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THE  
**CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT**  
**DEFENDED**

FROM THE  
**STRICTURES OF A CONGREGATIONALIST.**  
VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE  
BY THE REV. J. G. RIVINGTON  
SCRIPTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"These speak evil of the things that they understand not."  
2 PETER ii. 12.

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1836.  
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*Also, by the same Author,*

THE

**VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE**

TRIED BY THE

**SCRIPTURES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.**

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GILBERT AND RIVINGTON, PRINTERS,  
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.

THE extraordinary tissue of accusations which Mr. Harris, of Epsom, one of the Congregationalist ministers, in a little work entitled "*The Divine Establishment*," has published against the Church of England, is so entirely, with one single exception, the result of mere want of accurate information, that it is not less an act of charity to that individual, than it is one of justice to the Church, to endeavour to give him a truer idea of that body against which, through "ignorance and unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 13.) of its real character, he has shown himself as "a persecutor, and injurious."

*Epiphany, 1836.*



PRAYER OF THE CHRISTIANS IN THE CHURCH OF  
ENGLAND FOR THEIR ENEMIES.

*From the Litany.*

That it may please Thee to forgive our enemies,  
persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts,  
*We beseech thee to hear us good Lord.*

THE  
CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT,

&c.

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I HAVE thought it best to reprint at full length, in the Appendix, the charges which Mr. Harris has brought against the Church of England, that he and all his friends might be convinced that there is no wish, on the part of the friends of the Church, to keep any of them out of sight. No: all that he has written shall go forth, and the wider the circulation the better. It may serve, under God's blessing, to confirm some unstable souls, and to deter them from countenancing the sin of schism, of which too many are accustomed to think lightly, as if it were not stamped as a sin in the Sacred Writings, and prayed against as a sin by the Catholic Church. I say that the circulation of Mr. Harris's strictures may serve to deter men from countenancing the sin of schism, when they thus glaringly see some of the bitter but almost natural effects of that sin, even on an individual of otherwise respectable character, and to whom the full credit is given of a desire to do good. I am willing freely to acquit Mr. Harris of an intention to malign, nor do I think that he was conscious how utterly unfair and unwarrantable was the attack which he has made; but he is not therefore the less worthy of blame. It is true of the sin of schism and all its train of carplings, discontents, envyings, murmurings, and self-seekings, as it is of any other sin, that a man by indulging in it ceases, in matters connected with it, to be able to distinguish between right and wrong; but still he is and must be

held morally responsible for all the evil into which this sinfully-superinduced deadness of moral perception betrays him. Mr. Harris has also justly incurred censure on another score, for the means of refuting many of the calumnies which he has uttered against the Church, was, as will be seen, as much within his reach as mine, or any other person; and, therefore, he is inexcusable for not having made use of them. And surely when a man sets himself up as a teacher of the Scriptures, it is not too much to expect that he should pay so much respect to them as to consult them before dealing wild and reckless blows, which will be found in more than one instance to have fallen upon the sacred volume itself.

Before entering into an examination of his charges, there is one disclaimer which he has put forward too remarkable to be suffered to pass unnoticed. At page 27, we have the following passages: "Much, indeed *most*, of our animadversions is meant to apply to the body to which you belong, not as a *Christian denomination*, but as a *human establishment*." "Viewed as a *Christian denomination*, we see many things in you to love and praise;" "Your Christian doctrines are ours;" "We have a heart that rejoices in your usefulness;" "and arms of affection that embrace many of your members, as among the excellent of the earth." It is somewhat remarkable that when, in King Charles' days, Mr. Harris's predecessors succeeded in the work which the congregationalists are now attempting, namely, of *overthrowing the human establishment*, their "affection" to our "Christian denomination," in whose "usefulness their heart rejoices," showed itself, 1. In despoiling us of all our endowments, which human encumbrances they appropriated to their own uses; 2. In shutting up all our Churches, many of which were turned into barns and stables; 3. In prohibiting our clergy the exercise of their ministration; 4. In making it penal to use our Liturgy; 5. In forbidding our bishops to confer orders, without which our *Christian denomination must cease to exist*.

When dissenters endeavour to throw Churchmen off their guard by professions of brotherly kindness and Christian love, let Churchmen remember that that which has been above stated was the method which they took to prove their brotherly affection, when, once before, it

pleased Almighty God to put it in their power to do as they would. There is no reason to believe that lapse of years has produced any change in this respect, or that it is anything but want of power which prevents their repeating the same substantial marks of brotherly kindness. At least we do not learn that in the United States of America, where our Church has ceased to be united to the State, our "Christian denomination" fares better, or obtains more favour with the Dissenters, than our "human establishment" does in England. While the following extract from the proceedings of the Congregationalists in England not two years ago, of which body Mr. Harris declares himself a member, (p. 27.) may serve to give a better sample of their genuine disposition towards us, than the smooth words with which he has prefaced his attack. It appeared in the public papers of April, 1834, that "at the last monthly meeting of the congregational section of the three denominations, a question was mooted, as to the propriety of admitting to the privileges of the board those congregational ministers who adopt the Liturgy of the Church of England in their public worship; and, after a boisterous and angry discussion, it was decided by an overwhelming majority, that *none shall henceforth be admitted within the pale of the Congregational Board, but those who in their public worship reject the Liturgy of the Church of England.* Only seven ministers voted in the minority."

It is clear that the hostility expressed by this resolution, is aimed not against us as a human establishment, but as a Christian denomination, for the use of our Liturgy by Sectarian ministers can have no connexion with the former. Against that their rancour is so venomous as to lead them to put out of sight the very foundation principle of dissent, which (it is conceived) is an unrestrained liberty to do as they please in matters of religion. For thus it appears, that if any Dissenting minister should be inclined to make use of the English Liturgy, he would be put under the brand of exclusion, if he should venture to act according to his conscience. The resolution above referred to was not the rash and unguarded expression of some individual of ill regulated zeal, but the deliberate determination of "an overwhelming majority" of the dissenting body. It is to be hoped for the credit of Mr. Harris's professions of amity



towards our Christian denomination, that he was among the seven ministers who voted in the minority on that occasion. Having thus furnished, from ancient and modern times, some tests beyond mere professions, wherewith to try the value of Dissenters' *affection* for the Church of England, as a *religious denomination*, let us proceed to examine the strength of those *objections* which this friendly dissenter has chosen the present moment of our apparent weakness and danger, to urge against us as a *human establishment*.

His objections may be thus arranged:—

I. As regards an establishment in general, which he considers not only *without* warrant of Holy Scripture, but *contrary* to it.

II. In detail, resulting from the *consequences* of such an establishment.

My object is not to reply to his expressions, which are immaterial, but to his charges; which, if true and well founded, must certainly be deemed worthy attention.

I. He speaks of "an establishment," or "alliance with a human government," on the part of a Christian Church, as *unwarranted* by Scripture, for he says that neither "the example," nor "language" of the Apostles can afford any sanction for it. (p. 27.)

II. As *contrary* to Scripture; to prove which he cites our Lord's words, "My kingdom is not of this world;" and then concludes that "the Church of England, as a national establishment, dispenses with the Bible."

