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VOL. I.

ON THE UNLIMITED CALL OF THE GOSPEL,
AND ITS CONSISTENCY WITH THE DOC-
TRINE OF PARTICULAR REDEMPTION.

THERE is no truth more cheering to a sinner who is properly affected with the greatness of his guilt, and with the loud demands which justice makes for satisfaction, than the unlimited offer which is made of salvation to all who hear the gospel. Accordingly, it is stated in the Scriptures with the greatest clearness, that sinners may derive from it all the comfort which it is calculated to convey. It was illustrated by the type of the brazen serpent, which was erected in the wilderness for the benefit of the Israelites, who, on account of their murmuring against God, had been bitten by fiery serpents. As every Israelite, whom God had punished in this manner, was warranted to look up to the serpent with the full confidence of being miraculously cured; in like manner, every sinner of Adam's family has a divine warrant to trust in Christ, and a divine assurance that, by trusting in him, they will be cured of the moral malady of sin under which they are labouring—will be delivered from its guilt, its dominion, its pollution; and saved with an everlasting salvation. John iii. 14, 15.

When a multitude of angels came to the plains of Bethlehem singing in celestial harmony the praises of

God, and rejoicing in the high exercise of heaven's mercy toward man, they brought this truth along with them. The encouraging message, which one of them was commissioned to deliver to the shepherds, who there tended their flocks during the silence of the night, was, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, *which shall be to all people.* For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." The angel did not say, I bring good tidings of great joy to you, and some other select and favoured individuals. The terms, in which the message is expressed, plainly intimate, that every individual of our apostate race, who should hear the gladdening tidings, had a right to improve them for his particular benefit. When Christ entered upon the discharge of his public ministry, he often stated to his hearers the same important and comfortable truth, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost." His own labours were, for special reasons, chiefly confined to the Jews. But before he ascended to heaven, he gave the apostles a commission which completely demolished the partition wall that stood so long between Jews and Gentiles, and which, looking with an aspect equally favourable to every nation under heaven, afforded as high encouragement to every sinner to trust in the Saviour, as if salvation had been provided for none but himself; "Go ye therefore and teach all nations," or in the words of another evangelist, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." To this trust the apostles were faithful. Immediately after Christ's ascension they went and preached only to the Jews; supposing that their commission extended no farther than to every Jew throughout the world. But by a revelation from God their mistake was corrected, and the extent of their commission was explained to them—as embracing every Gentile on the earth, as well as every Jew. Upon understanding this, they "glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life;" and animated by a generous sympathy toward the whole race of man, they entered upon the wide field of benevolence which their com-

mission authorized them to labour in, redoubled their exertions, and besought all, whom they could address, without exception, to be reconciled to God. They offered salvation to the high and the low, to the rich and the poor, to the learned and the unlearned, to the freeman and the slave; and they offered this unspeakable gift as freely and as earnestly to those who rejected it, and finally perished, as to those who received it, and were ultimately saved. The ministers of Christ, in every age, have the same commission. The truth, the great truth, the comfortable truth emblazoned on their ministrations is, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." If then they fetter the gospel offer, by restricting it to those who are so and so qualified, they detract from the benevolent design of their commission, and are unfaithful to him who honoured them with it.

The doctrine of the unlimited call of the gospel has been abused in two ways. It has been brought forward as an argument against particular redemption, and particular redemption has been supposed to militate against it. There is a difficulty in reconciling these two doctrines with each other, and with the moral character of God; and this has led many into dangerous errors on the subject. These two doctrines, says the carnal mind, are contradictory, and therefore either the one or the other must be false, for God cannot be the author of contradiction. Accordingly, some under pretence of showing the consistency which there is between the redemption which Christ accomplished, and the unlimited offer of the gospel, have adopted the theory of universal redemption; while others, for a similar reason, have maintained that the offer of the gospel is confined to the elect, and not made to mankind-sinners *as such*. Thus, the desire of bringing down divine truth to the level of human reason, has led many into both these extremes of error; so dangerous is it to sit down to examine the system of theology with an intention to solve every problem, and to bring within the grasp of our limited understandings those difficult points, which may not be fully understood by the brightest cherub in heaven.

Both classes of objectors to which we have referred,

will put the question : If Christ died only for a determinate number of the human family, can God be *really sincere* in offering salvation to those for whom Christ did not die, and whom he never intends to save ? You may tell us, they will say, that the thief upon the cross, who had never seriously thought of eternal things till within a few hours of his entering into the eternal world, was graciously heard, and promised a speedy enjoyment of the delights of paradise, as soon as he presented to the Saviour that prayer of faith, " Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." You may tell us, that those who embued their hands in the blood of the Redeemer,—the blackest crime which is recorded in the history of human depravity, and which will probably be remembered in the world of woe with more horror than any other,—you may tell us, that these murderers, when roused to sensibility, and brought to exclaim, " men and brethren, what shall we do ?" were as sincerely welcomed to embrace the Saviour, as those who were less guilty. You may tell us, that Paul, who was " a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious, obtained mercy ;" that the jailor of Philippi, though a gross idolater, though a man of fierce and unfeeling disposition, and barbarous in his treatment of the ministers of Christ, when convinced of his guilt, and brought to believe in Christ, obtained an interest in the great salvation ; and that many of the Corinthians, who wallowed in all manner of pollution, who were " fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers and extortioners,"—that many such were " washed, were sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." In short, you may tell us, that the history of God's merciful dispensations towards man affords many instances of the salvation of the gospel being accepted by those who were foremost in the ranks of infidelity and profligacy, who equalled, if they did not surpass, those obdurate and abandoned characters, whose conversion the Scriptures record, and whose salvation the Saviour will regard as the proudest trophies of his victory over the powers of darkness. You may tell us of all this, without removing in the smallest degree the doubts which arise in our minds with regard to God's sincerity in

the unlimited offer of the gospel. We question not, that he sincerely offered salvation to those individuals who have been mentioned, because it was for them that Christ came to suffer and to die. But is he equally sincere, in offering this invaluable boon to those whom he passed by in the purpose of election, who are as inevitably doomed to perish in their sins as the angels who fell, and whose salvation Christ never undertook, and never accomplished? Nor is it merely the speculative opponents of the two doctrines which we are now considering, who reason in this manner. This is a difficulty which has perplexed the minds of many sinners, when awakened to a sense of their guilt; a distrust of God's sincerity in the offer of mercy has kept them at a distance from the Saviour, and almost plunged them into the gulf of despair. The same difficulty has, also, at times, embarrassed true believers, deprived them of that comfort which the gospel is fitted to impart, and darkened their days by the deepest dejection. It is from pity to such, and from a desire to remove the gloom and distraction which often arise in their minds from the contemplation of this subject, more than in answer to speculative and profane cavillers, that we now submit the following remarks to our readers, in vindication of this part of God's ways to man.

It is consolatory to find that the Scriptures furnish us with every proof of God's sincerity in offering salvation to sinners, which, reasonably, we could either desire or conceive. The truth of God is an attribute which partakes of the immutability of his nature. It rests on a broader and firmer base than the pillars of the earth. The earth has an indelible stamp of mutability upon it, and the day is coming when it "shall be burnt up." But the truth of Jehovah, amidst all the changes of created existence, will remain unimpeachable, and, after the lapse of unnumbered ages, will be without variableness, or the least shadow of turning. God has been always true to his threatenings. And he has been equally true to his promises. The generation of the righteous, in every age, have experienced, by the divine dispensations, of which they have been the subjects, that God holds his promises sacred and inviolable; and they all unite in bearing testimony

