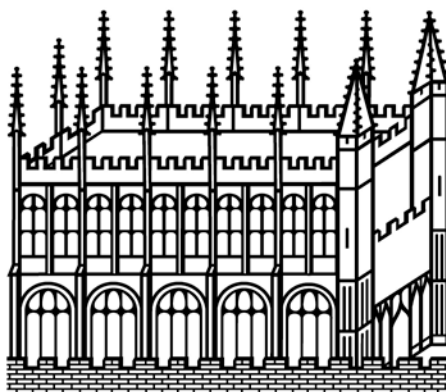




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TRUE STATE

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RESPECTING

RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

BY A CHURCHMAN.



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TRUE STATE OF PUBLIC OPINION.

Not being influenced by any desire to have the *last* word in an argument, I purposely abstained from all notice of the "Reply" put forth by "a Memorialist" to my "Remarks;" and I could have been well content to leave the question at issue between the Memorialist and myself to the decision of the public, without further explanation or enlargement, had not another publication issued from the same quarter as the Reply*, entering somewhat more into the general question of Religious Establishments. On the first glance at this new pamphlet, entitled "Remarks on the state and progress of Public Opinion in relation to Ecclesiastical Establishments, addressed to the People of Hull, by a Protestant Dissenter;" it appeared to me unnecessary to recall the attention of my readers to the disputed question. Yet the judgment of some, to whom I owe the greatest deference, over-ruled my purpose; and I resolved again to enter on an employment, for which I have little time and less inclination; but which seems rendered necessary, by the course of events, and by the conduct of the adversaries of our venerable Church.

As I have now the opportunity, I shall offer a few observations on the Reply, as well as on the more recent Remarks. The last of these Tracts begins with eulogizing the SPIRIT OF FREE INQUIRY which characterizes the Nineteenth Century. Now that I am no enemy to this spirit, has been shown by the free inquiry which I have made into the principles and design of the Memorial. Yet I find there are those who like to make free with the sentiments of others, and yet feel great objection to have their own freely canvassed; and who complain, that, when the Dissenters were going so quietly about their work, (which was nothing less than the demolition of the establishment,) I should have ventured to touch so inoffensive and sacred a thing as this same temperate Memorial.

But what is now often meant by the spirit of free inquiry, is a rash and headlong love of change, an unbounded license of thought which yields to no restraints, which looks only on one side of a question, which examines without caution,

* I do not say by the same pen; it may, or may not be so. Yet I conceive the parties to be so identified, that I am doing no injustice to either by putting the two publications together, and reviewing them as kindred performances.

judges without competency, and decides without evidence. And he who shall persuade men to deliberate before they determine, and to weigh consequences before they put events into such a train, that those consequences become inevitable, which might perhaps have been averted does more both to improve the intellect, and to secure the peace of the existing and succeeding generations, than he who urges public opinion onward at full speed, and solaces himself with the persuasion that if the mind of man be only active, it must of necessity be well employed. If every old thing were an abuse, every new thing an improvement, and every change an acquisition; the most "unsparing revision" of all existing institutions—such a revision of them as should leave nothing whereby we could recognize them, would not only be excuseable, but right. But not having yet learned in this New School of Reformation, I am disposed to admit no change till I am satisfied it will be a change for the better; and, when I am, I will gladly lend my best efforts to promote it. Let inquiry then be free, yet cautious; quick to detect abuses, careful in the application of the legitimate remedy; and never proceeding to subvert and to destroy till improvement is impracticable.

In the "Reply" to my "Remarks," the writer is pleased to bring a charge against my temper, which, as it does not at all affect the question at issue, I shall not attempt either to canvass or disprove. Men are often bad judges of their own temper, and still worse of that of their opponents. I shall therefore do nothing in the way of recrimination. I hope my long silence and patience under the reproof administered by him, will have fully convinced him that I am not "chafed" in temper now; and if he wishes for the credit of having "soothed" me into a better state, and of having illuminated me on a subject which I did not previously "understand," I will find no fault with him for so doing. I can assure him, I never dreamed of complaining of the "freedom" with which he treats me as an anonymous writer; and I hope that in return I shall be able to treat him throughout with all due respect. I have more reason than he to lament "the feeble and unskilful manner" in which (as he says) I have wielded my weapons; for mine must be the loss, and his the advantage. And still more deeply have I reason to regret, what I here most frankly confess, my invincible dulness of apprehension, which quite disables me from perceiving the force of his, no doubt, dexterous allusion to Jacob and

Esau. Of course I am Esau; and Esau, by a most singular concurrence of events, is among "the prophets." Though he "wears a rough garment" he cannot be accused of doing it "to deceive," for it is more natural to him, than ever prophetic vest was to its wearer. Yet Esau cuts an awkward figure in such company. The Memorialist seems little inclined to pay attention to his prophecies, and I despair of being able to conciliate the esteem of my enlightened opponent to so suspicious a prognosticator.