Let us deal with the worst charge first; which is, that for a Church to become an establishment, or, in other words, allied with the State, is *contrary* to Scripture. This charge rests upon the single text of Scripture, "My kingdom is not of this world." In order to understand the force of that text, let us consider the occasion of its being uttered. It was spoken in reply to a question of Pilate to our Lord, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Which question Pilate appears to have put in order to know whether he were to consider our Lord in the light of a rebel against the constituted government of the country. Our Lord's answer is to the effect that though He was indeed a King, He was not therefore a rival to Cæsar, for His kingdom was not one which could be promoted by human violence or human crime. The persons to whom the rebuke conveyed in that

answer seems most applicable, are those mistaken zealots who fancy to themselves that a real or fancied zeal for religion will be an excuse for discontent, murmuring, and treasonable practices, against the constituted government and institutions of their country. To such misguided persons, who "know not what manner of spirit they are of," our Lord does indeed say, "My kingdom is not of this world;" earthly treason cannot avail to promote it, earthly tyranny cannot hinder its growth. But there does not appear, nor can Mr. Harris show, either in this passage of Scripture or in any other, anything to forbid the rulers of this world, the great and the rich whom God has endowed with influence and authority, from using that influence and that authority to extend the kingdom of his Son: nor anything to forbid the spiritual rulers of the Church, the Apostles or Bishops, from availing themselves of that assistance to cause the sound of the gospel to be heard where otherwise it would not be, and the knowledge of salvation to be extended to those who would otherwise live and die in heathen darkness. That such will be the consequence if the Dissenters succeed again in overthrowing our establishment, we have every reason to believe; for the consequences of their former success are not yet obliterated from our minds. Through the greater part of the land, the sound of the Gospel in *any* shape ceased to be heard; the rites of religion were unperformed; and the people were left without Sacraments, without instruction, without prayers, without burial. As the only text which Mr. Harris has thought fit to cite, with a view to prove the position of the Church of England, as an establishment, to be against Scripture, has, upon examination, no reference whatever to us, but serves rather to condemn the political Dissenters who, on the plea of religion, are seeking to overthrow the institutions of their country, let us pass on to examine the minor charge, namely, that the position of the Church of England, as an establishment allied with the State, is *unsanctioned* by Scripture, having, as he says, no warrant from the example or language of the Apostles. There would be some force in this observation, if the Scriptures had led us to expect, or experience had shown, that the Church of Christ would always be in a state of persecution, as it was during the lives of the Apostles; for under the same circumstances,

the same conduct would reasonably be required of its Apostolic rulers; and as long as the "Kings of the earth stood up and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed:" it would manifestly be criminal, treasonable, and damnable, to the last degree for the servants of Christ to behave to them otherwise than as the first Apostles did. But when in process of time the scene came to be changed, and the prophecies of the Scriptures began to be fulfilled; when the "kings began to fall down before Him: the nations to do Him service;" (Ps. lxxii. 11.) And they "who persecuted the Church in times past, now" fostered "the faith which once they destroyed;" (Gal. i. 23.) When the kings of the nations came to "esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," (Heb. xi. 26.) placing the cross, which had before been counted a badge as infamous as our hangman's gallows, above the richest jewels on their earthly crowns, and seeking what they could most do to cause the religion which it expressed to be known, and revered, and loved, among men;—when thus, by every mark of outward profession, "the kingdoms of this world" began to "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ," (Rev. xi. 15.) what wretched perversion can lead any one to imagine that the Apostles of the Church were bound to repel these proffers of service, and set themselves doggedly to endeavour to prevent the fulfilment of the prophecies, which prophets and Apostles had recorded concerning the earthly exaltation of the Christian Church, "Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers?" (Is. xlix. 23. lx. 10, 11. 16. lxi. 6.)

If the voices of the prophets which foretold this state of things with joy and rejoicing, are not sufficient sanction in the perverted judgment of the congregationalists, for the course which was taken by the apostolic rulers of the Church, in accepting the assistance which was offered by the kings of the Gentiles in the name of the Lord; yet let their envious carpings be at any rate silenced by the conduct of our Lord Himself, the image of His Church, and by that of the Father. For when the kings of the East brought their choicest gifts, gold, incense, and myrrh, to Him who was born King of the Jews, as the first fruits of the service and duty which the kings of the Gentiles should

after render to the Christian Church, we read not that the infant Redeemer repelled their dutiful service, nor that such an alliance with human greatness was displeasing to the Almighty, who sent his star in the heavens to guide these men to perform their act of homage.

It appears then that the human establishment of a Christian Church, its availing itself of the support and alliance of a human government, is so far from being without warrant of Holy Scripture, that it was foreseen and foretold with hymns of rejoicing by the prophets before and since the coming of our Lord; and actually sanctioned in its first fruits by that blessed Lord Himself. While the only text which Mr. Harris has quoted on the point, when examined with reference to the occasion of its being uttered, is found to have no relation whatever to the case under consideration, but to be aimed against those rash zealots who would make religion a pretext for the indulgence of ill-regulated earthly passions, and an excuse for the commission of earthly crimes, especially those of treason, and rebellion, and bloodshed; like the Dissenters of old who, with religion in their mouths, overturned the government of the country, and dipped their hands in their sovereign's blood: or like the congregationalists of the present day who, with the same pretext of religion, are leagued with the Popish image-worshippers, and the Socinian blasphemers of our Lord, to overturn once more the institutions of their country.

What makes one most sorry to see this charge brought forward by a Dissenter is this, that the history of that class of religionists, both past and present, makes it extremely difficult to believe that the accusation is brought in sincerity; for whenever they have had it in their power to become an establishment, and to be allied with a human government, they have never failed to do so. When the Church was overthrown, in the days of Cromwell, and cast off from connexion with the State, the Dissenters who accomplished that overthrow did not scruple to occupy the position and alliance which they had denounced as unscriptural and anti-scriptural in the Church. When King William the Third, by an act of desperate tyranny, overturned the Church in Scotland, the Presbyterian Dissenters from that Church did not hesitate to step into their shoes, and

become, as they are to this day, the establishment which they had decried as sinful for the Episcopalians to be. And at this day, when the dissenting missionaries in Polynesia succeed in converting the heathen governors to their form of Christianity, they invariably become an establishment, closely allied with a human government, their missionaries taking part in the public legislation, and interfering compulsorily in the civil and temporal matters of the state, to an extent scarcely exceeded by the Jesuits in Paraguay.

II. Having thus disposed of his charge against an establishment in the abstract, let us next consider his account of the evils in detail resulting from the principle. Such are, 1. The compulsory nature of its membership; 2. the consequent taking all for granted to be members of the Church who live within certain geographical limits; 3. The absence of examination into the religious character of its members; 4. The compulsory nature of its maintenance; 5. Its style; 6. Its want of discipline.

If Mr. Harris had attended to the advice of the son of Sirach, "Blame not before thou hast examined the matter, understand first and then rebuke," it is probable he would not have encumbered his pages with accusations against the members of Christ's Church in England, which only show how very ill-informed he was on points which he hesitated not to make the subject of a discourse from the pulpit; nay, how little conversant with the Scriptures of which he exercises the office of a teacher.

Let us take the charges in order: The Church of England he affirms, by reason of its human establishment, "is involuntary in its formation." "You, by employing compulsion, suppose in your Church, the absence of piety," (p. 29.) In proof of this assertion he cites as "one of your highest authorities," what do you think, gentle reader? the authorized formularies of our Church, which are in every one's hands? the Liturgy, the Canons, the Articles, which we subscribe and acknowledge? or even the homilies which are recommended by the Articles? No such thing. The high authority is some nameless writer in some unmentioned number of the British Critic! What would the congregationalists say if we were to fix upon their whole body every careless assumption or ignorant statement, of every anonymous writer in their periodicals?