that he is a God who keepeth truth for ever. Could we ask every saint on earth—if they really believed that God is sincere in the unlimited offer which he makes of salvation to sinners in the gospel? they would tell us that they did. Whatever influence unbelief may have, in leading them to call in question the divine faithfulness, in an unguarded moment, or in the hour of strong temptation; yet, in their sober and reflecting periods, they are persuaded, that God made none of his promises insincerely, or for the purpose of mocking or trifling with his creatures; and, that if in any thing he is in earnest, it is when he offers salvation to the guilty: and the truth is, unless they were convinced of this they would never have embraced the Saviour. Could we ask every saint in heaven the very same question, they would return a similar answer, and assure us that, amidst the wide range of their experience, they never had detected in God the slightest approach to insincerity, and that, instead of coming short of his promises, he had gone far beyond them. Even unregenerate men, and some of them who have been pre-eminently wicked, often bear testimony to God's sincerity in the gospel offer. When the knell of conviction is sent into their consciences, as they lie on the bed of death, it not unfrequently happens, that they accuse themselves of having trifled away those invaluable opportunities which they once enjoyed; and although, from a deep sense of the greatness of their guilt, they are then ready to apprehend, that God will refuse to show mercy to them, yet they entertain not a doubt, that on the days that are past salvation was offered to them, that God was sincere in making the offer, and that instead of now finding fault with him, they have reason to deplore their obstinate unbelief and impenitence. Many have put the salvation of the gospel away from them, and have perished in their sins; but, does the destruction of such reflect any dishonour upon the truth of God, when they had never put his sincerity to the test? And could we ask the inhabitants of hell, to whom the gospel was once addressed, if they came short of salvation because God was insincere—they would unanimously tell us, provided they spoke the truth, that their perdition was to be traced to their pertinacious rejection of that sal-

vation, which had been generously presented for their acceptance. Although they may not, in words, confess the justice of their everlasting condemnation, but blaspheme the God who punishes them; although they may spurn at the doctrine of particular redemption, and wish that they could stigmatise it as the cause of their destruction; yet their consciences will tell them that, whatever they suffer they deserve, and that it is not the doctrine of particular redemption which has shut them out of heaven, and plunged them into the miseries of hell. For, it must be fresh in their remembrance, that they were earnestly entreated, by every possible motive, to be reconciled to God; while the only return which they made for the kindness of the Saviour was their breaking his laws, leaguering with his enemies, bidding defiance to his power, despising the offers of his mercy, and perhaps scouting his messengers who announced to them the glad tidings. Thus heaven and hell bear testimony to God's sincerity. The inhabitants of the former enjoy all the precious and unspeakable blessings promised in the Gospel of Christ, and can therefore attest from their own experience, that God will fulfil his largest promises. The inhabitants of the latter give an involuntary attestation to the same truth. Their consciences compel them to admit it; and the consideration, that salvation was sincerely offered to them, while it was as proudly and daringly rejected, will add to the strength of that worm which will gnaw for ever, and fuel to that fire which shall never be quenched.

But we have more convincing evidence of God's sincerity than the testimony of creatures, even the best. God has condescended freely to give us every proof of this, which we could demand from those of our fellow-men, of whose sincerity we are most suspicious. He has recorded the gracious promises of the gospel in almost every page of the Scriptures, he has reiterated them in the most forcible and encouraging language. And when sinners forsake their own mercy, and prosecute a wayward course, on the broad and beaten tract which conducts to destruction, he speaks to them in language so fervid and pathetic, that he appears, as it were, to be strongly agitated and pained, from the feelings of pity with which he views

that stupidity and misery into which they are heedlessly rushing. "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Why will ye die, O house of Israel!"

But God has done more than this to remove distrust from the desponding sinner, and to stop the mouths of gainsayers. Such are his condescension and grace, that he has solemnly given us his oath. "God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath." And he swears not by any of the creatures which he has made, but by his own self-existent nature. There is no truth more unquestionable than the existence of God. The skies above us, the globe in which we dwell, and all that we behold, preach this truth with a silent, but a powerful eloquence. Now God assures us by his oath, that as really as he exists, so really is he in earnest, when he offers salvation to sinners. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his evil ways and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: for why will ye die?" Ought not, then, the oath of God to put unbelief to shame, and extinguish its evil surmisings? We cannot suppose that God is devoid of regard for his own honour, which is dear to him as his existence? we cannot suppose that he, who hath declared himself the avenger of the false swearer, would himself set an example of the crime which he has so severely denounced; we cannot suppose him capable of sporting with the feelings and hopes of his creatures, by promising and swearing to do what he never intends to perform, or of delighting to see their expectations at one time elevated, and at another time depressed,—a species of conduct which would undefine him, and which can only be attributed to the cunning and wickedness of a demon;—and if we cannot suppose these things, are we not bound to exclude from our minds all suspicion of God's sincerity, which may be apt to arise in them, and to cherish the liveliest belief of the truth, that he is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," especially when he gives us his oath? "For,"

says the apostle, "men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife." If an oath then, given by a person of integrity, commonly sets at rest a litigated point among men; must it not be impious to harbour the slightest suspicion of God's veracity in the gracious declarations which he makes, when he has sanctioned them by his oath? The person "who believeth not God, hath made him a liar." He may not proceed the length of branding, in words, the God of truth with such an odious epithet, but virtually he does so, and thus becomes chargeable with placing God on a level with that hateful spirit whom our Lord terms "a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies." If the simple disbelief of God's *bare word*, then, be so criminal, to distrust him when he condescends to swear by his own sacred name, must be a sin of a much deeper dye. It is to accuse the God who cannot lie of perjury,—an accusation from which every mind, but that of an atheist, must shrink with indignation and horror.

But God has done still more to convince us of his sincerity in the offers of mercy, which he makes to sinners. In some cases, when men are suspicious of those with whom they deal, they demand a written bond or obligation, signed in the presence of witnesses, which may be of force in law. And a testament has, of all other written deeds, the greatest validity. What greater security can a person have, that he will inherit the property of a deceased friend, than a testament left by his friend in his favour, legally written out, and signed by him in the presence of witnesses? Now God has given us this very species of security, that whosoever believeth in Christ shall be saved. See Gal. iii. 15, 16, 17. The promises of the gospel are put into the form of a testament, subscribed by the hand of Christ the testator, and attested by the Father and the Holy Spirit. This testament is held forth in the preaching of the gospel, for the acceptance of the guiltiest of sinners. Now, as God pledged the honour of his character to see this testament faithfully executed, (Isaiah liii. 10, 11, 12,) and as he raised up Christ from the dead to be its trustee, there cannot be any thing in it of which he does not approve. And as it contains a gracious assurance, that all believers shall be

saved, he cannot be indifferent about that great and leading article of its provisions; on the contrary, by putting the promises of salvation into the form of a testament, we have the strongest evidence, that the same matchless and incomprehensible love, in which our redemption originated, still pervades all the merciful operations of God, and that the unreserved and unlimited invitations which he gives to sinners to embrace the Saviour, have the same impress of sincerity on them which the first proposals of the Father to the Son concerning the redemption of our species had. Thus, the sincerity of God in the gospel offer is proved by the testimony of saints, and awakened sinners on earth; by the jubilees of the redeemed in heaven, and the wailings of the condemned in hell; by the multiplied repetitions of the offers of mercy, and all the means which God employs in reclaiming the guilty; by the solemn oath of him who cannot lie; and by a written deed, signed and sealed.

Such a profusion of evidence will satisfy every candid mind; and with regard to those who are incredulous, after what has been said, it is highly probable, that every other argument brought forward against the infidelity of their hearts will prove as ineffectual as a battery which spends its force against an impregnable fortress. But to remove every excuse for unbelief, and to clear away the rubbish with which the doctrine of the unlimited offer of the gospel has been encumbered, we shall now state and answer a question, which, after all that has been said, will still proceed from the mouth of unbelief. The question is this, You have still to prove the consistency between the unlimited offer of the gospel, and particular redemption; shew us, that these two doctrines are not inconsistent with each other, and we will credit God's sincerity in the unlimited offer of the gospel. We shall answer this question in a future paper.

"MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD."

John xviii. 36.

OUR last article on this subject was intended to prove, That, without any contradiction to this or similar texts, the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world may directly contribute to each other's well-being, and that the latter, in particular, are bound formally to acknowledge the church,—give her their special countenance,—bring their public transactions to bear upon the promotion of her interests; and where it is found practicable, appropriate a portion of the property of the community to her support. It remains that we make a few observations in answer to the objections brought against this position, and with these we shall close this part of the subject. It cannot be expected that we can, in the short space of such a communication as the present, advert to them all, or to any of them at length, but we shall briefly notice a few of the most common and specious.