It might seem somewhat provoking also, that the Memorialist should have it in his power to turn my own weapons against me; but so effectually has he "soothed" me into good humour, that I make him heartily welcome to any spare shaft from my quiver which he may be able to gather up, for the sake of economizing the contents of his own. I may just hint, however, that arrows once used and blunted, require a powerful hand, to give them effect a second time. How far the Memorialist has succeeded in thus fighting with my weapons instead of his own, let the reader judge. Having in my "Remarks" referred to a passage in the Memorial, to show how strangely important distinctions were confounded, by the insinuation of a charge against our Tolerant Government and Church, in language appropriate only to the arrogant claims of the "Man of sin;" the Memorialist, in his defence of that document, instead of proving either that my allegation was false, or that the State really deserved the implied censure, throws back the arrow of accusation, and charges me with confounding distinctions in reference to burials, marriages, &c.; forgetting that to prove me *guilty* will not prove himself and his fellow subscribers *innocent*.

I have no intention to enlarge upon the topics of specific "grievance" involved in this dispute; because, I for one, should gladly see every concession made to Dissenters, which did not compromise the principle, that it is the duty of a Christian Government to make legislative provision for the religious instruction of the people. But on two or three subjects a passing observation will be necessary.

With respect to *tithes*, we have this curious statement, part of which is out of my depth, in the "Remarks on the state and progress of Public Opinion." "To make good, in the estimation of tithe-payers, the inalienable right of *the Clergy* to receive them, it will no longer avail to rely, with Dr. Morgan Cove, Dean of Hereford, on 'some unrecorded revelation made

to Adam;' on the mythological sanction of 'Apollo the Tithe-taker;' or on the abrogated Institutes of Judaism, and the emblematical symbols in Ezekiel's vision; still less on the more recent transfer to the English Church of tithes wrested from the Roman Catholic priesthood, at the sole pleasure of the State." (p. 10.)

It is on the last clause only of this splendid passage that I deem myself competent to offer any remark. We do not concede that the Church holds the tithes at the sole pleasure of the State. We deny that there has been any such "transfer" of ecclesiastical property from one Church to another, as the writer of the above paragraph supposes. Tithes in England were more ancient than Papal domination. The earliest statute on the subject, very nearly 1000 years ago, speaks of tithes as then belonging to the Clergy by the common law; whereas the power of the Pope, in these realms, was not established till after the conquest, A. D. 1066. The term *Reformation*, applied to the great change which took place when popery was dislodged from its strong holds in these realms, plainly indicates the truth, that the Church of England changed its *character*, but not its *identity*, at the period specified. There was "Reformation not Subversion" in the Ecclesiastical constitution of the country. The Church was *the Church of England*, both before and after the powerful and renovating shock. The effect of the Reformation was to loosen her chains, to set her free from the usurpation of Rome, to purify her from error and corruption. The change produced no "transfer" of general rights from one Church to another Church, but made the Church herself more fit to use and to enjoy her existing rights. Hence we argue, that while the Parliament has power to legislate respecting the best and most equitable mode of adjusting the tithe-system, to the present state of the country, and of rendering it more fully available to the purposes for which tithes were originally granted, it cannot alienate them, but by an act of palpable injustice, which would shake the foundations of every kind of property.

What, for instance, would be the fate of lay-impropriations—which are indeed the fruits of spoliation? Would they be safe, if the tithes of the Clergy should be tampered with? If they had not been impropriated, they would obviously have been in the same danger with the rest of the Ecclesiastical property. Could it then be imagined that the robbery perpetrated

by Henry the Eighth made that a good title, which, without such robbery, would have been a bad one? that an act of injustice gives legal stability to property which would otherwise have been in jeopardy? The supposition is monstrous.

On the claim to *inter in the Church-yards* without the use of the Church service, and the intervention of a clerical "Functionary," &c. I will simply quote the words of the Edinburgh Review, in the very article to which the Protestant Dissenter refers with so much approbation. "We must, however, in passing, remark," say the Reviewers, "that nothing can exceed the want of fairness and of common reason, shewn by some among the Sectaries in discussing these questions. Thus they claim the right of burial in the very Church-yards which they refuse the means of supporting. Let there be no rates, say they—let Churchmen keep up the Church-yard, but let us, who pay nothing towards it, have the privilege of burying our dead in it. Except among Irish land-owners, and the accomplices or dupes of Irish Agitators, was ever so glaring a want of fairness as in this pretension? We trust it is confined to a small body of the English Sectaries."

