1650, I can assure my readers that in this period, not a Latitudinarian, or Reliever, (for I look upon these as synonimous terms,) durst set out his head. O what an excellent and glorious foundation is this second period of reformation to sit down and build upon, as we have done in the Secession! This is the only rock on which the church ever was, or ever will be built, a foundation which is supported by the strong and immoveable bulwarks and pillars of sundry acts of Parliament. And how much are these poor Relievers to be pitied, who are so abject and mean-spirited, as to satisfy themselves with sitting down upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; a set of men, who, in their life-time, for the singularity of their doctrine and deportment, had many severe acts passed against them, but never obtained a single act of Parliament in their favour.

On the other hand I observe, that, when the church begins to be corrupted and defiled, when laxness in worship, discipline and government, pours in like a deluge, and solemn covenant-engagements are forgotten, neglected and despised, as is mournfully the case in this generation, these vermin of Relievers spring up like mushrooms in every corner of the land. And it appears to me, in whatever light it may be viewed by others, that these

ce have been ſent among us as a judgement, to puniſh us for ur ſhameful violation of ſolemn covenant-obligations. In roof of this I muſt obſerve, that the plague of lice, mentioned i my text, was inflicted upon Egypt becauſe Pharaoh had promiſed to let Iſrael go, and afterwards broke his promiſe. And I cannot but think, that this plague of Relief lice, with which the country is now infeſted, is the conſequence of violating our national engagements. Ah! how ſad a thing is it to break congregational covenants, as well as national! When the Rev. Mr Robert Campbell was about to be ſettled in Stirling, there was a covenant made between thoſe who were for his ſettlement, and thoſe who oppoſed it, that he ſhould not be ordained till another was ordained or admitted along with him. This covenant was broken in a moſt diſhonourable manner by Mr Campbell's friends, and he was ordained alone.—Behold the conſequence! in a few years after this breach of covenant, a very numerous, peſtilential, and malignant ſwarm of Relief lice ſprang up at St. NINIAN'S, who have cruelly bit Mr Campbell and his people, as the lice in my text did the Egyptians. And I am fully convinced, that this cruel and tormenting ſwarm has been ſent upon them as a righteous viſitation for their breach of covenant with the Proteſters. And I am ſadly apprehenſive, that they will never be freed from theſe vermin till they repent of this ſin, and perhaps the rod may remain for a conſiderable time after they have returned to their duty.

And as they have not been brought to repentance by the ſore viſitation of St Ninian's lice, they are juſtly ſmitten with new plagues. The Rev. Mr John M'Millan has invaded their borders, at the head of a new ſwarm of Cameronian-lice. There is alſo a new ſwarm of lice at Blairlogie, which may be juſtly viewed as a ſevere viſitation for this breach of covenant with the Proteſters. Theſe lice at Blairlogie would now be called Relief-lice, but, while they remained under Mr. Pirie's miniſtry, they might be called anonymous lice, or partly Preſbyterian and partly Independent lice. And Pirie himſelf

and profession of the true religion by the unscriptural, irrational, Popish, and antisolemn-league methods of argument and persuasion. And with what justice Mr Pirie may be called the nipping louse, I appeal to his witness against the Associate brethren. And how can I but be filled with indignation against these Blairlogie lice, for their enmity at the Association all along? for at the very commencement of it, they brake down with outrage and violence the Rev. Mr Ebenezer Erskine's tent, when it was erected on Arthry-hill, with a laudable intention to propagate the Associate cause: so that, though, like the Stirling Associates, they cannot be charged with the guilt of covenant-breaking, yet they are justly loaded with the guilt of tent-breaking. And for this foul misdeed they have been punished with hearing Latitudinarian Whitefield, Mr Duchal's death, Mr Wright's intrusion, Mr Warden's death, and Mr Pirie's transportation: so dangerous a thing is it to break tents, as well as covenants!

Thus I have shown to my own satisfaction, and I hope to the satisfaction of my readers, with what propriety the Relievers may be called Lice.

And now I have brought to a period the two first heads of my discourse, and though I am not endowed with the gift of prophecy, I can easily predict, that the Associate brethren will have their modesty offended, with the just commendation which I have given them; and the Relievers will be greatly irritated because they have been so justly confuted by my pen.