1. It is asserted, That the church stands in no need of assistance from the state, and that to suppose so, is to throw a reflection on the all-sufficiency of her divine Head. That she can subsist without such assistance, we have already granted; but this by no means proves, that it can be of no service to her; and as we have already, we trust, shewn the contrary, we might leave this objection without any farther remarks. As our opponents, however, lay great stress on facts, as confirmatory of their assertion, it may not be improper to advert to some of them.

The two leading facts that are represented as evidential of the utter inutility of a national establishment of religion, are the rapid progress of Christianity in the first three centuries, and the alleged prosperity of the churches in the United States of America at the present day. In reference to the first, it is sufficient to remark, that the success of the gospel, in the early ages of Christianity, without the assistance, or rather in the face of public authority, was wholly supernatural, and one of those miraculous circumstances, by which its divine origin was attested. God could no doubt have placed his church then under the wing of

a national establishment, but he could not have done so without the miraculous conversion of a nation at once; and this would have been only to work one miracle, in order to counteract the influence of others, as it was obviously his intention to display his hand in supporting his church in the face of all opposition, till, as the stone cut out of the mountain *without hands*, smote the image and broke it, that kingdom, at first apparently so feeble, subdued the kingdoms of the earth, and brought them as its vassals to own and serve it. To reason from what then occurred, to what must be the ordinary method of Divine procedure, would be as absurd as to argue from the same premises, for the necessary continuance of miraculous gifts, or the inutility of human learning to serve the interests of religion; or to assert, that because Israel were so miraculously multiplied in Egypt, therefore the church always thrives best in the furnace of persecution.

As to America, it will be time enough to reason from her institutions when these are a century old. The daughter of Britain, with habits formed under the fostering influence of the institutions of the mother country, ages must elapse before the tendency of that boasted peculiarity in her constitution, the equality of all forms of religion in the eye of the law, and the withholding of all public countenance from them, be fully developed. In the mean time we shrewdly suspect, that the influence of this principle on public morality is not found to be so happy on the other side of the Atlantic, as is supposed by its admirers here. Not a few very competent and unprejudiced witnesses among themselves frankly declare, that in those states of the Union where a modified establishment exists, the means of religious instruction are much more abundant, and the tone of morality decidedly higher than in the rest.

The following extract, which is probably new to most of our readers, shews, that the consequences of the system have not been contemplated in the most favourable light by those who have witnessed their actual operation.

The Rev. Mr. M. of Philadelphia, writing to the Rev. Prof. B., October 25, 1800, has these words:—"I dread that our government in America will not be permanent,

as it no way recognises the Christian religion, and requires no profession of it in our civil rulers. Surely where the majority of a people are professed Christians, they ought to make a profession of it a term of admission to places of power and trust, which are no man's natural right but the gift of the people. There is every reason to believe that Mr. J., an avowed deist, will be our next president, and all those of this description will be appointed to offices under him." Recent events also in that country, such as the attempts lately made to obtain the national recognition of the Christian Sabbath, and the legal enforcement of its more strict outward observance, and the vote of congress, (though it failed of its object,) for the public appointment of a day of national humiliation, seem to prove that the public recognition of no form of religion, not even Christianity in general, by the united constitution, is felt by not a few to be no credit to the nation. Nor would it greatly surprise us to see the principle of a Christian establishment, though perhaps carried to a limited extent, adopted in that country, after it has unhappily been abandoned by the nations of Europe.

The idea that public countenance to religion interferes with the superintendence of her Head, scarcely requires a remark. It will be a valid objection when he shall cease, in the execution of his purposes, to make use of the instrumentality of man. In the mean time, as one of his prerogatives is to be made "Head over all things for the church's sake," as he has often made "the earth" to help her, employed the "sons of the stranger to build her walls," and enriched her treasury with "the gifts of kings and kingdoms," we are warranted to believe, that he will continue to make use of similar instrumentality to the end of time, without any sacrifice of his high prerogative.

2. It is objected, that connection with the state tends to secularize the church, and has been productive only of injury to her. That the interference of the state *in the internal concerns* of the church, and dictating to her in matters which belong to the church's own jurisdiction, has often proved most injurious to her, we freely grant, and deeply lament; but that all the interest which public authority has manifested *about* the church, has been uniformly hurtful, we must

meet with an express denial. To calculate the comparative amount of good or evil that has resulted to her from such a connection, would indeed be no easy task; but nothing can be more inconsistent with fact, than to affirm, that the balance is wholly on the side of evil, or even that it preponderates to that side in the degree that many imagine. Let any person read with candour, for example, the history of the Reformation—let him observe how in Italy, Spain, and other places, where it wanted the countenance of men in power, it was soon suppressed; while in Germany, Switzerland, Britain, and most other places, its preservation was, under God, greatly owing to the powerful protection which was thrown around it, and he must, we think, be convinced that the interposition of public authority, though sometimes it tended to check and hamper it, was in many respects the reverse of pernicious. In our own country, no doubt, the reformed religion had to fight its way to public recognition, against the prejudices and opposition of one party, which frequently comprehended the highest persons in the state; but how much was it aided in this battle, by the political weight which its friends had in the community? Their influence, through divine assistance, not only proved sufficient for its protection at first, but also procured its ascendancy at length; and he must be blind, we think, who does not see, that the charter which was then obtained for it, and which stands embodied in the public law of the community to this hour, has been one of the principal means of its defence and repeated re-establishment since that time.

The idea that the church always prospered till Constantine took her by the hand, is one of those unfounded sentiments, that having once obtained a footing, is embraced and perpetuated without inquiry. The seeds of corruption were sown, and far advanced in their growth, long before the church obtained the countenance of the Roman empire, and that event chiefly contributed to their development, as the sunshine, while it ripens the grain, brings forward with greater rapidity the weeds with which it is choked. Had it not been for their existence, that countenance (though we by no means vindicate all the extent to which it

was injudiciously carried) could have been regarded only as an inestimable blessing, conferring upon her tranquillity and ease, after a long period of cruel suffering, and the remark would have applied then as formerly, "Then had the churches *rest*, and walking in the fear of God, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied." As it was, it is expressly recognised by God, (Rev. vi. 12, &c.) as one of the most glorious triumphs gained by the great Head of the church over his open and malicious foes.

A *secular* spirit, as it is called, or in other words, a spirit of conformity to the world, is engendered in the church, not so much by national countenance given to her, as by the pernicious influence of great worldly prosperity in any shape; and that effect has been as visible, according to the degree in which they have enjoyed it, in churches called *voluntary*, as in those that have been countenanced and endowed by the state.

That *civil* power has often been abused to the detriment of the interests of religion, we have no inclination to question; but so has *ecclesiastical* authority, and to a much greater extent. Who has not felt, in reading Moseheim, for instance, that the history of the church seemed to be nothing but a record of errors, ecclesiastical usurpations and abuses? But would any man be justified from this, to argue for the abolition of all ecclesiastical offices and authority? We will venture to affirm, that had the Church of Scotland been true to herself, all the encroachments made on her by the state, for more than a century back, would have done her comparatively little injury. In short, we are surprised that our opponents cannot see that this argument, from abuse, is as conclusive against the use which the Jewish kings made of their authority in behalf of religion, as it is against the use of it, for which the enlightened advocates of civil establishments still plead. To insist on it, therefore, is to condemn what the immutably holy Jehovah explicitly commanded and approved, an extreme surely to which our adversaries are not prepared to go.