As to their right of free admission to the *Universities*; I observe that the College funds are as much endowments on the part of individuals, for the use and benefit of the members of the National Church, as Lady Hewley's Charity is for the use and benefit of Dissenters from that Church; and that we might as reasonably claim a portion of the funds of Rotherham or Highbury College, for the education of Members of the Establishment, as they a portion of the University funds for the education and advancement of Dissenters.

In passing, on a former occasion, from the consideration of the claims of Dissenters, to that of the operation of their system, should they be able to attain their present purpose; I ventured to point out what appeared to me an inconsistency in the Memorial, which condemns as unjust, a compulsory provision for the religious instruction of the adult population, while it would enforce one for the education of the young.

How does my opponent deal with this "dart?" "As we survive, (says he,) and feel no wound, we can readily forgive the intention." What! more "forgiveness" still? When shall we be able to repay this accumulated debt of kindness? "But (as our Writer says,) to the point." I had intimated that, though in these projected schools, the Bible would doubtless be at first chosen as the book of general instruction, yet ob-

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jectors might arise who would not allow their children to read it; and had asked, must these objectors be compelled to support a system they do not approve? Instead of answering this simple question with a simple negative or affirmative, he tells me, my "eye is diseased." Well; that may be, but what has it to do with the question? and why does he proceed to throw dust into it, unless it be for the sake of increasing the disease? He goes on to inform us, that he does not confound distinctions, or "overlook the line of demarcation between the provinces of Divine and human legislation." Now, as he does not overlook this line, what a pity it is that he has neglected to point it out. He does indeed talk about religion on one side, and politics, commerce and the arts on the other, and then enumerates "elements of language, the art of penmanship, the rules of arithmetic, mathematical demonstrations, &c.;" but one demonstration he has failed to make; namely, that of this disputed line of demarcation. To simplify the question as much as possible, I had alluded to nothing but the first principles of knowledge, and the Bible as the means of communicating it: now I still ask, after all that the Memorialist has written: "When a master teaches his scholar to read the Bible, where does the merely literary portion of his labour end, and the religious portion of it commence? or is it all literary, or all religious?"

To proceed more particularly to the "Remarks" of the Protestant Dissenter. The burden of the whole piece is, that there now prevails a general outcry against the Church Establishment. For this sundry causes are assigned. But the fact having been asserted, and not a little exaggerated; one thing is assumed as certain—that it is to be traced to the growing illumination, and the increased knowledge of the Scriptures which prevail. But may it not in fact, and much more obviously and directly be referred to other causes? Certain recent changes have quickened the political part of the Dissenters, and the avowed enemies of the Church generally, into a degree of life and hope and energy before unknown; and have they not been exerting themselves throughout the whole land to prevail upon mankind to adopt their views, and even by appealing to the worst passions of the heart, to excite them to effect their purposes? And may not these proceedings sufficiently account for a great part at least of what we witness, independently of much real "illumination" on the subjects brought into discussion? Is it not the fact, that the

mass of mankind, especially in a free country, are liable thus to be wrought upon, like the waves of the sea by the wind? and that hence, what almost amounts to a mania, is, from time to time, and from various causes, excited among them, which a little change of circumstances may avail again to allay and dissipate; but which, fomented by ill-designing men, may be productive of the most disastrous consequences. All this the history of the French Revolution, and the events of our own country in the age of Charles I. conspire to demonstrate. But how soon, in the one case, did the rage for "Liberty and Equality" sink into submission to military despotism, and, in the other, furious hostility to both Monarchy and Episcopacy, after having tasted the bitter fruits of its own success, give way to a no less ardent and exulting zeal in restoring both the throne and the altar, which it had subverted.

Dissenters should also consider well who are their associates in their present unhallowed crusade against the Church. They themselves may speak of *religion*, and may flatter themselves that it is to derive great advantage from the success of their schemes: but a great part of their comrades "despise their speech," and ridicule this notion as senseless fanaticism or hypocritical cant. Did their present excited state permit them to listen to reason, they might receive salutary admonition from one of their own brethren in the North. "It is proposed," says a writer in the *Quarterly Christian Magazine* for March, 1833, "to form an union among" various discordant sects and parties, "as *Dissenters*, for subverting the National Churches, as being an 'aggression' and 'an unwarrantable attack on the right of property,' to which they ought not always to submit. It is not impossible that their efforts may be successful: the national Churches may be subverted: but by whom? by Dissenting Christians? Nothing is more unlikely. It will, in all probability, be the work of infidels and revolutionists; and then the people of God who promoted the voluntary associations will experience, to their cost, that they have been the dupes of desperate and interested men; that they have been the tools of a party which, after having carried their point, will turn again and rend them."

In order to confirm his own views respecting the prevailing dislike to the English Church, the Protestant Dissenter quotes the worst, because the most violent and ill-founded portion of what he styles "a powerfully written article from No.