I now proceed to offer a word of improvement. And as I doubt not but my readers, and especially the persons of whom I have taken particular notice in this discourse, will allow, that I have been pretty practical in the doctrinal part, which I reckon a great excellence in preaching. I shall study the greater brevity in the application. And,

1st, This doctrine may be improved in an use of information. It may inform us that creatures very little, insignificant and contemptible in themselves, may be the instruments of punishing numerous and respectable bodies of men for their offences. Lice were sent into all the coasts of the Egyptians, to punish a numerous, wise, and learned people, for their misdemeanours. In like manner we see in our own times how these vile, contemptible reptiles, the Relievers, who do not so much as deserve the name of creatures, (were it not that they might be exposed,) are sent into this nation to be a scourge and plague to such a numerous, charitable, and respectable body of men, as have joined in the Associate interest.

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2d, This subject may be improven in an use of lamentation, that these vermin of Relief lice are so very numerous, and like to be more so in this nation, especially as they are so very Latitudinarian and loose in their terms of communion, as to admit men to join in the sacrament, merely because they are believers, who ought not to be admitted to it, because they will not declare themselves Seceders. For I rejoice at the relation of it, that so strict and zealous are our Associate brethren, that when they give the sacrament, they never mean to cover a table for the friends of religion, but for the friends of the Association. And how lamentable is it, that these Relievers should be so much under the spirit of error and delusion, as to maintain, and that in the most open and barefaced manner, that there should be no terms of communion in the Christian church but what are of divine appointment, and what were observed in the days of the Apostles. I wish I may never live to see the day, when the Association shall become so lax and degenerate, as to satisfy themselves with the Apostles' terms of communion, viz. a competent measure of knowledge, and a Christian deportment. What? will it ever be admitted by any genuine Associate, that the Latitudinarian terms of communion, observed in the infant state of the church, by Paul of Tarsus, a deformed creature, and a tent-maker, and by the other Apostles, who were but fishers, tax-gatherers, and illiterate men, and who were accounted the very off-scourings of the earth, should be still observed as terms of communion, in a more enlightened, pure, and perfect state of the church? How could the Apostles know how to fix the terms of the Christian fellowship, who never heard of the books of discipline, our solemn covenants, and our Judicial Testimony? Or are their terms once to be compared with the terms of communion established both by church and state in the ever-memorable second reformation period, which is the foundation on which we of the Association are so happily set down? At that auspicious æra, which was the zenith of reformation in Britain, no person could be a member of church or state, or even a soldier in the army, or sailor in the navy, without swearing the Solemn League. By that reforming church the Apostles and all the primitive Christians would have been rejected, and held in contempt, as Latitudinarians in their principles and terms of communion; as the Relievers justly are by the Secession at present, for observing the same terms of communion with the Apostles and primitive Christians, and for erroneously maintaining that the Apostolic age was the purest period of the church.

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Before I quit this use of lamentation, I must observe, that it is ground of mourning, that any should so grossly misrepresent our worthy ministers in the Association as to say, that when they invite men to the sacramental table, they invite believers in general, like the Latitudinarian Relief ministers; for I can assure my readers, that whatever general expressions they may sometimes use on these occasions, they only mean to admit to the Associate table Associate believers. The Associate elements are only consecrated for Associate believers, not for Christians as such, but for Associate Christians; for if Christianity itself were to entitle to communion in the Associate way, our communion would be corrupted by an inundation of Kirk Christians, and Relief Christians, &c.; but when, besides Christianity itself, a firm adherence to the Associate interest is made a term of admission to the Associate table, this effectually shuts the door against those who have nothing but bare Christianity to recommend them to communion, and keeps them without the pale of our church.