That the ministers of an endowed church may so far forget the dignity of their station, as to fawn upon men in power, is alas too true, although certainly the early history of our national church furnishes many

honourable instances of the contrary. But are the ministers of voluntary churches, as the phrase is, never tempted to flatter the humours of *the people*? The evil consists in allowing the mind to be influenced by a feeling of *dependence* on any but their great Master; and *he* is as likely to do so whose support comes directly from pockets which may be closed at pleasure, as *he* whose maintenance is derived from public funds, and secured by public law. Perhaps it will be found, on candid inquiry, that the church has suffered no less from deference to popular prejudices than from the influence of power. At all events, the loss of the high sense of ministerial *independence* constitutes the evil, and it is then a small matter, as a celebrated writer observes, whether the man to whom the servants of Christ have learned to cringe wears a crown or a bonnet.

3. The establishment of any form of religion by public authority, is represented as leading to injustice and persecution. Every establishment, we are told, involves the application of compulsion or force to matters which concern the consciences of men. That it involves the application of authority to such objects, and that that authority (to distinguish it from ecclesiastical, which is chiefly persuasive) is denominated from one of its leading features, compulsory, is no doubt true; but nothing can be more inaccurate, than to suppose that therefore it must always accomplish its object by pains and penalties. Many of its important ends are gained indirectly, as by the supporting of institutions which tend to accomplish them; not by directly forcing them, an attempt which must necessarily defeat itself. Where this rule has been improperly departed from, and actual compulsion has been directly applied to matters which do not admit of it, we do not pretend to vindicate it.

But our opponents descend lower, and find persecution and injustice to the other forms of religion in the exclusive countenance given to one. To this we might answer, then was God guilty of injustice, who not only required the national countenance of Israel to be given exclusively to his church, but proscribed any rival worship on their sacred soil. And though we may be told, that *He* might have done what other

legislators are not warranted to imitate; still the question recurs, shall not the Judge of all the earth do *right*?

We may, however, go farther, and ask, where is the injustice of giving exclusive national countenance to a church, more than to any benevolent association that may merit it? No doubt, the community may not be of one mind as to the excellence of that religious association which is supported, but upon what public measure are they all agreed? In ordinary cases, wherever an establishment of religion has been regularly formed, we may safely conclude, that it has obtained the approbation of at least the great majority; and we can see no greater hardship in the minority submitting in this, more than in any other great national question, many of which as deeply involve the question of conscience, such as engaging in unjust and oppressive wars. Where that minority is large, a nation will no doubt find great difficulty in perfecting this establishment, and as we have already remarked, are justified in doing only what circumstances will admit of; and where they are acting obviously from conscientious motives, all due lenity is to be used towards the dissentients; but God has his rights as well as men, and it is doing them no injustice, when a Christian people refuse to allow deference to the scruples even of their own respected members to stand in the way of public duty to him.

We can have no sympathy with the sentiments of those whose consciences are so cruelly wounded by contributing, at the demand of public authority, to a church with which they are not in actual communion, at least while it has not manifestly become a synagogue of Satan. Neither Christ nor his apostles scrupled to pay tribute in their day, though the appropriation of the public revenue they could not unquestionably in all respects approve; and we confess it appears to us as the affectation of scrupulosity, when glaring persecution is seen in being required to contribute, though in an almost imperceptible degree, to a church of whose constitution and standards the scruplers profess to approve, and to whose bosom, were several defections from these remedied, they pretend to be anxious to return. This appears to be the more unreasonable,

when contrasted with their liberality in other respects. How few of those who have of late been raising such a clamour about the cruel hardship of their having to contribute to the support of the church of Scotland, would now hesitate to join personally with her in public religious worship, and contribute to her funds out of their own pockets in entering her church doors? And is not that conscience most curiously scrupulous, which can see a hardship imposed upon it in being necessitated to furnish a few additional pence to the same object through the circuitous channel of tields or taxes? For our part, though in a state of strict secession from that church, and seeking her reformation, we do still regard her, considered as a national institution, as one of the most efficient agents in maintaining and promoting the public welfare. While we have freely and honestly stated our disapprobation of particular instances in which she has submitted to the improper interference of the state in her internal concerns, we rejoice in all the support it gives her. Were we conscious of contributing to it, which, from the mode in which it is levied, we are not, we could do so as cheerfully as we bear any public burden whatever; and we will regard her overthrow as a greater national calamity, than if our army were completely discomfited, or our navy buried in the deep.

4. It is objected, that the granting of specific national countenance to any form of religion, supposes that the public authorities pass a public judgment on what is true and false religion. We answer, Well, and what of that? So they must on any question that comes before them, particularly on the merits of any association that claims their support, though not a few such questions involve the interests of morality, and consequently of religion, to a very considerable extent. But, say our opponents, civil legislators are quite incompetent to form a judgment as to the merits of an ecclesiastical society. That not a few of the members of our *present* legislature are so, we grant, but for that very reason we think they should never have occupied a place there; and, should our people, now when they have the modelling of their legislature so much more in their power, continue to send such to it, or worse, we shall consider them unworthy of the privileges

granted them. Persons to whose tuition no Christian would intrust his *child*, cannot be qualified to legislate for Christian *men*. But this has not always been the case, nor will it always be so; unless, as some think, the public affairs of worldly kingdoms are always to be in the hands of the *servants of the devil*—a poor prospect undoubtedly for the world, and happily not a scriptural one. But mere men of the world may possess sufficient discernment to see the excellence of religion, and the title which the church of Christ has to public favour. Where God, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, has employed such instrumentality to procure her that countenance to which, abstractly considered, she is entitled, we see no reason why she should refuse it, any more than divine ordinances themselves should be rejected, if duly administered, because those who administer them may possibly be unconverted men. Even many of our opponents allow that public functionaries are capable of judging on subjects connected with religion, when they appeal to them for the decision of questions relating to ecclesiastical property. And if they are capable of judging whether a church still adheres to her profession, and be entitled to retain property granted her upon that condition—often a very delicate question, and requiring no small degree of Scriptural knowledge—what hinders them from being capable of deciding whether that profession may not entitle her to public approbation?

That in a distracted state of the church it is difficult to form such a public judgment and act upon it, we have already allowed; but the difficulty is felt, though not to the same extent, by an individual. As it is no reason, however, why he should neglect to decide upon and adhere to the cause of truth, so neither does it exempt public bodies from doing what is in their power in the same way. Happily the decision was comparatively easy when the question as to national approbation was between popery and protestantism—between prelacy and presbytery; and as God has in many ways approved of the national influence thrown into the right scale, we would need to beware how we undo what was then done. In short, the invalidity of this objection will appear if we turn the tables, and suppose the state to be the divided party. If in this case the church shall equally countenance every faction, shall

put up public prayers alike for an usurper or a rightful sovereign, shall place all parties on a level as to her public acknowledgment, we may applaud her policy, but we can say little for her honesty. The application is easy.

5. It is objected, that public support to religion interferes with the observance of an ordinance of Christ, viz. That his servants be supported *solely* by the voluntary contributions of their hearers. Now, for our part, WE COULD NEVER DISCOVER SUCH AN ORDINANCE IN ALL THE NEW TESTAMENT. We know that it is said by the Apostle Paul, "that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel," and "that he that is taught in the word ought to communicate to him that teacheth in all good things," just as it is asserted by Paul's Master, that "the labourer is worthy of his hire." In such language we perceive the strongest assertion that the ministers of the gospel are entitled to receive adequate support, not merely of *bounty*, but as matter of *right*, from those that are benefited by their labours; but we never could see that these passages laid down any definite rule as to the *mode* in which it is to be contributed. We conceive the injunction is equally implemented whether that support be received, as our Lord and his apostles in their day received it, from individual bounty,—or by the joint contributions of a particular worshipping assembly, as is the case in most dissenting churches,—or from the general fund of a whole body of professors, as is the practice among the methodists—or, where a nation consider themselves as the benefited party, in whole or in part, from public funds. Certainly the reference to the support of the Levitical priesthood does not decide the question against the latter mode; far less, 1 Cor. xvi. 2, which is a mere prudential regulation in reference to contributions for the poor; and though very properly followed, in raising ecclesiastical funds for various purposes, yet as it was never supposed to forbid public support for the *poor*, it can far less prove national support to *ministers of the gospel* anti-christian.