CXVIII. of the *Edinburgh Review*:" in which, among other accusations against the Clergy, it is said, that "they, generally speaking, seem to value themselves on nothing so much as their determined resistance of all improvement, and their steady patronage of every existing abuse"—that they have "taught men to believe that the guardians of the Church considered is as impossible that she and improvement could exist together,"—that they have "identified their Church with all corruption." These aspersions the Protestant Dissenter has made his own, and can he think himself justified in casting them upon the body of the Clergy at large? Or what would be said, were we, in language as unqualified and unmerited, to pour forth similar abuse upon Dissenting Ministers in the aggregate? Men who deal in such terms, are in no small danger of bearing false witness against their neighbour, till they believe their own falsehood.

In animadverting as I have done upon the Protestant Dissenter's representation of Public Opinion, I am, by no means, disposed to deny that there is a great and continual advancement of knowledge in the present day; but I contend that this knowledge is a much less noisy and less ostentatious thing, than that of which he boasts. Nor do I doubt, that Public Opinion has a force which will ultimately tell upon the legislature, and consequently upon the political and religious Institutions of the Country; but I question whether it is taking the direction he supposes, and consequently, whether it will land us in the Elysium to which his longing eyes look forward with beaming hope; where no State shall patronize a Church, but the voluntary system shed all its untold blessings on a happy and grateful people.

To such a result, however, my opponent thinks we are in rapid progress. And the first cause to which he traces this effect, is "the extended circulation of the word of God, and the homage it has received from the institution and efforts of of the Bible Society." The extended circulation of the word of God must be a source of gratification to the Christian's mind, whatever effect it may have upon any institutions for which he has a predilection: and so powerfully was this felt, more than twenty years ago, by the celebrated Rev. Dr. Clarke, Professor of Mineralogy in the University of Cambridge, that in the Public Meeting of the Society in that place, he uttered in the most energetic manner, words to this effect: "When it shall be proved that the circulation of the Bible alone is

hostile to the interests of the Established Church, then, and not till then, be the Church subverted."

I may, however, be permitted to add, that, as I feel assured it was not the wish of the Dissenter to injure the Bible Society, or to induce Churchmen to withdraw from it, it might have been more discreet to abstain from dragging it into the controversy. His argument would have lost nothing by being confined to the Scriptures themselves, and to their general circulation, without reference to this particular instrument of circulating them. My own opinion of the effects of this Society happens to be different from his; but sorry should I be to obtrude it as any argument against Dissent, had I the opportunity and the temptation to do so.

But how do the Scriptures affect Public Opinion on the question of Religious Establishments? "An inquirer (says the Protestant Dissenter) anxious to ascertain how far the Church of England, with her hierarchy, articles and formularies, is sanctioned by the New Testament, seeks there in vain for the pattern of the politico-religious structure which the State has reared. Of *Diocesan* Episcopacy he reads nothing; no trace does he find of Archbishops, Deans, Archdeacons, Prebends, or any of the Sinecurists who monopolize so large a share of the wealth and honours of the Church."

The chief question involved in this statement is the general one of *Diocesan* Episcopacy; which, in its simplest form, implies merely the superintendence of one Pastor over others, and, in some degree, over their flocks. This office we certainly do find in the New Testament, though the bearer of it is not always called a Bishop, and though we further concede that inferior Pastors do bear that name in common with him. The office, however, is more important than the name; and as this name was attached to it, and to it exclusively, soon after the times of the Apostles, we think ourselves warranted to abide by that precedent.

The elders or presbyters of Ephesus, for instance, were many, at least several, in St. Paul's time. See Acts xx. Yet, in the Book of Revelation, the Son of God addresses the "Angel" of the Church of Ephesus. Are we to suppose that Christianity had so declined in this great city, as to have reduced the elders to *one*? Is not the contrary supposition the only one consistent with probability and with Ecclesiastical history, that the elders or presbyters were multiplied, instead of reduced in number; and that the Angel was the Superintendent, the President, the Bishop of that Church?

An attentive reader of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, will find four functions ascribed to them, distinguishing them from ordinary Pastors.

1. That of ordaining elders in conjunction with the other presbyters. 1 Tim. iv. 14, v. 22. 2 Tim. i. 6. ii. 2.

2. The superintendence of their doctrine, or teaching. 1 Tim. i. 3.

3. The superintendence of their life and conduct. 1 Tim. v. 1. 19.

4. The general regulation of Ecclesiastical affairs implied in the direction, to "set in order the things that are wanting." Tit. i. 5. 1 Tim. ii. iii. 15.

And if he will have it that the office of Timothy and Titus was extraordinary, yet surely what was good for the Churches then, in the absence of the Apostles, might furnish no questionable precedent for their Government after the Apostles should be finally removed.