3d, This doctrine may be improven in an Use of Reproof. It may reprove those who are rather too lax in our own way, in sometimes hearing the Latitudinarian Relief ministers and others. Ah! Sirs, ye who use this lawless liberty, do not reflect that none have a right to preach the gospel but the Associate brethren. The Relief ministers have no more right to preach the gospel, or dispense any religious ordinance than the false prophets of old, who ran unsent, or vile intruders in our own day. Alas! brethren, ye do not consider, that, by promiscuous hearing, ye act inconsistently with your own principles and profession as a witnessing remnant in a backsliding generation, and how much ye grieve and vex the spirits of your own Associate ministers, sessions, and congregations. And what is a more mournful and affecting consideration than all the rest, ye are, by this occasional hearing, in eminent danger of wandering from the fold of the Association altogether, never more to return. Such therefore are reproved.

4th, This doctrine may be improven in an Use of Self-Examination, whether you are the real friends of the Association or not. Do you implicitly and cordially believe the Judicial Act and Testimony, and resolve to adhere to it to the end of your days? Do you detest from your very hearts the Relievers and their Latitudinarian tenets, and resolve never to hear a single man of that fraternity? Are you resolved for the future to adhere only to the ministry of those who are engaged in a witnessing way? Are you satisfied in your own consciences that

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Whitefield was "an impostor," and that the work at Cambuslang was a "delusion of the devil?" Is it your sincere desire to see those persecuted and suppressed who are enemies to our solemn covenants? Would you wish to see these covenants forced upon all ranks of men in Great Britain by civil pains and penalties, however contrary to their inclinations, and whether they understand the things contained in them or not? Would you have these covenants made a term of communion, both in church and state, as they were in the famous second reformation period, (which is the only rock on which our Secession church is built) though they were entirely unknown in the days of the venerable Apostles, who, though very strict and zealous in other things, were a little lax, like the Relievers, in their terms of communion, and never attained the knowledge of the terms of communion now established in our Associate church; a church far more pure, and farther advanced in reformation-work, than any of the Apostolic churches? Are you firmly resolved not to believe divine truths themselves, upon divine authority revealing them to be believed, but as they are authorized in the reformation system, and revealed in the Judicial Testimony as the object of the Associate faith? Can you, out of zeal for truth as it is at present wholly in the hands of the Associate interest, deliberately and knowingly assert the most notorious lies and falsehoods, with a truly Christian design to blacken the characters of these vile Latitudinarian Relief ministers, and to destroy their usefulness? If, in the integrity of your hearts, you can answer all these queries in the affirmative, then I pronounce you the genuine friends of the Association.

5th, This doctrine may be improven in an use of consolation to all who are heartily embarked in the Associate cause. Amidst many causes of grief which we at present labour under in a witnessing way, it is ground of comfort that the whole cause of truth is among our hands, and no other party can justly lay claim to any portion of truth, as the whole of truth belongs to us. And how safe are we in being engaged on the side of truth; for great is the truth, and it shall prevail? And must it not afford the most pleasing and heart-felt satisfaction to our whole witnessing remnant, to think that the cause of these Relievers is the cause of error, and totally destitute of the truth? They will therefore, in a little time, dwindle into nothing, as snow melts before the sun. Like Babylon, they shall fall, and shall arise no more at all. Let us, in the Association, endeavour by every mean to extirpate this vile, infamous, heretical, Latitudinarian, malignant, pestilential, wicked, and diabolical

generation of Relievers, with which the country, and especially our Associate witnessing remnant is so miserably pestered. Let us rejoice and be comforted, in the desireable prospect of their utter extinction, annihilation, demolition, and destruction: Oh! when shall it once be? then the Associate interest will rise to glory, splendor and renown, when once the earth is rid of these enemies to truth and goodness. And I am certain that every genuine Associate wish, when they are dead, "that firm may the turf lie on their unhallowed heads," and pray "that they never may obtain a resurrection day."