The injustice in our case is greater, because the Church of England has, what they who separate from it for the most part have not, authentic documents by which its authorized principles and practices may be known. If Mr. Harris had consulted these, as in common justice he was bound to do, he would not have affirmed, what, notwithstanding the nameless writer to whom he appeals, is really nothing but a simple untruth, as will be plainly seen by a reference to the rubrics of the Common Prayer Book, in the Confirmation and Burial Offices. By these it will appear that we admit no adults to Church communion until they have received confirmation; nor any, whether infants or adults, to Church burial unless they have been baptized. If Mr. Harris can show any power (beyond advice and exhortation) which the Church of England has ever exercised, or can by any possibility exercise, to *compel* persons to receive the sacrament of baptism and the rite of confirmation, then he will make good his case. If not, he will stand convicted of having, through the most culpable ignorance of the subject on which he was preaching, brought an accusation against the Church of England utterly destitute of truth.

2. His next accusation is, that the Church of England takes for granted that "every man, woman, and child, who happens to be born within certain geographical limits, is a member of it." This accusation, like the other, is utterly untrue. The rubric at the end of the Confirmation office, which directs that "there shall none be admitted to the Holy Communion, until such time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed," evidently supposes that there may be many within the geographical limits inadmissible to the highest privilege of Church membership. And the rubric which stands at the head of the Burial Service, directing "that the office is not to be used for any that die unbaptized, or excommunicate, or have laid violent hands upon themselves," plainly implies that there may be many within the geographical limits, who either never were, or have ceased to be, members of the Church.

3. His next accusation is couched in these words; that the Church, "at no period of his life, appeals to the *will* of a member. It leaves no room for the exercise of that. It inquires not, 'Are you a Christian?' it authoritatively

asserts 'You are one.' It asks not, 'Are you willing to believe, to embrace, to obey the Gospel?' it takes that for granted, and pronounces, 'You are willing.'" Surely the great "accuser of our brethren, who accuseth them before our God night and day" (Rev. xii. 10.), never invented any charge against them more utterly contrary to the truth than this unhappy leader of schismatics, and opposer of the Church of Christ, has here set forth. We have before proved, from the rules of the Church of England, that none are admissible to Church communion until such time as they have been confirmed. The inquiry which the Church, on that occasion, makes of every person, before acknowledging him to be entitled to the full privileges of Church membership, is contained in these words: "Do ye here, in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your baptism; ratifying and confirming the same in your own persons, and acknowledging yourselves bound to believe and to do all those things which your godfathers and godmothers then undertook for you?" These "things" are set forth in the Office for Public Baptism, thus: 1st, to "renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the same, and the carnal desires of the flesh, so that thou wilt not follow nor be led by them." 2nd, to "believe all the Articles of the Christian faith, as set forth in what is commonly called the Apostles' creed." 3d, to "obediently keep God's holy will and commandments, and to walk in the same all the days of their life." Thus, then, it appears that the Church does ask, of every individual, before recognizing him as worthy of her communion, the very questions which this writer affirms that she does not.

But he further says, "The Church never inquires into the character of its members." It is most true; nor can we find that the blessed Founder of our Church, in the commission which He has given to our apostolic rulers, or in the instructions which the first receivers of that commission, who wrote under the direction of the Holy Spirit, have left for the guidance of their successors, any intimation that it is part of their duty to do so. It is true, that the rulers of the Church of Rome, who have likewise received this commission, have felt themselves warranted in

*compelling* from the members of their Church, answers to the most searching and harassing inquiries into their most secret character. But we have yet to learn that by this tyrannical exaction they have not far exceeded their commission, which appointed them "*not* lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock." (1 Pet. v. 3.) Mr. Harris can tell whether it is not also true that many of the presumptuous leaders of the Protestant Dissenters, who have received *no commission*, have sought to render themselves masters of the secret character of their followers, by encouraging a practice which leaves the Roman confessional very far behind. I mean the meetings for declaring "the experiences" of the members: that is, for each member declaring the courses of temptations to sin, and of sin itself, and his deliverances from them, which have befallen him. What the fruits of such a practice can be but hypocrisy, fanaticism, self-deceit, and hardness of heart, it does not seem easy to understand. I call it worse than the extorted Roman confessional; and so it will appear, when it is considered, that *that* is made in private to one who has received the ministry of reconciliation,—*this* in public, to those who have received no share in that ministry: *that* with shame, and the desire of concealment; *this* with no such desire; for they are tempted to think they heighten the glories of God's grace, as they make the sin more grievous from which His grace has delivered them, and thus to glory in their shame.

It is certainly true that the English branch of the Apostolic Church pursues neither of these objectionable courses to inquire into the character of her members. Trained in the charity which "believeth all things, and hopeth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 7.), her pastors believe, and hope, that when, "with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation," "the heart" at the same time "believeth unto righteousness." (Rom. x. 10.) In other words, as they have no means of judging of the secrets of men's hearts but by their words and actions, when they know that men, "solemnly, in the sight of God and of the congregation," have professed the faith of Christ crucified, and pledged themselves to "believe, embrace, and obey the Gospel," and are not aware that they have *openly* belied with their lives the profession of their lips,—they feel bound, in love and



charity, to give them credit for its being true: and as to secret sins, do no more than encourage those whose consciences are oppressed with the remembrance of them, to have recourse to some authorized "minister of God's word, and open their grief; that by the ministry of God's Holy word, they may receive the benefit of absolution, together with ghostly counsel and advice, to the quieting of their conscience, and avoiding of all scruple and doubtfulness." (See First Exhortation in Communion Service.) But if Mr. Harris means to assert that, when men openly and scandalously offend the congregation, by conduct which even the utmost stretch of charity is forced to acknowledge to be contrary to their Christian profession, they are still admissible to the Communion of our Established Church, let him read the Rubric at the commencement of our Communion Service, and acknowledge that this accusation also is founded in wilful ignorance. If he wishes for proof whether those rules are still in force, he may make the trial in his own person. I can only say, that if, after a life spent in the sin of schism, now heightened and increased by his false accusations against the Church of Christ, he were to present himself for communion in the church where I am appointed to serve, I should feel it my painful duty to repel him from communion, until, by open acknowledgment of his error, and profession of repentance, and compliance with the rules of the Church, he should have rendered such satisfaction to the Church as the Bishop under whom I act should deem sufficient in so scandalous a case.