What he says about Archdeacons, Deans, Prebendaries and Sinecurists, who monopolize so large a share of the wealth and honours of the Church, may be briefly dismissed. For first, they are not essential to Episcopacy; nor are they different *orders* of ministers, but only ministers holding different *offices*. The Church would still be as much an Episcopal Church without them as with them. The Arch-deacon is a sort of deputy of the Bishop, to perform certain duties in his absence. There can be no *essential evil* in such an office. The Dean and Prebendaries are connected with the Cathedrals and not at all with the parishes; and therefore we do not plead for them, on the same ground as for the order and government of the parochial Clergy. But they are *Sinecurists*; this is the great offence; and to much malevolent aspersion have they been exposed in consequence of their imagined enormous wealth. On inquiry it is found that many of these high-sounding titles have not incomes attached to them sufficient to defray the necessary expenses of the duties required; and that many others do not leave their possessors fifty, sixty, or one hundred pounds per Annum. But we appeal to the unexceptionable evidence of the Edinburgh Review. "The absurd exaggerations of its wealth (the wealth of the Establishment) had been for a season credited, because of the unblushing confidence with which they were promulgated by *designing* among *ignorant* men. The falsehood of these tales was exposed by making public

the true statement of its revenues; and the former animosity towards it was succeeded by a calm, or rather by a kind of favourable feeling."

But to return to the researches of the reader of the Scriptures. "No warrant does he discover, (says our opponent,) in precept or in precedent, for compulsory exactions in support of Christian worship." It would be strange if he did, when those who alone had the power of the State were neither likely to listen to such precept, nor disposed to set such a precedent. But if the writer of this passage means to contend, that the new Testament indeed requires the employment of all influence and talent possessed by others, for the propagation of Christianity, and yet prohibits it in Christian Governors, we deny his position, and ask him for the proof.

Once more: "No warrant does he discover, for the appointment of Pastors over particular congregations, without their knowledge or against their consent. On the other hand he *does* find congregations of faithful men, voluntarily associated for the worship of God and the observance of Divine ordinances; whose Bishops or Pastors were elected by the people, maintained by their willing contributions, and aided by Deacons chosen from their own number to serve tables." It is somewhat remarkable that the reader of the Scriptures should find so accurate a picture of Independency! We have but one question to ask, "*Where* does he find all these things?" What account have we of one Bishop or Pastor chosen by the people, from the beginning to the end of the New Testament? And with regard to the choice of Deacons "to serve tables," it is singular, that in the only place where we are told that persons were chosen for this purpose, *they are not called Deacons*.

As the Apostles were chosen by Christ, so we find other Ministers appointed by *them*, not by the *people*; and in the instructions given to Titus, *he* is commanded to ordain elders, not the *people* to elect them "in every city." We do not however deny that a voice might be advantageously allowed to the people, though not in *choosing* their own Ministers, yet in shewing cause against the admission of unfit ones. But to point out room for improvement is not to assign a ground for subversion.

Such was the Ministry which God deigned to bless in the Primitive ages of the Church. Whether the constitution of the Church more nearly resembled the Independent or the Episcopal form, the reader must judge. To speak of adopt-

ing an "instrumentality disowned by Christ, and foreign to the genius of his government," is begging the whole question. If however the case were to be decided, by the comparative *success* of the two systems we should have no fear as to the issue. Episcopacy is not another word for oppression, secularity, indolence, or uselessness, as is frequently insinuated in the remarks of our Antagonists. But this introduces a new topic for discussion.

The second cause to which the Protestant Dissenter ascribes the present supposed state of Public Opinion is, "the inertness and inefficiency of the Establishment (with its numerous Clergy and vast pecuniary resources,) as a *professed Evangelical Institution*, contrasted with the vigour and efficiency of the voluntary Church system, and its universal adaptation to all states of society, under all forms of Government." In speaking on the same subject, he insinuates that the Church had "put off the armour of God, for the power of the sword and the patronage of kings." "A corrupted Church," he adds, "and an imprisoned gospel, mournfully rebuked, for ages, the folly and presumption of the experiment." He elsewhere assumes that "the ends of the original compact" between Church and State were, that the Church should be made the "political tool of the State;" and that the State should "lean on" the Church for support. By thus mistating the *end* of the union between Church and State, he is able to infer that nothing but a corrupt Church and an arbitrary Government could go together; and that therefore, since the Reform Bill had passed, the fate of the Church was sealed. But let us look at his facts. In order to come to a right decision, it will be necessary to compare the operations of the Established Church and of Independency at various, but corresponding dates. If for instance we examine the state of the Church a century ago, and the state of Independency now, we might come to a very erroneous conclusion respecting the comparative merits of the two systems. But let us observe both in times past, and see what benefits each conferred on the community. The Church, it is allowed, did not adhere with fidelity to the great principles of the Reformation: she sunk into formality: the doctrine of Justification by faith was obscured, and little was left for the edification of the people, beyond the great and incalculable benefit of having the Sacred Scriptures, and the Evangelical Liturgy of the Church read in every parish, in the kingdom. Did the voluntary system step in and make up the deficiency during this season of dearth?