Dissenters have never settled this question among themselves. Few of them restrict themselves to contributions *purely* voluntary. Seat-rents, which form a principal part of the revenue of most, constitute a real *debt*, the payment of which is not always made out of

pure good will. Where is the dissenting church that would refuse a mortification, to however large an amount, because it would interfere with the duty of Christian liberality? Is not Lady Hewley's bequest one principal source of the support of many dissenting churches in the north of England? And why should those bequests which have fallen to the lot of the national church be more quarrelled with? The present occupiers also of that property, from which the produce of that fund is now drawn, might with equal propriety, that is to say, with equal injustice, resist present payment on the ground of their change of creed, as the present payers of the revenue of our national church propose to withhold her dues for a similar reason. In short, seceders and dissenters in Ireland draw a great, if not the greater, part of their stipends out of the public purse in the shape of a *Royal Bounty*, hampered too with the degrading condition of being approved by the existing administration, and being obligated, if required, to take oaths which their fathers reasonably scrupled at. Nor do we hear from them one whisper of the blessedness so much valued by certain of their brethren on this side of the channel, of *subsisting wholly upon practical godliness in the hearts of their hearers,** and the inconsistency of drawing support from *the servants of the devil*.

But we are told that the making imperative in any shape the payment of church dues, even by those who do not scruple to give them, and belong to the parties benefited, constitutes the evil, as it prevents them from

* On reading the above expression in a late synod sermon, we were strongly reminded of the following specimen of spiritualizing. Some years ago a certain dissenting clergyman brought an action before the Court of Session against his congregation for his full stipend, and pled the promise in his call, that they would give him all *due submission, subsistence, and encouragement in the Lord*. One of the counsel for the defendants, who was somewhat of a *wag*, made the following comment upon it. "These words *in the Lord*," said he, "refer to all the three things specified, *subjection, subsistence, and encouragement*. Now *in the Lord*, plainly means *spiritual*. As the church of Christ is a spiritual society, her members promise *spiritual subjection, subsistence and encouragement*." "So you see, my Lord, all that these people have promised in this call is, *subsistence in the Lord, or spiritual subsistence*; as for 'the filthy lucre' of this world, it is plain, that from this document he cannot claim from them a single penny."

voluntarily doing a duty which is a part of their religion, and a great test of their Christianity. Now, for our part we have always considered a man's payment of his *debt* to the house of God, much in the same light as his payment of any other debt. His conscientious discharge of it is no doubt a test of his religion, and will be accepted by those who receive it as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice well-pleasing and acceptable to God;" but so is his honest payment of any of his other obligations. It may be a greater test of his religion or a less one, according to circumstances, for it is no uncommon thing for those who are ready with their *tithes* to neglect *justice* and *mercy* in *other* things; but whatever be the *degree* of evidence of a man's religion derived from it, as to *kind*, it is not materially different from any other compliance with the requisition of the eighth commandment; and why the superadding of the obligation of human law, to secure its regular payment, should be a hinderance to a man's conscientious discharge of his duty in this more than in any other case, we cannot see. Would those who broach the above sentiment propose to abolish all laws which enjoin the payment of ordinary debts, that Christian principle may be left free to operate in producing voluntary honesty between man and man? Then let them not talk as if, when a Christian nation interposes its authority, to see that the labourer in the gospel is not defrauded of his due, and pledge their public property for this purpose, they thereby lay a restraint on the conscientious paying of that due, by those on whom it may thus be made to fall more lightly than otherwise, or on their general liberality to the house of God.

6. It is insisted that the church's receiving support from the state is a species of spiritual fornication with the kings of the earth. This has been already so happily exposed, in two former numbers of the Magazine, that we do not consider it necessary to add one word more. We would only remind those who are most busy in making the assertion, that their brethren in the sister kingdom are, according to their view, living at present in the habitual indulgence of *spiritual uncleanness*. Have they applied to them the apostolic rule in reference to every brother who is called a fornicator?

We suppose it is on the same principle, that a late writer of considerable estimation, in one of his notes to the new edition of Knox's History of the Reformation, asserts that the reformers ought to have renounced every penny of the church property formerly devoted to the support of popery, because it was *an accursed thing*. How must the delicacy of such writers be shocked by such declarations as the following? "And it shall come to pass, after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord; it shall not be treasured nor laid up, for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing." Isaiah xxiii. 17, 18.

We intended to have considered one or two more objections, but our observations have already far exceeded what we at first proposed. We therefore close this part of the subject with a single remark. It has long been the honourable distinction of the friends of truth in this land, to contend for the *sole headship of Christ over the church*. Let them remember, this can never be consistently nor safely maintained at the expense of another and kindred principle, that he is "*made head over all things for the church's sake*." We would remind them, when kingdoms which have once been on friendly terms have been provoked, by mutual encroachment upon one another's jurisdictions, instead of ridding marches and renewing their leagues, on more precise terms, to break off all correspondence, their indifference has seldom failed to terminate in an open rupture and ruinous war. The kingdom of Christ, and our own beloved country, whose interests have so long been intertwined, have not been free of mutual injury. Nor has the fault been all on one side. While statesmen have unduly interfered in ecclesiastical affairs, and neglected the positive duties they owe to the church, churchmen have also gone beyond their sphere in political affairs, and failed in their duty to the state. If, instead of repairing the faults already committed, as circumstances loudly call upon them to do, and placing their future relations on a

more scriptural footing, these two kingdoms shall start back from one another, and break off all future correspondence, can we look for any thing to issue but a disastrous collision? If it please God that such shall be the case, we need scarcely say who will be the greatest sufferers. We have the solemn assurance of Zion's king, that though, for her merited correction, she may fall in such a contest, "she shall again arise;" but we have the same assurance, that "that nation and that kingdom that shall not serve her shall utterly perish."

To the Editor of the Presbyterian Magazine.

DEAR SIR,—I send you a proclamation for a fast on account of the cholera, by the governor of the state of Pennsylvania, which I have extracted from an American newspaper. It appeared to me that it may be interesting to some of your readers, as conveying to them information respecting the manner in which such things are managed on the other side of the Atlantic, and if you are of the same opinion, it is at your service. Of course, I am not to be considered as approving of the appointment of fasts by the state alone, in a country such as ours, where there is a constituted church. Nor do I enter into any discussion as to what method would be proper in America, where the constitution both in church and state differs so widely from what it is here. But there are several things which an intelligent person cannot fail to remark, upon reading this and similar proclamations in other states of the Union, and observing with what deep seriousness and cordiality the people generally answered these calls.

For example, the proclamation itself, although far from being what even the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in that country would have likely made it, particularly in omitting any reference to the gospel way of obtaining pardon, and any specification of prevailing sin, yet in regard of a grave religious tone in other respects, it seems to me, that compared with our cold, formal proclamations, it appears to great advantage. There are sentiments and expres-

sions in it, which, I am afraid, would have been scouted as cant and lumbug by those in our parliament, who ridiculed the acknowledgment of divine providence in the cholera.

It may be noticed also, that this measure was not gone into without an intimation of an earnest desire, on the part of the clergy and others, which goes a certain way to relieve the state from the imputation of assuming ecclesiastical power.

But what chiefly struck me, upon reading this proclamation, was the evidence it affords, that, republicans and liberals as they are, the Americans are not so squeamish as to repudiate all friendly intercourse or connexion between church and state, much as their example has been appealed to on this subject. The principle, a very plain one I think, is laid down, that the interests of a whole people should be cared for by their rulers. God is acknowledged as the God of nations, and as they may incur his displeasure, and thus be subjected to chastisements from his hand, what can be clearer than that their interests are connected with religion? How then can the representatives or rulers of a people be faithful to their interests, to even the temporal interests of those committed to their charge, if they pay no attention whatever to the subject of religion. The Americans, whatever it may be the fashion to say of them in this country, have too much practical good sense to go to this extreme. Indeed, the principle here admitted, if followed out to its legitimate consequences, would carry them much farther than many seem to be aware of. Yours,

AMICUS.

Kirkaldy, Oct. 23, 1832.