6th, This doctrine may be improven in an use of exhortation to these poor, misled, simple, and deluded creatures, who have put themselves under the inspection of the Relief ministers. Ah! Sirs, consider on what dangerous ground ye stand. How can ye be instructed in the truth by these men, who are enemies to the truth, and whom the truth has utterly forsaken; who have no testimony but the Bible, and have the daring presumption and impiety to maintain, that the Bible is a better book than the Judicial Testimony. Be exhorted therefore, without delay, to withdraw yourselves from the ministry of these wicked men, and come into the Associate church, where you will find the very quintessence of truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; and if you will not obey this exhortation, your blood will be upon your own heads: and I take the Judicial Testimony, and the whole Associate interest to witness against you, that I have exhonoured my conscience, and pointed out your duty. And if, after all I have said, you still continue to adhere to your Latitudinarian Relief scheme, as I am afraid many of you will, this will be a sad proof of your woful blindness, obstinacy, hardness of heart, and unbelief in the Associate way; and I desire such Latitudinarians to consider that Latitudinarianism is the way that leadeth to destruction.

I shall now conclude this word of improvement with a few things by way of advice or direction to all the genuine friends of the Association. And,

1. My dear brethren of the Secession, beware of following a multitude to do evil. Many are now following the Relief ministers, as the world wondered after the beast, but be not ye partakers with them: ye may all be convinced, that the Relief ministers are wroug from this very circumstance, that their followers are so greatly increased. But if ever the time come that our Associate scheme shall be enforced by civil pains and penalties, I will venture to predict, that there will be more Associates and fewer Relievers: Such a time of trial will show that many rot-

rotten-hearted professors now adhere to the Relief; and it will also discover the internal strength and energy of our scheme, when it will overpower the very consciences and understandings of men, and bring them into subjection to it.

2. Never think, dear fellow Associates, that ye can understand the scriptures for yourselves, but submit implicitely to the explanation given of them by the Associate ministers. They have the alone power of ascertaining and determining the genuine sense of Scripture, and therefore though the letter of scripture may lead you wrong, yet the sense which the Associate clergy put upon it, is always right, and on this account their commentaries on scripture are a much surer guide into all truth, than the letter of scripture. And if you do not implicitly believe their sense of scripture to be the true one, then their usefulness and your own edification will be marred, and you will fall from your stedfastness in the Associate cause, and be in danger of being tossed about with every wind of doctrine, and then the consequence will, in all probability, be final and irrecoverable apostacy from the Association altogether.

3. Dearly beloved, if a difference should at any time take place between the Associate ministers, and other ministers, about any point of revealed religion, without ever allowing yourselves to enquire into the merits of the cause, take care to believe and assert that your own ministers are in the right, and that the other ministers are in the wrong; and be industrious to maintain this in every company, and in this way you will testify your respect to your own ministers, and the cause in which you are embarked, whoever have right and truth on their side.

4. If at any time you enter the list with a Reliever upon points of principle, be sure if you cannot defend your principles from scripture, to have recourse to the Act and Testimony, or the second reformation period. And if you are unable in any way to defend your principles, take care obstinately to adhere to them; for it must be acknowledged that our system of principles (unless in very able hands) is better maintained by believing than reasoning, and boldly tell your antagonists, that you are so much persuaded of the truth of your principles, that you could shed your blood in the defence of them; and this is more than every Reliever would venture to do for his principles.

5th. and Lastly, Consider yourselves on account of your being witnesses for truth, that ye are holier than other men, and pure members of the church. Keep therefore at the greatest distance from them, and embrace every occasion to expose the vices

vices and imperfections of other denominations; but carefully conceal the weakness and infirmities of the Associate body; for the best of men have their failings: but let it never be forgotten that the faults of a brother are not to be treated in the same manner as those of an enemy, who is without the pale of our Associate church.

I have now, I hope, in the foregoing discourse, composed the difference of this factious and disputatious age; in which, as the poet expresses it,

> "Faith, gospel, all things seem to be disputed;
> "And none have sense enough to be confuted."

I have brought within the compass of this sermon all the arguments that ever have been, or ever will be advanced against the Relief, and for the Association. And from the date of this publication will commence the ruin of the Relief empire; and the full establishment and glory of the Associate interest.

O! O! O! Now to conclude; I flatter myself that I have far more effectually, in this sermon of mine, destroyed the Relievers, than my dear brethren the Rev. Mr. Bennet of Ceres, and Mr Ramsay of Glasgow, in their pamphlets. And I am of opinion, that this sermon, if it come into the hands of the Burgher Synod, will be adopted by them, and published to the world for their New Act and Testimony.

THE END.