Did the Chapels of Baxter and Matthew Henry resound with the Saviour's name? The fact cannot be denied, that the season of deadness within the pale of the Church, was the season of rampant heterodoxy without. Many pious Ministers were indeed to be found among the Dissenters in different parts of the country; such as Watts, Jennings, Doddridge, and others. But the plague of Arianism which broke out in Devonshire about the year 1718, spread with alarming rapidity through the Dissenting Congregations, especially the Presbyterians and general Baptists. "Error was the destroying angel of Dissenting Congregations," says a most unexceptionable witness*. The voluntary system, instead of being 'adapted to all states of society, under all forms of Government,' was palpably without any adaptation to the state of this country, at the time when it most imperiously demanded all the spiritual help, which any right religious system could afford. Not only were its fruits bad, but (what under the circumstances must be regarded as a peculiar mercy) it was 'inert' beyond all conception; otherwise at the season when the gracious revival of religious feeling took place in the hearts of a few holy, energetic men, about eighty years ago, they might have found the country deluged with Socinianism.

The use then of the Establishment, during the worst period of her history was this; that she kept the word of God constantly before the people, and furnished their minds with suitable subjects of prayer, which, notwithstanding the general lack of vital piety, would undoubtedly be beneficial to many, and especially when sickness, age, infirmity and death itself were coming upon them.

Again. When it pleased God to rouse the nation from its spiritual slumber, on which of these two systems did he confer the sanction of his special blessing? Was it not the Church? Such men as Romaine, Walker of Truro, Venn of Huddersfield, Dr. Conyers and others, separately, but almost simultaneously began to preach the doctrines of the Cross, and to excite considerable attention, in large districts of the country, on the great subject of religion. Wesley and Whitfield, reared in the bosom of the Church, but unhappily discountenanced by those who ought to have honoured and rejoiced in them, began their labours about the same time. It was by an injustice and a short-sighted policy, which I would neither excuse nor extenuate, that these men were driven from the churches, where they were disposed to teach, and that thus an

* Bogue and Bennett, vol. III. page 318.

accidental advantage was given to the voluntary system by the folly of its enemies, which could never have been secured to it, by any sagacity or power of its friends. Yet notwithstanding this, how much more extensive has been the progress of religion during the last fifty years within the Establishment, than in any of those communions which are based upon the principle of Independency!

To abate the force of any argument drawn from the acknowledged usefulness of the Church, the Protestant Dissenter intimates that "the voluntary principle is the main spring of Christian energy and evangelical usefulness within the pale of the Establishment itself." He here seems to take for granted that whatever is voluntary, is so far opposed to the spirit of an Establishment; than which nothing can be more false in fact, or in principle more absurd. What we contend for is, that an Establishment, while it compels the careless and the reluctant to contribute something to the service of God and the common good, gives more abundant scope to the exertions of all within her pale, who are disposed to "devise liberal things."

With respect to Scotland, I will only here express my conviction that the following sentiments of the Edinburgh Review are in unison with those of the majority of his countrymen.

"We set out with stating, that we approved the necessity, or at least the high expediency of an Establishment both in England and in Scotland. Let those who deny this, only explain in what way they expect the bulk of the common people to receive religious and moral instruction, if all is left to voluntary exertions. How are those who stand most in need of the control of religion, to provide pious and faithful ministers of the word of God?... Until some scheme is promulgated which can ensure a due supply of this essential want,—a supply not depending upon the desires or caprices of those, who standing most in need of it, are pretty generally the most blind to its value,—we must own that we shall feel an invincible repugnance to any thing which can shake the Establishment*."

If the statement respecting Wales had been confirmed on any higher authority than that of a Newspaper pledged to the cause of Dissent, it might have deserved notice. But to argue on such documents as are here produced is fighting with shadows. I allow that the interests of the Establishment in the Principality are low compared with other portions of the

* Ed. Rev. No. cxviii. p. 502—the same article from which the tirade against the Clergy above given is quoted. The Reviewer adds: "With all our Presbyterian prejudices, too, we must admit the extraordinary degree in which the Church of our southern neighbours combines piety and learning with tolerance. Our own is simple, no doubt, and it has less of the pride which state and wealth engender. . . it is possible, too, that it may have more piety. But we fear that it cannot pretend to anything like equal learning."

island; but perhaps this might be more accurately accounted for, by the notorious poverty of the Welch Clergy, than by "the vast compulsory revenue," by which it is said the Churches are supported.