PROCLAMATION in the Name and by Authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, by GEORGE WOLF, Governour of said Commonwealth.

It having pleased the Sovereign Ruler of the universe, in the course of his just and wise providence, to visit our beloved country with a desolating pestilence denominated the spasmodic or Asiatic cholera, and believing that mercy is a distinguishing attribute of the Deity, that he exhibits his strange works of

judgment by the infliction of chastisements upon his creatures because of their transgressions, for the benign purpose of causing them to turn from the evil of their ways, and to fly unto him as to their sure refuge and rock of their salvation.

And although the propriety of recommending a fast by the civil authority of a state is doubted by some, and altogether denied by others, yet when a whole people are threatened with the visitation of the pestilence that walketh in darkness, bearing death and destruction in its train, it becomes the duty of all, whether occupying civil or religious stations, to arouse their fellow-citizens to a sense of their danger, and to exhort them, as one man, to devote themselves in humility and godly fear, on a day to be set apart for that purpose, to the service of the God of nations, and to unite in common supplication to him in whose hands our lives are, that he would graciously avert from us the threatened calamity, or mitigate its desolating severity.

Under these impressions, and in accordance with an intimation of an earnest desire on the part of a respectable number of the rev. clergy of different religious denominations, and other devout and well-disposed citizens of this commonwealth, that the executive of this state would recommend to the people of the same, the observance of a day to be set apart as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, I do, therefore, hereby earnestly recommend to all my fellow-citizens within this commonwealth, that, laying aside as far as practical all worldly avocations, they observe *Thursday the ninth day of August* next as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, imploring the God of heaven to remit unto us all our iniquities, transgressions, and sins; deprecating his merited displeasure; supplicating his mercy, that the hand of the destroying angel may be stayed; that we may be preserved as individuals and as a people from the desolating scourge, or that in the midst of deserved wrath he would be pleased to remember our frailty and his unbounded mercy; that he would, in tender compassion for his weak and erring creatures, mitigate the inflictions he may, in his wisdom, see fit to lay upon us, and prepare us to receive, with a becoming temper, his righteous award.

And it is farther recommended, that the good peo-

ple of this commonwealth accompany their supplication with the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to the Father of all mercies, that, in his infinite goodness, he has hitherto preserved us as spared monuments of his mercy; for having, in great loving kindness, extended unto us a long continuance of healthful seasons, and for his unremitting goodness in mingling with his judgments many rich blessings both of a spiritual and temporal nature.

Given under my hand and the great seal of the state, at Harrisburg, the 17th day of July, in the year of our Lord 1832, and of the commonwealth the 57th.

By the Governor,

JAMES TRIMBLE, *Dep. Sec.*

In another paragraph we have the following notice.

“*Fast-day.* The governor of New-Jersey has appointed next Thursday the 26th instant to be held as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, on account of the cholera.

A CHRISTIAN MOTHER TO HER CHILD, HOLDING THE BIBLE.

And dost thou truly in these little hands
The hope of thy eternal kingdom bear,
A hope to mingle with the heavenly bands,
And be redeemed from sin and thy despair?

Already dost thou throw upon the page
A fond, nor wholly inexpressive look,
As if, although an infant yet in age,
Thou half-foreknew'st the secret of the book.

How many Powers, whom God did all dethrone,
This hour with envy gaze on thee, and waste;
To them redemption is a voice unknown,
Thou with the sacred word of promise play'st.

How near thou art to ruin, and to heaven—
Hope in thy hands, destruction in thy heart—
Within thy bosom all the dangerous leaven,
And *on* thy bosom all the better part!

I press thee in my arms, nor can dissemble
 A greater than the mother's fear within;
 For while I joy to see thee—yet I tremble—
 I hail the beauty, but I fear the sin.

And yet, O yet, upon thy forehead gather
 The smiles which prove thee still redeemable;
 My heart will dare to hope of thee the rather,
 Because not born where beauty doth not dwell.

There is no beauty upon Satan's spirit,
 For, banished ever, he is quite defaced;
 And not a charm doth all his troop inherit,
 They cannot be redeemed, and are not graced.

But O! to Thee, who art not hopeless all,
 A remnant of th' unfallen look is left,
 And I will take the comfort—yea, I shall—
 Thou art not of God's likeness quite bereft!

And, yet again, do these small palms of thine
 A message from thy God to save thee bear?
 Rise up, thou young immortal, rise and shine,—
 Thine eye was never made to shed a tear!

Hush, boasting mother! Still will frailty out?
 Will still thy hope to exultation leap?
 This is the land, where joy alone we doubt—
 He *may* be saved, he cannot fail to weep.

If he attain the heavens, by tears he must,
 And sigh towards his high inheritance;
 If he achieve a kingdom not of dust—
 Is it without a groan, or with a glance?

If he has gained a kingdom, and has smiled;
 He lost a kingdom, and must shed his tear—
 And if an endless heav'n await the child,
 It is the earth alone which yet is here.

THETA.

REVIEW OF BOOKS.

The Lame Restored; being an Exposition of the Views of the projected Voluntary Church Association. By a Friend to the Kirk and a Foe to her Crutches. Pp. 30, Reid, Glasgow.

THERE is nothing in this publication intrinsically worth a moment's notice from any human being. The talent which it displays is but mediocre, the assumptions which it puts forth have been refuted, we know not how often, and its impertinence and conceit are beyond measure disgusting. But as the subject which it embraces is now fiercely agitated, and particularly attracting the attention of our religious associations, and as the misrepresentations with which it abounds are so laid as to meet the present leanings of our least intelligent, but keenest reformers of religious abuses, we conceive it a duty we owe to the Christian public to expose its nonsense, and to warn them against believing its assertions without examination.

In doing this, perhaps, we may subject ourselves, (not deservedly, we trust), to be "publicly denounced as hypocrites and vipers, and persons unworthy of credit," for it is difficult to know what some people mean by "ungentlemanly abuse and bad temper." In the vocabulary of many, (and a Friend to the Kirk, for any thing that we know, may be one of them.) a faithful statement of the truth comes under that denomination, particularly if it be followed up by an unsparing exposure of error and of the weak arguments by which it is supported, and by a manly Christian rebuke for their adoption. Be this as it may, we assure Mr. Anderson and his friends of the Voluntary Church Association, that while we have no intention to assail them with abuse for the sentiments which they have stood forward to advocate, we are not to be deterred by their silly bravados, from exposing their false assumptions and vindicating the truth.

Before proceeding to examine the misrepresentations of a "Friend to the Kirk," it may be worth while to notice the reason why, ere he put "Finis" to his lucubrations, he changed his original intention of appearing anonymously, and felt obliged to subscribe his name. It seems, on reviewing what he had written, and perceiving the "uncremonious" manner in which he had, at times, dealt out his "reprobations," he felt conscious that *he deserved* to meet with similar treatment; but as he does not seem to be fond of it any more than his friend of Kirkintulloch, he confesses himself to be W. Anderson of Laurieston, and bravely exclaims,—Attack me who dare!

But this is not all. Keenly as he has undertaken the defence of the Voluntary Church Association, he has not yet enrolled

himself a member of it, for the following reason. "His name is, *at present*, widely affected with discredit because of his 'looking,' and teaching others to 'look,' for the *speedy* fulfilment of that 'blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God our Saviour.'" That is, for we cannot stay to copy all his uncouth and wordy phraseology, Mr. A. is a believer, with the heretical Irving, in the doctrine of Christ's speedy personal reign on earth; and as he is aware that such a belief is viewed by many as an evidence of rather weak, if not deficient, intellect, he generously wishes the Association not to run the risk of being regarded in this light, by receiving him into its ranks. They would have avoided the danger far more successfully, we think, by Mr. A. retaining his anonymous character, and keeping his authorship a secret in his own breast. But we suspect that bitter hatred to "the Kirk," if not the lust of championship, (take care, Mr. Marshall), was too strong upon him to allow him to enjoy his expected triumph in secret. Or it may be, that his faith in the vagaries of Irving is so strong, as to induce him to prefer the honour of appearing among the hair-brained followers of that heresiarch to that of belonging to any other association on earth. In this case the name was necessary, and the appending of it honest, to say the least. At all events, if the members of the Voluntary Church Association in Glasgow have any sense of propriety in them, they cannot do less than unanimously vote him their thanks at their next public meeting.