But he says, further, "You, in your Church, suppose the absence of piety" (p. 25): and again, "Your Church, as an establishment, can actually do without piety" (p. 29). It is true he adds a *distinction*, saying, "Remember, I speak now of your Church, not as a Christian denomination, but as a civil establishment:" but, as the only rules which the Church, as a civil establishment, observes in regard to piety, are the same which were first approved by her as a *Christian* denomination, Mr. Harris cannot avail himself of this fictitious distinction; but the truth or falsehood of his accusation must be tried by those formularies which are authorised both by *civil* enactment, and *ecclesiastical* canons. I will cite, therefore, from the Communion Service, the *terms* in which the Establishment requires and insists upon piety in

its members ; and I will leave it to him to say, whether the English language can furnish expressions, which could more fully, and peremptorily, enforce the absolute necessity of piety, in all who would be worthy partakers of Church communion. This is the invitation: "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort." This is the caution: "My duty is to exhort you so to search and examine your own consciences, and that not lightly and after the manner of dissemblers with God, but so that ye may come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast, in the marriage garment required by God in Holy Scripture, and be received as worthy partakers of that holy table. The way and means thereto is first to examine your lives and conversation by the rule of God's commandments; and wherein soever ye shall perceive yourselves to have offended, either by will, word or deed, there to bewail your own sinfulness, and to confess yourselves to Almighty God, with full purpose of amendment of life. And if ye shall perceive your offences to be such as are not only against God, but also against your neighbours, then ye shall reconcile yourselves unto them, being ready to make restitution and satisfaction, according to the uttermost of your power, for all injuries and wrongs done by you to any others, and being likewise ready to forgive others that have offended you, as ye would have forgiveness of your offences at God's hand; for otherwise the receiving the Holy Communion doth nothing else but increase your condemnation. Wherefore, if any of you be a blasphemer of God, a hinderer or slanderer of his Word, an adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or in any other grievous crime, repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table."

If, among our numerous communicants, there be some unhappy persons, who, in despite of these solemn warnings, will approach the holy mysteries without repentance, are the pastors of Christ's Church, who have no infallible method wherewith to try the secrets of men, chargeable with their guilt? or may they not, after these plain and startling warnings, take them "to record," with St. Paul, "that

they are pure from the blood of all men, for that they have not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God?" (Acts xx. 26, 27.)

He further brings it as a charge against the Church, "that it gathers its members indiscriminately, without reference to character." I answer, that if it does so, it does exactly what its Founder, our Lord and Saviour, declared it should do, when he likened it "to a net cast into the sea, which gathered of *every* kind." (Matt. xiii. 47.) It was not till "it was full," that is, till the Day of Judgment was arrived, that the severance was made, and the good put into vessels, and the bad cast away. The pastors of Christ's Church will leave to Mr. Harris and the other unauthorized intruders into God's ministry, the task of forestalling the Day of Judgment, in this life, by rash and hasty separation of all upon whom, after "inquiring into their characters," they take upon themselves to pronounce judgment; unmindful of His merciful caution, wherewith he rebuked the hasty zeal of those who, in the parable of the wheat and tares (Matt. xiii. 24), recommended such a course: "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them: let both grow together till the harvest."

4. The next accusation brought against the Church of Christ in England, by Mr. Harris, is the compulsory nature of its maintenance. "It still compels him (the Dissenter,) to render his share of pecuniary support; and has not merely all the civil, but all the military power of the nation, to compel that support." (p. 31.) "The Establishment follows us through life with claims of pecuniary support; and looks complacently on, while the civil and military array of the nation exacts and compels payment." This statement is partly true, and partly false; but in whatever respects it is true, it is equally applicable to the Dissenters as it is to the Church. As to the main source of the revenues of the Church, it is utterly false that they are compulsory. The tithes and church-lands with which our Cathedral and Parochial Churches and Chapels are endowed, are as much the result of voluntary individual piety on the part of our members, as the lands and quit-rents with which the Dissenting Meeting-houses are endowed are the result of voluntary piety among them. The pew-

rents in our Churches and Chapels are as voluntary as the pew-rents of their Meeting-houses; our Easter offerings as their collections. But the rents of our church-lands, and payments for tithes, are enforced, if need be, by "the civil and military power of the kingdom." Well, and would not the rents of the lands with which the Meeting-houses are endowed be enforced in the same way, if there was the same necessity? If the tenant of the estate with which the Meeting-houses at Dorking and Guildford are endowed was to refuse to pay his rent, would not the Trustees of those Meeting-houses *compel* payment by appealing to the civil power? And if the tenant, on pretence of being a Churchman, was to refuse to pay rent to Dissenters, and make a riot for the purpose of effecting his fraud, would not the magistrates who might be called upon to execute the sheriff's writ, procure the aid of the military, if need be, to suppress that riot? To be sure they would. So, then, his flaming expressions about persecution and compulsion come to nothing, unless he is prepared to allow that it would be persecution for the Trustees of the Meeting-house to compel their tenant, a Churchman, to pay his rent.

There is one source of revenue *enjoyed by the dissenting ministers*, with which the clergy of the Church cannot be charged; I mean, *payment out of the public taxes*: and I allude to the annual sums voted for the support of non-conformist ministers in England and Ireland. *There is no such sum voted for the clergy of the Church.* Perhaps Mr. Harris will tell us whether this is a compulsory maintenance. If he cannot deny it, let him consider upon which side his censures fall. But perhaps he will say, "there are the church-rates, and these at any rate are compulsory." I cannot admit that they are. Did not Mr. Harris, and every other person in the kingdom, purchase, or take, the house or land he occupies, on the clear understanding that it was subject to the quit-rent of Church-rate? and did he not, therefore, get his property at a less cost than he otherwise would have done? If so, then Church-rate is in lieu of the additional rent or purchase-money he would otherwise have paid: and how can this fairly be termed compulsory? When it was first agreed to, there was no other religion in the kingdom but that of the Church of England; the

members of which, voluntarily, saddled their properties in perpetuity, with the charge of maintaining the parish Churches: just as it would be in the power of the Dissenters of the present day, voluntarily, to saddle theirs with the cost of maintaining meeting-houses. But more than this, not only was the Church-rate voluntary in its erection, but the defective state of the law is such that it is voluntary, in the application of it. So that though it is certain that all lands and houses are bought or rented subject to this charge, yet the amount of the rate, and the rate itself, apparently, depends upon the voluntary vote of a majority of the rate-payers: and where the majority of these are dishonest persons, they actually can, and do, refuse to fulfil the engagements subject to which they took their lands. But I will not press this argument; I will content myself with asking him, Are the church-rates more compulsory than the *taxes levied by Act of Parliament last year to build the Dissenting Meeting-houses in Jamaica*? If not, the Dissenters have no cause for complaint.

But he says that the Church "follows through life, with the scourge of persecution, every individual who dissents from her theory," (p. 30.) This is, surely, the wolf and the lamb over again. *Who* are the persecuting party? the Church, or the Dissenters? Do we seek to deprive *them* of the exclusive use of their endowments? or of the exclusive use of their colleges? or of the exclusive use of their burial-grounds? We have never done so. But they have sought, and are seeking, to deprive *us* of the exclusive use of our endowments, of our colleges, of our burial-grounds. He says, "Remember Ireland." Yes, let us look to it. *Who* are the persecuting party there? The clergy of the Church, who are driven from their homes, murdered, their families reduced to starvation, and compelled to subsist on charity? or the dissenting priests of Rome, whose haggards are reported, in several instances, to have been filled with the tithes of which the clergymen of the Church have been defrauded?

5. His next charge is, that we have acted contrary to our Founder's intention, by the style which we have given to our Church, calling it the Church of England. He says, "According to His (Christ's) intention, when a Christian society had been gathered in such a place, it was

to be called the Church of Christ *in* such a place,—in Reigate, for instance. But your establishment would call it the Church of Reigate; meaning, by that, the Church of all the inhabitants of Reigate, bad and good, godly and ungodly, drunken and infidel."