The case of America, however, is that on which our opponents mainly rely as exhibiting in perfection the effects of their system. Accounts transmitted from the other side of the Atlantic, by the avowed advocates of the voluntary system, at the special solicitation of its friends in England, speak of the fifteen thousand congregations of the United States, of the ample provision made for their Ministers, and of the astonishing progress of religious knowledge, through that land of liberty.

That these numbers are greatly exaggerated there can be little doubt, even on the shewing of the warmest advocates of this voluntary scheme. Mr. Colton, speaking of one sect, which does not stand high in his favour, says: "Their preachers are all itinerants, and when one of them has collected a small group of people in some retired place, and exhausted his doctrine and influence in a few weeks, it is then set down in the list of 'Congregations,' and away he flies to make another in the same way, and the one he leaves behind him is soon dissolved, and no more is heard of it. This is substantially the history of their "One thousand congregations."

We also learn, that one prominent fact is the almost incredible number of sects in America, which *sinks the dignity of the Christian Ministry*, and reduces its means of support. The people are so divided and subdivided, that even where the population is considerable, there is often neither the inclination nor the ability to support regular, well informed, public teachers. Hence many Ministers are *Farmers*; and many desert the ministry at an early age, and seek a living by schools and other means.

From the Third Report of the American Society for educating pious youths for the ministry, the following facts are given. From the year 1620 to 1720, more than *half* the graduates of the Colleges became Ministers; but this proportion gradually diminished every succeeding year; till from the year 1800 to 1810, not more than one *sixth* of the number took the ministerial office; and yet the entire number of graduates has not increased so fast in proportion as the population!

Another fact bearing the same aspect on this question is, that the two extreme heresies which afflict the Christian

Church, are very prevalent in the Union, Popery and Socinianism. No where does the Church of Rome speak of her triumphs in a higher tone. Yet Voluntary Churches have branded Establishments, as nurseries of Popery. Mr. Potter, in the course of a debate in the House of Commons, is reported to have said, "that the spread of Unitarianism, in America, had been most rapid. There was now hardly a town in that vast country in which there was not a Unitarian Chapel, in the larger towns, two; and in the town of Boston there were no fewer than sixteen congregations professing Unitarian belief." A considerable portion of the Baptists, one of the largest denominations in the Union, are accused of heterodoxy. Many of their preachers are represented as "enthusiastic Socinians, profoundly ignorant and very noisy*." To these mournful facts, let it be added, that by many no part of the Sabbath is deemed holy time, except the portion of it, which is spent in religious worship; and then it will be acknowledged that however great may be the excitement produced, from time to time, among the purer and more orthodox religious denominations, yet there is nothing in the present state of America to abate an Englishman's love to his own Established Church; or to make him desire any approximation in the religious system of his own country, to that which, with such a mixture of good and evil, reigns in the United States.

Respecting the *third* cause of the imagined change in public sentiment, namely, "the progressive Reforms in Church and State, which render it no longer possible for either party to fulfil the terms, or attain the ends of their original compact;" I have already shown that the "ends of the compact" are essentially different from those which our adversaries assign, and of a much better kind. The Church is intended to be a blessing to the State and to the whole country. And the State is required to uphold the Church, not, as has been falsely alleged, because *she* cannot stand without an arm of flesh whereon to lean; but because the well-being of the *nation*, and the universal diffusion of morality and religion among the mass of the population, are best promoted by such means. The Church would exist without the patronage of the State, but the country would suffer a loss by the contemplated stroke of separation, for which no vigour and efficacy of the voluntary system could compensate.

* Mr. Colton, who throughout writes like an ADVOCATE rather than a WITNESS, asserts that Socinianism is declining, yet confirms Mr. Potter's fact respecting Boston. He says nothing about the charges brought against the Baptists.

Fourthly, the alleged "gradual rise of a party amongst Episcopalians adverse, on various grounds, to Ecclesiastical Establishments," demands a passing notice.

As there are some Dissenters (we hope many) who are decidedly opposed both to the principles and conduct of the leaders in the present warfare against the Church; so there are some Churchmen who speak generally against Establishments, though they still loosely adhere to that in which they have been educated. But between the two cases there is this great difference; that, whereas Dissenters have been well trained to use such argument or sophistry as their cause was capable of; Churchmen have been left, to a great degree, ignorant of the true grounds on which theirs was to be vindicated. We have no doubt that the present controversy (from which, for the mere sake of peace, the Church has long abstained) is producing a great change in the views of that class of persons to which we now refer, but it is in a directly opposite direction to that supposed by the Protestant Dissenter. The documents of our adversaries alone have opened the eyes of many; the spirit of their proceedings in different parts of the country, especially in Nottingham, has awakened the suspicions of more; and the able defences of Establishments by Chalmers, Dealtry, (in his "Charge" and his "Sermon" on the subject with the appended notes) and others, have put the whole question before them in a new and more advantageous light. Such, in our judgment, is the progress of opinion among those from whom the Dissenters expect considerable aid in their adventurous enterprize.