Mr. A. begins his "exposition of the views of the projected Voluntary Church Association," by denying the truth of the allegation that either he or they "meditate the overthrow of what is called the Church of Scotland;" and to prove the falsehood of the allegation, he *tells* us that there "are enrolled on the list" of that Association "the names of several pious and intelligent men of that church's own communion." How this can prove Mr. A.'s allegation, is rather a difficult problem for us to solve, so long as we know that it is no uncommon thing to find *traitors* in the church as well as in the state. But whatever the "meditations" of Mr. A. and his friends may be, and it is no easy matter, we must always recollect, to get at *some folk's* "meditations," their overt acts, and even their language, in spite of all the miserable quibbling which disgraces it, proclaim their object beyond the possibility of mistake. What although they wish not to overthrow the stone and lime of the kirks and manses appertaining to the established church, nor yet to "pillage and banish the ministers" who presently occupy them? Is not their "assault directed," as Mr. A. Dick expresses it in the speech which he delivered at the formation of the Edinburgh Association, and has since published, "against the *ecclesiastical system* of this country?" Is it not their "object," as Dr. Heugh avows, in very inaccurate language, it is true, "to influence the legislators and legislation of Britain so far as that all state influence in the church, and all state support to any sect of Christians, should cease?" And what

is all this but to overthrow "THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH OF SCOTLAND?" The merest child, whose intellects are sound, cannot fail to perceive this. To talk, therefore, of a "respectful and affectionate acknowledgment of the pastoral superintendence of the ministers of THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, of a reverent submission in the Lord, to the rule and decision of *Her* Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and Assembly," is a perfect absurdity. Nor would it belong, we apprehend, ere Mr. A. and the Voluntary Church Association gentlemen "gave her to wit," that the Relief and United Secession Churches have an equal, if not a better, right to the name and authority of the Church of Scotland, than she had.

True, Mr. A. assures us that he confines *his* views to the demolition of her state "crutches," (as he elegantly expresses it,) to the removal of "the acts of Parliament for her enforced endowment with teinds, manses, glebes, assessments, levies on city funds," &c. &c., nor do we refuse to admit, that she might still authoritatively retain the name of the Established Church of Scotland, though our legislators were foolish enough to follow the advice of Mr. A. as to her "teinds and manses," &c. But would matters rest there? Only, we reply, till the Relief or United Secession Churches had so far gained the ear of the existing government as to encourage them to sue for that share of the public purse, of which their ungrateful combinations had deprived their quondam mother. We have read of voluntary church association advocates in former times, (the Cromwellian period, for instance), who, although they did not view themselves as parish ministers, yet were in the practice of "accepting the livings" of an established church, then overthrown, "of occupying its parochial edifices, and even receiving a portion of the *tithes* for their maintenance;" and we also know, that there is a body of Seceders in Ireland, in connexion with the United Secession church, who, at this hour, receive an annual *regium donum* from the British Government, and swear *state oaths* to qualify them for obtaining it. Now, believing, as we most conscientiously do, that human nature will not be much improved, for some time at least after the established church of Scotland is overthrown, if ever that event shall occur, we are really of opinion, and many more besides us, that Mr. A. and his friends would greedily follow the same course, were the way thus cleared for them, and the strings of the public purse in any degree under their control.

"The reasons" why Mr. A., and those whose cause he pleads, object to "the state-support of the established church," are ten in number; and it is only necessary to look at the first of them to perceive that "a Friend to the Kirk" is either miserably ignorant of the subject on which he has presumed to dogmatise, or recklessly determined wilfully to misrepresent it. The former, we are charitably inclined to believe, is the truth. "We object," says Mr. A. (p. 7,) "to the exclusive endowment by the state of a

particular church, holding a particular creed, because it *proceeds on the principle, that the king is infallibly qualified, and divinely authorised, to decide for his subjects which is the true religion, and, of that religion, which form, in particular, is pure and genuine*; so that all who refuse to comply with his decision, assume the appearance of being disaffected to his government, and are virtually denounced from the throne as schismatics or heretics." Now it might be sufficient to reply to this, that no such principle was ever held or pled by any enlightened advocate of church establishments. Where Mr. A. can have met with it, it is impossible for us to say; but wherever he met with it, we can assure him it betrays an understanding far from sound, and the man who believes it deserves pity rather than "reprobation." In pity to Mr. A., we beg to tell him, that the principle on which the enlightened friends of civil establishments have been accustomed to advocate their endowment by the state is, that as it is the duty of *nations as such*, as well as of individuals, to acknowledge and worship the Supreme Being, and *nationally* to provide that he be publicly honoured and served among them, so *nations, favoured with the light of the gospel and the enjoyment of its ordinances*, are solemnly bound to make a public *national* profession of their faith in Christ, and cheerfully to devote, from a regard to his glory and their own national welfare, a suitable portion of their temporal substance for the regular maintenance of his ordinances among them. If Mr. A. and his anti-establishment associates can disprove this "by appeals to the judgment scripturally regulated," we shall then believe that what he calls "the crutches" of our established church are "worse than an encumbrance."

Mr. A.'s second reason for abolishing "the state-support of an established church," is founded on his first; and as we have seen that it has no existence, save that in the brain of some one who is more to be pitied than condemned, we might pass it by without a single remark, were it not that it contains one of the grossest misrepresentations concerning the Church of Scotland that we have ever seen, and a still fouler aspersion of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Mr. A. asserts that the Church of Scotland, by receiving pecuniary support from the State, "necessarily exalts the king to be Head of the church, in the same way, and nearly to the same extent, that the Pope is Head of the church of Rome," and that however "indignant she may feel at this charge, it will not admit of an enlightened and candid denial." What this "Friend to the Kirk" means by "an enlightened and candid denial," we cannot pretend to say. It evidently is the denial of every other man of sound intellect; for can any thing be plainer than the declarations, that "there is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ?" (Conf. c. 26, sect. 6,) and that He, "as king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church officers, *distinct from the civil magistrate*, and that to these officers *the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed*?" (Conf. c. 30, sect. 1, 2.)

In short, can any one, but a man either utterly imbecile, or wickedly determined to misrepresent, pretend to misunderstand this declaration, that "the civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven?" (Conf. c. 23, sect. 3.) It follows, it is true, that "He hath *authority*, and it is his *duty* to TAKE ORDER that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, (the capitals and italics are Mr. A's) that all blasphemies and *heresies* be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God." But what is the meaning and fair amount of all this? Let Dr. M-Crie, whose exposition no wise man, nor indeed any man, has ever yet attempted to contradict, reply.