I am sorry to disturb him in the enjoyment of his harmless cavil, but, unfortunately, it is so far from being well-founded, that if he will but consult those Scriptures of which he exercises the office of a schismatical teacher, he will find, in the writings of St. Paul and St. John, the *genitive* case, almost as frequently used as the ablative. Thus, in the plural number, we have, "the Churches of Galatia" (1 Cor. xvi. 1.); "of Asia" (*ibid.* 19.); "of Macedonia" (2 Cor. viii. 1.); "of Judæa," (Galat. i. 22.) In the singular, "the Church of the Laodiceans" (Col. iv. 16.); "of the Thessalonians" (1 Thess. i. 1.; 2 Thess. i. 1.); "of the Ephesians" (Rev. ii. 1.); "of the Laodiceans" (*ibid.* iii. 14.).

The truth is, that when we speak of the *visible* Church of Christ, we apply the term visible to man's sight, not to God's; and therefore include in it all those who, by profession, belong to it; all those who "confess with their mouth the Lord Jesus;" and not merely, as Mr. Harris would explain it, those who are sincere and true Christians, for who they are can be known to none but to Him who is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. That this was our Lord's acceptation of the word, we have seen in his comparing it "to a net which gathered of every kind," "good" and "bad." That such was the Apostles' acceptation of the word, we know by the Epistles; for in many of the Churches to which they were addressed, fault is found on account of there being among them men of "carnal" minds (1 Cor. iii. 4.), as proved by their giving way to schism; "disorderly" (1 Thess. v. 14.); "fornicators." (1 Cor. v. 1.) See also the 11th verse of that chapter for more upon the same subject. Nor does the definition which the English Articles give, of "the visible Church of Christ, as a body of faithful men," differ from this, nor bear the interpretation which Mr. Harris has given it. For by "faithful men" are there meant, not those only, the sincerity, integrity, and consistency of whose faith is known to Him alone "who trieth the hearts and reins," but all who, to use the words of the Church Ser-

vice, are "not ashamed to profess the faith of Christ crucified;" "all," in short, according to the Apostle's definition, "that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 2.); or, as it is in another place, "all upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord" (Acts xv. 17.). As Mr. Harris has not thought fit to give the whole of the English definition of the visible Church, I will venture to supply his defect. "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." For by this it will appear, that so far is the Church of England from accounting all within certain geographical limits as true members of the Church, that she recognises no bodies of Christians as belonging to it, unless the Sacraments be duly celebrated among them. By which definition *all the dissenting congregations*, among whom the Sacraments are celebrated *unduly*, and *without the authority* "*which of necessity is requisite to the same,*" are as virtually excluded, as by the following (9th of 1603) canon of the Church they are expressly cut off.

"Whosoever shall hereafter separate themselves from the communion of saints, as it is approved by the Apostles' rules, in the Church of England, and combine themselves together in a new brotherhood, accounting the Christians who are conformable to the doctrine, government, rites and ceremonies of the Church of England, to be profane, and unmeet for them to join with in Christian profession; let them be excommunicated *ipso facto*, and not be restored but by the archbishop, after their repentance, and public revocation of such their wicked errors."

6. In one, and one only, of his strictures, has Mr. Harris a ground of truth; and that is in our defective discipline, on which he enlarges, p. 29. What the causes have been which have led to it,—what the lets and hindrances which have prevented our Apostolic rulers from reviving and enforcing it, I have no intention here to inquire; nor how far it is mainly chargeable upon the Dissenters, who, by voluntarily living in a state of excommunication, have encouraged ignorant and careless persons to think lightly of such a sentence. Suffice it to say, that the evil is known, and lamented, and ac-

knowledged by the Church at large; and the 8000 clergy who, two years ago, addressed the Archbishop of Canterbury, all joined in expressing their desire for amendment in this respect. There is hope, therefore, that, under God's blessing, this, the only stone of reproach which our accusers can find out, will at length be rolled away. But it is right that Mr. Harris, and all other Dissenters who may be inclined to triumph over us for this defect, should clearly know beforehand, that the very first and necessary consequence of the restoration of the exercise of our discipline will and must be to enforce the canon above cited, and to exclude the separatists and revilers of Christ's Church from the spiritual benedictions which He has entrusted to her; of which, in many instances, by the laxity of discipline, they are now enabled, outwardly, to partake. The justice of this he must himself acknowledge; for as there is no sin more frequently and earnestly condemned in the New Testament, than the sin of schism and causeless dissent, they whose carnal mind leads them to fall into that snare of Satan's, are, to the full, as fit objects of exclusion as Mr. Harris considers those who fall into other sins. Not only this, but as it is manifestly contrary to our Blessed Lord's intention that we should "cast the pearls" of our heavenly treasure to those who "turn again and rend us" (Matt. vii. 6.) with railing accusations; so it seems to the greatest degree unreasonable, that they who have lived in hatred of the Apostles' communion in the Church of England, should be admitted, or rather forced, into an apparent junction with that communion, at matrimony, burial, or any other office. Any alteration in the law, which shall release us from the supposed obligation we now lie under of administering the rites of the Apostles' Church to those who have declared themselves aliens from it, will be received as a relief by all who have had grace to weigh and value the trust committed to them. I have now noticed every observation of Mr. Harris which seemed deserving of notice. As respects the whole of his attack, I freely confess that I think, to those who daily pray for, and desire to see an extension of Christian communion, a union of all who profess the faith of Christ crucified,—his attack affords much ground for comfortable and cheering hope. The solemnity of the occasion on which it was delivered—for, whatever we who have received



grace to know the nature and necessity of the apostolic commission<sup>1</sup> may think of the mockery, presumption, and sinfulness of men taking upon themselves to confer orders, who can show no warrant, or pretence of warrant, ordinarily or extraordinarily, directly or indirectly, for sending labourers into the Lord's vineyard; yet, doubtless, to them who have persuaded themselves of the lawfulness of such an act, it must be a most solemn occasion—the solemnity, I say, of the occasion, which was the ordination of one of the Dissenting Ministers, on which this attack was delivered, gives us every reason to suppose that Mr. Harris then said the most that he could say in justification of his state of separation and dissent from the Apostles' Church in England; that he urged the gravest of those excuses by which he hopes to justify himself and others hereafter, so that they should not be deemed to have incurred the condemnation which the sayings of our Lord and his Apostles have recorded against schism in the abstract. If it is not unreasonable to suppose that he has urged all the weightiest reasons he could find, then surely it is not unreasonable to encourage the hope that, when he and his friends shall find that these objections are founded in an entire misapprehension of the state of the English Church, and that its rules and regulations are directly contrary to what they supposed them to be, they may be led to consider whether they are still *obliged*, or *warranted*, in living in a state of separation and exclusion from it; and, if not, may have grace to see that it will at once tend to the glory of our common Lord, to the edification of His Church, and to their own salvation, to return again to the Church of their fathers, and thus become "repairers of the breach" (Is. lviii. 12.). Is there no hope ere long to see "the day when the Lord shall bind up the breach of His people, and heal the stroke of their wound?" (Is. xxx. 26.) Let us indulge that hope as regards those who separate themselves through ignorance, and erroneous impressions of conscience. As for those who only make use of religious dissent as the cloak and plea for political agitation and ambition, it were vain to hope for much success with them.

<sup>1</sup> See Churchman's Manual. Rivingtons.