These remarks apply with equal force to the *last* of those grounds on which the author of the tract before us makes his appeal; "The existence within the Church of an increasing class of hopeful Auxiliaries to the voluntary system." I will only here observe that the Dissenters in their anxiety to count up friends, are in some danger of reckoning a part of their opponents hosts in the number. An attempt is made to show that all Churches, for instance, built by voluntary contributions, are so many witnesses in favour of the voluntary system. It is true the word "voluntary" happily occurs in both cases. But the reasoning goes on the supposition that whatever is voluntarily done under the Establishment, is done in direct violation of its fundamental principle. In this way it would be no difficult matter to prove, that the entire Church of England belongs to the voluntary system. For, from time

immemorial, this voluntary principle has been appealed to, in various ways and for various purposes.

We deem it indeed, no small advantage possessed by the Church, that she unites the stability of an Establishment, with the activity of the voluntary system; and is not behind the chief of her compeers or antagonists in the zeal with which she diffuses religion, while she has a pledge for the steadiness of her progress and the perpetuity of her triumphs, which a system ever varying with the caprice of the age, has no power to confer.

The Protestant Dissenter puts in a bold claim for the Wesleyan Methodists as coadjutors in his cause. We shall not, I hope be thought to undervalue the testimony or the conjectures of our opponent, if we refuse to give him credit for being better acquainted with the state of the Wesleyan Societies than Mr. Henwood.

The conclusion to which the whole argument of the tract under review is brought amounts to this: "Throughout the three kingdoms the conviction gains ground daily, that the main causes of discontent with the Established Churches are inherent in their political constitution, and inseparable from them *as such*." The inference drawn by the Edinburgh Review, in the Article already quoted on both sides of this controversy, is somewhat amusingly different. "With these sentiments" says the Reviewer, speaking of the Church, "we own we derive great satisfaction from reflecting upon the causes of its unpopularity. They are all personal—accidental—removable."

Our own summing up of the whole case is this. There is an enlightened and there is a factious spirit abroad. From the former the Church has every thing to hope, from the latter alone arise all its causes of fear. The partial information which has been diffused with great industry through the Country respecting America; the taste which has been cherished for novelty and change; the abuse which has been unsparingly heaped upon the Church and Clergy;* the appeal which has been made to political prejudices; have all tended rather to the promotion of faction than of knowledge, among large portions of the community. It is also to be remembered

* Take the following as a specimen. "The policy of the Established Clergy in all ages has been, to go as far against Dissenters AS THE PUBLIC MIND WOULD BEAR. When persecution could be inflicted, they inculcated the propriety of persecution. When this would no longer be borne, they admitted the propriety of TOLERATION." Ballantyne, quoted in the Remarks of the Protestant Dissenter. And yet the first Writer who unfolded the true doctrine of religious liberty, was a celebrated Bishop of this intolerant Church, Jeremy Taylor!

that this work has been going on for years. The Ecclesiastical Knowledge Society, issued its violent tirades, its false statements, its dishonest projects of spoliation through the medium of tracts and speeches; and all this while the Church was quiet and patient almost to a fault. Yet, after all, how far beneath the anticipations of Dissenters has been the success of these desperate efforts. The Church at length, goaded and threatened on every side, has buckled on her armour. Her sons have rallied round her standard, and her enemies, who thought her sinking in the decrepitude of age, are surprised to find in her the vigour of renovated youth.

That great advantage will be obtained by the Church and by the country from this struggle, I fully believe. She will be roused to greater exertion; she will, I trust, be purified, not burned in the fire; her ministers will become more earnest to do good, and her people more diligent to improve their privileges. The large accessions which of late years have been made to the congregations of the Establishment in many parts of the kingdom; the increased spirit of piety which pervades her ministers and people; the warm expressions of attachment which the recent attack upon her has elicited from immense numbers of the population, who were thought to be quite indifferent to the whole question now agitated; are decisive tokens for good. Whilst on the other hand it appears from important concessions made in the *Ecclectic Review* and in the *Congregational Magazine*, that Dissent is on the decline among the middle and higher classes of Society; and that a gradual "re-absorption" is taking place of their most respectable members into the Church. (See *Congreg. Mag.* 1826, p. 9. *Ecclec. Rev.* 1832, p. 138.)

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