"Another objection," (says that enlightened and unanswered advocate of civil establishments of religion,) "brought against the Confession is, that it subjects matters purely religious and ecclesiastical to the cognizance of the civil magistrate, and allows him an Erastian power in and over the church. This, if true, would be very strange, considering that the Assembly who compiled it were engaged in a dispute against this very claim with the Parliament under whose protection they sat, and that, owing to their steady refusal to concede that power to the State, (in which they were supported by the whole body of Presbyterians), the erection of presbyteries and synods in England was suspended. Independently of this important fact, the declarations of the Confession itself are more than sufficient to repel the imputation. It declares, 'that there is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ' (chap. 25, § 6.); and that, he, as 'king and head of his church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of the church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate. To these officers the keys of the kingdom are committed.' (chap. 30, § 1. 2.) Yea, the very passage appealed to in support of the objection begins with the following pointed declaration: 'The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' (chap. 23, § 3.) 'The keys of the kingdom of heaven' include all the power exercised in the church, under Christ, its sole king: not only that which is ordinarily exercised in the government of particular congregations and in censuring offenders, (chap. 30) but also the power 'ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience, to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his church, to receive complaints in cases of mal-administration, and authoritatively to determine the same.' (chap. 31, § 3.) The Confession teaches, that magistrates cannot warrantably assume to themselves the power of doing these things, and what it adds must be understood in a consistency with this declaration. It is true, that it allots to the magistrate a care of religion, and asserts that 'he hath authority, and it is his duty to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church,' &c. But is there no order which he can take for having these things done by the persons and in the way by and in which they ought to be done, without taking the doing of them into his hand, and thus assuming what does not belong to him? The Confession asserts, that there is, and proceeds to say: 'For the better effecting whereof he hath power to call synods.' And is there any good reason for absolutely denying him this power? When 'the unity and peace of the church' are broken and endangered in any country, 'the truth of God' is depraved, 'blasphemies and heresies' of almost every kind are spreading, 'corruptions and abuses in worship' are abounding, and when, the church being disorganized, there is no general authority of an ecclesiastical kind to use means for remedying these evils, may not the civil government of that country warrantably call a synod for that purpose? When the state of the nation, as well as of the church, may be convulsed, and its convulsions may be in a great degree owing to religious disorders, is it not a high duty incumbent on him to take such a step, provided he finds it practicable and advisable? Was not this the state of matters in England, when the Westminster Assembly met? Was not the state of matters similar in many

respects at the Revolution in Scotland? And may not a crisis of the same kind yet recur? Was there any rational ground to think, at the period of the Westminster Assembly, that such a synod would have met, or, supposing it somehow to have been collected, that it could have continued together until it had finished its business, if it had not been convoked, maintained, and protected by the Parliament of England? Do many of those who deny the power in question reflect, that they owe those books which they still, in one degree or another, own as the subordinate standards of their ecclesiastical communion, to a synod which was thus convoked? Do they reflect, that by means of them the interests of religion have been promoted to an incalculable degree, 'unity and peace preserved in the church,' &c. from the period of their compilation down to the present day, in Scotland, in England, in Ireland, and in America? Or, recollecting these things, are they prepared to take the pen, and insert their absolute veto—'The civil magistrate—for the better effecting thereof, hath nor power to call synods?' At the same time, it may be observed here, as on the former objection, that it is not asserted, that the magistrate may exercise this power on all occasions and in all circumstances, or whenever there are any evils of a religious kind to correct. It is sufficient, that there may be times and circumstances in which he may warrantably exert this power. It is true that the Confession, in another place, (chap. 31. § 2.) is not sufficiently full and explicit in declaring the intrinsic right of the church to convoke synods. But this defect was supplied by the Act of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland receiving and approving of the Confession; and in the formula used in the Secession from the beginning, an approbation of the Confession is required 'as received' by that Act of Assembly.

"After stating that the magistrate has power to call synods, it is added, 'to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them, be according to the mind of God.' Not to insist here, that these words ought, in fair construction, to be understood of such synods as have been convoked by the magistrate, what reasonable objection can be made to his being present? May he not claim a right to be present at any public meeting within his dominions? May he not be present in a synod to witness their proceedings, to preserve their external peace, to redress their grievances, or (why not?) to receive their advice or admonitions? But, if it be supposed that his presence is necessary to give validity to their proceedings, and that he sits as preses of their meeting, or as director of their deliberations and votes, I shall only say, that the words of the Confession give not the slightest countenance to such claims, which are utterly inconsistent with the common principles of Presbyterians, and, in particular, with the well-known and avowed principles of the Church of Scotland. A similar answer may be given to the objection against the last clause of the paragraph. May not any Christian, whatever his station be, 'provide that whatsoever is transacted,' even in synods, 'be according to the mind of God?' If the legislature or government of a nation have a special care about religion, or if there is any particular duty at all which they have to discharge respecting it, and particularly if they have power in any case to call synods, must it not in a special manner be incumbent on them to see to this? Nor does this imply that they are in possession of any ecclesiastical powers, or that they pass a public judgment on true and false religion. Their private judgment is sufficient to regulate them in their public managements in this, as well as on many other subjects, about which they exercise their authority, without sustaining themselves as the proper judges of them, as in the case of many arts, sciences, &c. which they patronize and encourage. Must not Christian rulers, judges, and magistrates provide that 'whatsoever is transacted' by themselves, 'be according to the mind of God?' Is it not highly fit that they should be satisfied, and that they should by every proper means provide that the determinations of synods be according to the mind of God, if they are afterwards to legalize them, or if they are to use their authority for removing all external obstructions out of the way of their being carried into effect; both of which they may do, without imposing them on the consciences of their subjects? And, in fine, are there not various ways in which they may provide as here stated, without assuming a power foreign to their office, or intruding on the proper business of synods, or ecclesiastical courts? But, if it be supposed that the magistrate, as the proper judge in such matters, is to control the deliberations of the ecclesiastical assembly, to prescribe and dictate to them what their decisions shall be, or that, when they have deliberated and decided, he may receive appeals from their decisions, or may bring the whole before his tribunal, and review, alter, and reverse their sentences, I have only to say, as formerly, that the words of the Confession give not the slightest countenance to such claims, which are utterly inconsistent with the common principles of Presbyterians, and in particular with the well-known and avowed principles and contentings of the Church of Scotland.*

* M'Crie's Discourses on the Unity of the Church, pp. 130—143.

If, after this enlightened and candid exhibition of the principles of the Church of Scotland, Mr. A. be troubled with the sight of any "shocking monstrosity," we advise him to expel it from his own brain; it is not to be found in the Confession, nor in the sentiments of its intelligent advocates. In fine, without asking him to "pledge his reason to prove its fallacy," as we are not very sure that the pledge would be satisfactory, we refer him to the exposition which we have just transcribed for an answer to his question, "Could a majority of ministers and elders amend the Confession, supposing it appeared to require amendment, without the permission of the legislature?"

In the *third* place, Mr. A. objects to the pecuniary endowment of the Church by the state, or of religious bodies, in any circumstances whatever, if we understand him right, because such endowment being of the nature of *external force*, is utterly opposed to the genius of the present dispensation. And he adds, "not to speak of the Christian having his house of worship built, and his minister supported by money forcibly exacted from others,—just think of *this*, that, according to the compulsory system, the infidel is assessed for furnishing the Christian's table with the bread and wine of his Sacrament! O, I have heard some persons express themselves as if they saw nothing mean nor unscriptural in this, but as if they ate and drank with better gust and sweeter relish, in the reflection that the blasphemer was compelled to provide their feast for them!" Now, we at once confess that *this* is a "monstrosity," a "shocking monstrosity," sufficient to terrify wiser men than "A Friend to the Kirk" out of their very wits. But unfortunately for Mr. A., we must tell him again, that the "monster" exists only in his own apprehension. We have no intention, indeed, as we have no reason, to question Mr. A's veracity, as to what he has heard. We have no doubt that such sentiments have been uttered in his hearing, and very possibly, too, by members of the Established Church; but what we believe is, that as Mr. A. has numbered himself with those who are "looking, and teaching others to look, for the speedy coming of Christ to reign on earth," he has been mingling too frequently with those who have the vapours, and has consequently been a little infected with their deplorable malady. At any rate, we know that, save in the solitary instance of the city of Edinburgh, where, through the mismanagement of the local magistracy, an ecclesiastical tax is imposed on some householders, there is not a single penny levied for kirk or minister, manse or sacrament, on Christian or infidel, in all broad Scotland. Moreover, though it were as Mr. A. says it is, it would be nothing to the purpose in the present argument. It is with the *principle* of establishments that we have to do, not with the *abuses*; and we must tell our "Friend" once for all, that it is no evidence of his fitness for the task he has undertaken, that he passes from abuse to principle, and from principle to abuse, and attempts to

reason from the one against the other, in almost every line of his pamphlet. But for the present month, we must delay our farther exposure of his "lame" reasons, till next number.

NOTES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Titus, in reply to the *Edinburgh Catholic Magazine*, and to an *Episcopalian*, in our next; as also his remarks on "Easson's Examinations." "A Constant Reader," and "A Radical Reformer," will also be inserted.

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