*The following are Mr. Harris's strictures upon the Church of England, reprinted at full length, from his Discourse entitled, "The Divine Establishment," &c. preached at the Ordination of the Rev. THOMAS REES, at Reigate; and published by Westley and Davis, London: 1835.*

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## APPENDIX

BUT, secondly, I must not forget that one of my supposed  
 audience is a pious member of the Establishment. And though  
 I will hope that the appeal which has now been made to Scrip-  
 ture, and to Christian common sense, has commended itself to  
 his judgment, and has found a cordial response in his breast,  
 I can easily suppose that he may be ready to say, "Whatever  
 your views of a Christian Church may be, yet, as you agree  
 with us in the great doctrines of salvation, I wonder that you  
 should deem any minor point of sufficient importance to justify  
 you in dissenting from a Church by law established." My  
 brother, we value unity—but we value truth more. We em-  
 brace the great doctrines of salvation, of which you speak,  
 simply because we find them in the Bible; and in the Bible  
 we find the views which we have now stated of the nature of  
 a Christian Church, and therefore we embrace *them*. It is true,  
 they may not be of equal importance to my salvation with the  
 doctrines of grace; but the question is, not what is their com-  
 parative importance, but are they to be found in the word of  
 God? Do they contain *scriptural* principles of a Christian  
 Church? If they do, the blast of a thousand trumpets could  
 not add to their authority: they would not be more binding  
 were God to assemble the world at the foot of Sinai, and to  
 publish them anew amidst the rekindled fires of the Mount  
 that burned.

We repeat, then, we adopt these views of a Christian Church,  
 simply because we find them in the Scripture. As consistent  
 men, therefore, it follows that, if we dissent from the Establish-  
 ment, it is because we believe it to be *unscriptural*. To say  
 that such is our belief, may probably jar your feelings. And  
 here permit me to remark, that it is the infelicity of the situa-  
 tion in which I am now standing, that whoever occupies it  
 is placed in apparent hostility to the Establishment, though  
 aiming only to defend himself. The reasons of his separation

are necessarily so many arguments against the Church from which he separates; in merely stating the reasons of his own conduct, he appears to be impugning the conduct of others. The sword of the Spirit—the only weapon he is allowed to employ—is two-edged; and though he wield it in the most guarded manner, he can scarcely fail to inflict a wound, though he meant only to use it in self-defence. Besides, much—indeed *most*—of our animadversion is meant to apply to the body to which you belong; not as a *Christian denomination*, but as a *human establishment*. This is a distinction, permit me to say, which many of your community never think of, and which others do not wish to remember: but in every discussion of this kind, it is a distinction which should never be lost sight of. Remember you form a Christian denomination—one sect among many: the Government might cast you off to-morrow, and take another denomination into favour; the Presbyterian, for instance, or the Wesleyan. In that case, you would still exist; you would exist as a *Christian denomination*, just as we Congregationalists now do: and you would have a name—that of the *Episcopalian denomination*. Now, viewed as a *Christian denomination*, we see many things in you to love and praise. Have the goodness, then, to bear in mind, that at the moment when we are speaking, as you may think, severely against your body as a human establishment, your Christian doctrines are ours: we have a heart that rejoices in your usefulness, and arms of affection that embrace many of your members as among the excellent of the earth.

I. But whatever we may see in you as a *Christian denomination to approve*, as a denomination turned into a *human establishment*, we see everything to *disapprove and condemn*; for, my brother, is not such a transformation *unscriptural*? There is a sense in which this is admitted now by some of the ablest defenders of an establishment—that is, admitted *tacitly*; for on this subject they close the Bible; they find that they must seek their weapons of defence from another armoury, for the Bible refuses to help them in their straits. They leave the Christian warrant—the *Bible*; and betake themselves to the statesman's warrant—*expediency*. That the *example* of the Apostles can afford them no sanction for allying the Church of Christ to a human government is evident; for, during their days, every human government was the sworn enemy of Christianity. And that the *language* of the Apostles can furnish no sanction is equally clear; for, while yet every human government was actively seeking the destruction of the Christian Church, *they* yet spoke of that Church as complete—as quite complete within itself—as wanting nothing from the world but peace; and even that they did not cringingly sue for—did not anxiously care about: like the disciples in the storm, they knew their Lord

was with them, and they referred the quelling of the tempest to him.

But not only must the defenders of an establishment have closed the Bible, they must have forgotten it; not only are they *without* Scripture, but *against* it. "My kingdom," said Christ, "is not of this world." Now, put the lowest interpretation you please upon that declaration, you will yet find that the principle of a human establishment of religion contravenes and contradicts it. "My kingdom is not of this world," saith Christ. "Nay," some of the highest authorities in the Establishment—I quote their express language—"it is amalgamated, it is one with the state<sup>1</sup>;" "it is vitally and inseparably connected with the state<sup>2</sup>;" "we hold that there is not any man of the Church of England, but the same is also a member of the commonwealth; nor any member of the commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England<sup>3</sup>;" "not a soul of them is at liberty to consider themselves otherwise<sup>4</sup>." And, as far as the unnatural amalgamation can be effected, they are one. I ask for the head of the Church, and I am shown the king of the nation. I ask for its spiritual rulers, and I find them sitting among the rulers of the nation. I ask for its laws, and I am pointed, not to the Bible, but to the statute-book of the land. I ask for its mode of maintenance, and I find it collected by compulsory taxation.

The Church of England, then, *as a national establishment*, dispenses with the Bible. It does so as a matter of course. As an integral part of the constitution, it is as much the subject of legislation as any part of the criminal code is. And when the Parliament sits in legislation for it, the Bible is not consulted. The legislator who should appear with the Bible in his hand, would be looked on as beside himself. The question asked on such an occasion is, Does the measure proposed agree with the spirit of the constitution?—that is, with the spirit of a worldly kingdom: and, Is it demanded by the spirit of the times?—that is, by the ever-fickle spirit of the world. If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, the measure is adopted—the Bible meantime is forgotten. If, indeed, it puts in a claim to be heard, and if, on being heard, its voice happens to accord with the measure, it is thought fortunate,—fortunate, that is, for the Bible, rather than for the measure; for that stands on an independent footing, and is heard with a faint cheer. But if it protests against the measure, it is treated as an unwelcome intruder, and its voice is drowned amidst cries of *expediency*; and, like a deposed monarch, it sees its throne

<sup>1</sup> Church of England and Dissent.

<sup>2</sup> Quarterly Review.

<sup>3</sup> Hooker.

<sup>4</sup> British Critic.

usurped, and its office profaned, without being allowed a hearing where it ought to have given law.

Now, as might have been expected, the evils arising from this state of things are numerous and serious. I will name only one of these,—the entire supersedence of some of the most important passages in the New Testament, relating to Church discipline. One of the consequences, I say, of placing the Church of Christ under the control of a human legislature is, that men presuming to legislate where Christ has been legislating before, some of the most important of his laws, relating to Church discipline, are entirely nullified and superseded. By subjecting itself to such unnatural control, the "Church of England" has placed it out of its power to obey some of the most vital and leading laws of a Christian Church. It cannot serve these two masters; and the master disobeyed is not the human, but the Divine. Let me specify a single instance. You remember the laws which Christ enacted for his Church, in the 18th of Matthew. He supposes a member of the Church to have fallen into sin; and he appoints the method in which he shall be dealt with: first, told of his fault alone; then, in the presence of a third person—then, before the whole Church. Should this prove ineffectual, he is to be cut off from the Church. In taking this solemn step, they are to come into the presence of Christ as the fountain of their power; and he declares, "I will be there in the midst of you; I will descend and be a party in the final and awful transaction. As you discharge the painful task, I will ratify it. I am in the midst of you."

Can this be done? can these laws be observed? distinct as they are—ample, imperative as they are, can they be observed by the Church of England? Not one of them. She has put it out of her power to obey them. She has called in another law-giver—sworn obedience to another authority; so that these laws are a nullity to her: they might be erased from the Bible, blotted out from the statute-book of the Christian Church, she would not feel the loss of them—she has another statute-book. To conduct such affairs, she has separate courts of law, and all the accompaniments of a worldly judicature—fines, sequestration, and imprisonment.

2. But, my brother, we affirm, not only that your Church is human in its establishment, in opposition to the Divine origin of the Christian Church, but also that it is *involuntary in its formation*; while, as we have seen, the Church of Christ is, and must be, essentially voluntary. He would have "nothing done in his Church by constraint, but willingly." In his Church every thing supposes the presence of piety—appeals to piety—employs it—calculates on it; but you, by employing compulsion, suppose, in your Church, the absence of piety.

Am I asked for proof of such compulsion? Take, my brother, one of your highest authorities—the British Critic. “The system of our ecclesiastical judicature,” it states, “is founded on the presumption, not only that every man, woman, and child is a member of the English Church—but that not a soul of them is at liberty to consider themselves otherwise. For certain purposes, a man is no more allowed to renounce his churchmanship, than he is to abjure his allegiance.” Here, then, is a frank avowal, that your system leaves no room whatever for the exercise of the will.

Take another proof, in strict accordance with this avowal, the manner in which your Liturgy takes for granted, from first to last, that all who outwardly conform to its rites are Christians. In this respect, certainly, it is consistent throughout; for it never inquires into their character—utters not a doubt on the subject; from baptism to burial it uniformly recognises them as Christians. It insists, whatever doubt they themselves may have, it insists on it that they are Christians. According to Scripture, persons are members of the Church of Christ, because they are Christians: according to your system, they are Christians because they are members of your Church. In his Church, a title to membership depends on Christian character: in your Church, a title to the Christian name depends on membership. At the moment of baptism, it tells him that he is a child of God; at confirmation it meets him again with the same assurance; each time he frequents the table of the Lord, it repeats the affirmation—and, following him even to the grave, it repeats over his dust the assurance of his resurrection to eternal life. At no period of his life does it appeal to his *will*. It leaves no room for the exercise of that. It inquires not, “Are you a Christian?” it authoritatively asserts, “You are one.” It asks not, “Are you willing to believe, to embrace, to obey the Gospel?” it takes that for granted, and pronounces, “You are willing.” The Saviour had predicted, “My people shall be willing:” but your Church declares of all who are born within a certain circumference, “They are willing. I do not ask, Will you belong to the Church? I pronounce that they do;” and as such it treats them.

It may be said, however, “If the Establishment proceeds *without* consulting the will, it cannot be alleged that it defies and opposes the will.” Yes, my brother, it does even this: it is an *involuntary Church*, in the strongest sense of the term. Not only is it founded, as we have just heard, “on the presumption that every man, woman, and child, who happens to be born within certain geographical limits, is a member of it;” but it follows every such individual through life, with the scourge of persecution, if he dissents from that theory; for it

still *compels* him to render his share of pecuniary support—and has not merely all the civil, but all the military power of the nation to compel that support. Remember Ireland.

Perhaps, however, you are ready to suggest again, the fact, that Dissenters are tolerated, protected, and allowed voluntary enjoyment in religion. My brother, allow me to say, that for this we are indebted, not to the Establishment, but to the State—which has very properly interfered and arbitrated between the Establishment and those who dissent from it. We often, indeed, hear a boast of the mild and tolerant spirit of the Establishment; but the language is delusive, self-contradictory, and absurd. An established Church *cannot* be tolerant. You *cannot* say of any law, that it is *tolerant*; tolerant of *what*?—of its own violation?—a law allowing itself to be broken?—legalizing crime?—destroying itself? the thing is absurd. The *spirit of the times* may be tolerant; and may occasionally restrain and overrule the law, and compel it to forego its penalty. Such, for instance, at present is the position of that part of the criminal code which inflicts capital punishment. The spirit of the times has become so much more mild than that law, that it will not allow the law to inflict death, except in extreme cases. But no one thinks of calling the law, on that account, tolerant; on the contrary, it is daily denounced as *sanguinary*, and, as such, will no doubt be repealed. Well, the theory of an established Church is, *religion made law*; dissent is a violation of that law—so that if dissent be tolerated, it is not *that* law which tolerates it; *that*, as we just now heard from one of its advocates, *that* does not allow a soul in the nation to consider himself at liberty; whatever liberty dissent enjoys, it receives from the spirit of the times: not from the Establishment—but from the State: not from the Church (so called)—but from the world. And the Establishment—as if, to complete our argument—as if anxious to demonstrate that it is not with her permission we dissent, follows us through life with claims of pecuniary support; and looks complacently on, while the civil and military array of the nation exacts and compels payment.

Now, my brother, startling as it may sound, the consequence of all this is, that your Church, *as an establishment*, can actually do without piety. Remember, I speak now of your Church, not as a *Christian denomination*—but as a *civil establishment*; and, I ask, where is the proof that it needs piety to make it prosper? Recal to mind the royal names of those who, in succession, have stood at its head; has piety been their characteristic? Its legislators; has piety distinguished them? Many of its laws; piety has wept over them,—even humanity has turned from them and shuddered. Yea, if there be any truth in history, those periods when your Church has been most complete, most prosperous and triumphant, *as an establishment*, have been



the periods when it has been most worldly, most destitute of piety. What an anomaly! a Church independent of piety! a Church as complete without piety as with it! By allying itself to the State; by employing coercion—which is the only power with which the State *can* aid it—it leaves no room for the exercise of the will; it presumes the absence of piety in all its members; and more than once, alas! it has nearly realized that presumption, by almost expelling all piety from its bosom. Those of you acquainted with its history, need not be told that I allude especially to the expulsion of two thousand of its holiest ministers in one day.

3. We have seen that the first and only idea suggested by the word *church*, in the scriptural sense of the term, is that of a society distinct from the world; a society, spiritual in its character, religious in its members—or, as the Nineteenth Article of the Church of England declares, and declares to its condemnation, “The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men.” Is that, my brother, a description of your Church? On the contrary, it *practically* knows nothing of such a distinction: it gathers its members indiscriminately, without reference to character. The intention of Christ was, that when his Gospel had been preached in a place, as many as became converted in that place should be gathered into a distinct society—into a Church. But your Establishment, without inquiring into character, takes the whole population. According to his intention, when a Christian society had been gathered in such a place, it was to be called the Church of Christ *in* that place—in Reigate, for instance: but your Establishment would call it the Church *of* Reigate—meaning by that, the Church of all the inhabitants of Reigate, bad and good, godly and ungodly, drunkard and infidel—it takes the whole. The principle of his Church is *separation* from the world: the principle of the Establishment is *identification* with the world. The intention of Christ was, to place his Church in contrast with the world; but your Establishment leaves no world—it takes the whole. Hence, it is called, the Church *of* England: that is, the Church of all the inhabitants of England. Ask for the Church—and you are pointed to the nation: ask for the nation—and you are pointed to the Church; they are identical—they are one, and, consequently, if you then ask for the world, you will find that the Church has left none—it has taken the whole. Now carry out the application of this idea, and you will—*you must*—see its absurdity. Suppose, for instance, that all Europe were added to the English nation, and consented to adopt your Establishment, it would then be called the Church of Europe. Suppose the other quarters of the globe *did* the same, it would then (*without a single additional conversion to God having taken place*), it would then be called, *the Church of*

*the world!* What an awful perversion! what a palpable contradiction! the church of the world; some, including the whole; a selection which leaves none—which takes the whole: a society of believers, including all unbelievers: a sacred name which was meant to distinguish from the world, given to the world!

And then, my brother, the awful effects of this perversion! Souls deluded! Men flattering themselves that they are Christians, simply because they are members of your Church; for you tell them that they are. You know, my brother, how easy it is to believe what we *wish* to be true. Men wish to be thought Christians, for the sake of the rewards of Christianity; and your Church tells all in England that they are Christians; will not allow them to think otherwise, and they believe it: they lay the flattering unction to their soul—they pass into eternity with this lie in their right hand. Collect together the vilest inhabitants of this town, the refuse of society, and ask them, “Are you Christians?” “Christians!” they would say with surprise, approaching to indignation—“Christians! what else? are we not Churchmen? have we not been christened, confirmed? do we not belong to the Church? what do you take us for—heathens?” Or, rather, they would say, “Do you take us for brutes?” for so wide spread with them has the delusion become, that the term *Christian* is used synonymous with *man*; they have been taught to regard every man they know as a Christian; and their language implies that every other man is: that if a creature be not a brute—his only alternative is, that he must be a Christian: and hence *they* are Christians. Thus, men, who would be cast out of every other society as a disgrace, are emboldened to regard themselves as members of that which should be the most select of all societies—a Christian Church. Men glory in the *Christian name*, who know nothing of the *Christian doctrine*, and who would think it a reproach to be suspected of having the *Christian character*. Men assume the *profession* of Christianity, lest they should be thought *heathens or brutes*, who would on no account practise the *duties* of Christianity, lest they should be thought *mad*. They find that the mere profession of Christianity constitutes them members of a Church—and they are satisfied. The Church treats them as if that were enough; and every thing in their depraved nature inclines them to believe it, and to be satisfied. Were a system to be called for, which should be named, “A System for the Encouragement and Propagation of Nominal Christianity,” it would be difficult to devise one more completely answering to the name than this, or to devise one which could more appropriately take for its motto, “Christianity made easy;” made so, by dispensing with all but the outward form.

Oh, my brother, it is this consideration which most deeply

wounds the heart of genuine piety; to see a Church which might be mightily efficacious for good—mightily efficacious for evil. Nor can the pious and reflecting among you plead ignorance of the fact; for in all your missionary operations which are under the superintendence of evangelical men, and in which you find yourselves at Christian liberty, unhampered by the shackles of a worldly policy, you act on Scripture principles, allowing those only to be regarded as Christians and members of a Christian Church, who prove by their life that “they are called, and faithful, and chosen.” May God hasten the time when your freedom from state alliance shall permit you to act thus at home.

4. Did time allow, I might easily enlarge on the remaining particulars. We have seen, for instance, that the Church of Christ is independent of all worldly authority and human interference; and we dissent from you, my brother, because your Establishment accepts and acknowledges both. You have created a throne by God's throne, and have invested the authority that sits in it with “power to decree rites and ceremonies.” Piety is a virtue in his sight only as it is in compliance with his authority; but you have sworn allegiance to another authority—to an idol of your own creation; and, as the righteous reward of your temerity, you are now in daily apprehension of some of the evils denounced against the Israelites, when they said, “Nay, but we will have a king over us.” Having blended and incorporated with an earthly kingdom, you must expect to partake of all its pangs and paroxysms. Your pulse will fluctuate and beat, as that smiles or frowns. You belong to a Church of which we frequently hear it said, that it is *in danger*; and which is, indeed, at this moment in a panic, trembling from head to foot, lest its rulers should become its destroyers. For, being the creature of circumstances, circumstances may arise which may destroy their own creature. That which you have hitherto deemed your *strength*, and boasted of as your *title*—that you are *established by law*—is likely to prove your weakness and disgrace; for the power which *placed* you, can displace and dismiss you. “A nod may mar you, as a nod has made.” We choose to belong to a Church which can never be placed in so precarious and undignified a position; a Church, on whose front its Heavenly Founder has inscribed, “The gates of hell shall not prevail against it;” while his perfections kindle into an encompassing wall of fire for its protection.

5. And then, moreover, we have seen that the Church of Christ is purely spiritual in all its purposes and effects. We ask, my brother, whether it is this which has given value to your Establishment in the eyes of our statesmen? Have they thought of working it as a spiritual machinery, designed for nothing but heavenly purposes? Have they not calculated its value by a far

different standard—by its applicability to state purposes? But you remind me of its spiritual distinctions, its piety, its usefulness, its religious services both at home and abroad. My brother, it has not been my object to draw up a catalogue of objections to your Establishment, or it would be easy for me to swell the list of evils to a much greater amount than I have. But when you point to the piety and labours of your Church, I must be allowed to remind you, that the corrupt Church of Rome itself can refer to its examples of piety, and usefulness, and disinterested labours—so that in your case, as in the instance of that Church, these heavenly fruits *may* illustrate, not the excellence of the soil, but simply the excellence of the Gospel tree, which, however unhealthy the soil in which it is planted, lives, and puts forth, at least, a scanty produce of the fruits of the Spirit.

And then, I would remind you, that the great works which you are doing in the present day—and you are doing such, and we rejoice in it; and our prayer is, that you may do still greater works than these,—but these great works are not the fruits of your Church as an establishment. Now, pray, bear that vital fact in mind. What are these works? Your co-operation<sup>1</sup> with us in the Bible Society, in Missionary labours, and the like. Well, these are things which you do, not as an Established Church, but in spite of being an Established Church—by violating the first principles of an Established Church—by actually dissenting and departing from the spirit and principles of an Established Church; and, accordingly, those of your number who first set the example of doing these works, had to brave the frowns and thunders of the Established Church, for acting so irregular and uncanonical a part. You are prosecuting these works in your capacity as a *Christian denomination*—so that were you to cease to be *the Established Church to-morrow*, you would still go on prosecuting them. Are not we doing the very same things? and we are doing them as a *Christian denomination*. Yes, my brother, it is by becoming one with us—by practically abandoning your own principles, and by substantially adopting our views of a Christian Church, that you are doing all your great works. Do not talk, then, of your “excellent Establishment,” and of what it is doing: you are doing your noblest works in the very teeth of your Church as an establishment: return to the spirit of that, and you would soon abandon them all. But, as a Christian denomination, you have been slowly stimulated into activity by the example of other denominations; and, finding the cumbrousness and impracticability of your state-apparatus, you have been sliding insensibly into the adop-

<sup>1</sup> The extreme modesty of this expression will be understood, when it is recollected that the Missionary Society of the Church of England, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, numbers 135 years, the oldest Dissenting one, 42.

tion of our principles and modes of operation, till you have, in effect, become a dissenting community in all that relates to the extension of the kingdom of Christ, and remain an Established Church only in what relates to State purposes, and the maintenance of mere nominal Christianity. Yes, your greatest praise in the present day is, that in defiance of your own Establishment, you are labouring on our principles to counteract the pernicious effects of that Establishment. May your efforts be crowned with a success beyond your own wishes.

THE END.