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George Dunlop. Lillmanock

Thomas F. Torrance

SCS #1184

PATRONAGE

ANATOMIZED and DETECTED.

O R.

The Rise, Reign, Nature, Tendency, Effects and evil Consequences of PATRONAGE laid open; some Objections noticed; and Popular Election in a few particulars vindicated.

In a LETTER from JOHN HOWIE to the Eldership and Congregation of the Parish of FINWICK.

To which is prefixed, by way of Introduction, A short historical Narrative of the whole Process betwixt the People of Finwick and the Judicatories of the Established Church, setting forth what treatment they have received from said Judicatories anent their consent or choice in calling of their own Minister.

Published at the Desire of the said Parish of Finwick.

ISA. xxviii. 14. Wherefore hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men that rule this people.

PSAL. lxxxii. 2. How long will ye judge unjustly? &c.

LAM. iii. 36. To subvert a man in his judgment, the Lord approveth not.

JOHN X. 1. He that entereth not in by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

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T O T H E
P U B L I C.

ALTHOUGH Patronage, at least the obtruding of unqualified, undeserving, and undesired persons on reclaiming congregations, is almost become epidemical in Scotland, yet every reiterated act or instance of this kind that occurs in divine providence, affords new matter of speculation and amusement in this age, which, Athenian-like, has a capricious fondness to hear or see something new.

As to the occasion, rise and publication of the following papers, I am to advertise the reader that some considerable time after this contest began, a Member of Session signified his desire that I should help them with something of this kind concerning Patronage. Upon considering the thing, I conceived, that as the Parish of Finwick had not hitherto actually felt the callous claws of Patronage, the most part of them were then in a great measure unacquainted with this kind of warfare. Therefore, I drew up the contents of the following Missive on Patronage, and sent it to them in March 1780; which proved so acceptable to them, that some judicious persons in the Parish desired from time to time that it should be enlarged and published. However, it was put off for some time. In the mean while, it was thought proper, that a short narrative of the whole affair betwixt them and the church judicatories should be drawn up, and the

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publication delayed till the whole process were finished; and, for that purpose, having received their paper minutes and notes of presbytery, I drew out a short narrative as concise as was consistent with the reader's having any true idea of the matter, leaving a decision on either side to the judgment of the impartial and candid

FOR this publication there needs no other apology than the ancient Roman proverb, *Audi et altera partem, i. e.* Let the opposite party be heard. As the people of Finwick had been misrepresented in different and distant places, it was necessary, nay, I fear reasonable, that they should be allowed before the public to answer for themselves. They should be heard before they be condemned for their conduct. And can any thing be more necessary for that purpose, than to give a relation of facts as they stand, and shew their reasons why they could not submit to lordly Patronage?—The principle of self defence to those concerned may sufficiently warrant this, while a vindication of injured truth and a desire to inform the ignorant, may rather be accounted the motives—*Pat. thou art permitted to answer for thyself*, said king Agrippa.

LET it farther be noticed, that, though this letter on Patronage be now much larger than in the original copy, yet it cannot rationally be expected, that the limits of a Missive can contain either a multiplicity of particulars, or prolixity of reasoning. Nor is there much need here for it, after so many detached pieces have been elaborately wrote and published on the subject.—So that they may be accounted only a short compend or summary of the principal arguments against, and evil consequences of Patronage, for the benefit of those who are not acquainted with the Publications. Some may think, that indeed my observations are too short. But many people have a great inclination to purchase, and as little appetite to peruse bulky pamphlets of this kind; and where b

vity is studied, consistent with perspicuity, there is this advantage, that the reader's patience is not fatigued with that superfluous lumber with which heavy and prolix performances are oftentimes stuffed.

THERE is no question that as these pages are published by consent, and at the desire of the committee, eldership, and people of Finwick, that some may wonder, why one so little concerned in the affair should intermeddle so far therein : but this needs be no objection ; for I had not the most remote thought of any thing of this nature till suggested unto me (as has been noticed). And, though the opposing of Patronage may in some sense be accounted the common cause ; yet I have been so far from acknowledging the authority of these judicatories, or homologating any of their proceedings in the evils complained of, that I have rather looked upon it as an opportunity offered, in divine providence, to testify against their conduct and career of defection and apostacy.—For this cause, no doubt, did these patronizing and patronized gentlemen think that they had an object here to fix their attention upon, there would be whole peals of indignation and resentment rung out both against the writer and his small performance.—But this affects me or the cause nothing. Truth will be truth still, whoever speak it. It is hoped these arguments have scripture to support them ; and for historical facts, they are stubborn things, and will not yield to every wanton and impudent attack made upon them. It is to be lamented that every new year produces new materials of this kind for illustrating the bad tendency and woeful consequences of Patronage in the church of Scotland.—Besides this, every controverted truth is the word of Christ's patience, and so ought to be the word of the church's testimony. Every part of our once famous reformed covenanted constitution (of which this is one) is well worth the contending for, because it was free, and its object was religion, which
of

of itself is of all things the most valuable ;—because it has been struggled for by the best of men, who spared not all they had on earth even life itself, to purchase and secure it ;—and the opposite of it, particularly in the case of Patronage, is despotism to the highest degree. For these reasons, if this small mite of testimony against Patronage shall serve no other purpose, it will stand on record as another additional witness against the granters, accepters, practisers, fomenters and compliers with Patronage,

No doubt, my private capacity and want of a more enlarged degree of literature, will render these pages below the taste of clerical eloquence, accuracy, and symmetry.—But is any thing more comely than truth in its native dress ? And as no designed mistake is in it, if any thing of this kind that I have been led into, appears in sentence, word or figure, it will be the more easily pardoned by the indulgent reader.

AND finally, if any thing therein shall prove in some degree useful for the information, support and confirmation of one of the least of Christ's mystical members, then the end is gained, and all my pains amply rewarded.—For, that many may be found *standing fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, -and earnestly contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints,* is, ought, and, through grace, shall be the earnest and ardent desire of

LOCHGOIN, }
July 9th, 1782 }

JOHN HOWIE.

T H E

I N T R O D U C T I O N .

THE Parish of Finwick was anciently a part of the Parish of Kilmarnock. But its length rendering it inconvenient for people's attending gospel-ordinances after the reformation, (being above seven miles at the extremity from its own parish church). For this and other reasons, the heritors and others procured a disjunction, and built a very handsome country church, which bears the date of 1643.

It is said, that the memorable and faithful Mr William Guthrie preached within its walls before it was finished. However, he was ordained their first minister, Nov. 7th, 1644. This church and parish was at first called New Kirk or New Kil-marnock. But it has now for a considerable time been designed and known only by the name of FINWICK. Mr Guthrie continued in the faithful discharge of that trust committed unto him a number of years; and indeed *he was a burning and a shining light*, and the people in that corner were willing for a season to rejoice in that light.

After the restoration of Charles II. when the rest of the faithful ministers were thrust out about the year 1662, he was, by means of Glencairn, then Chancellor, and other gentlemen, kept in Finwick for some years: but, on account of the people that looked unto his ministry from the adjacent bounds, James, Archbishop of Glasgow would suffer him to
continue

continue there no longer; and therefore he was thrust out and suspended. At last, he prevailed with the Curate of Calder for 5l. to undertake the dreary work. Accordingly, he came with a party of soldiers to Finwick, and upon the 14th of July 1665, intimated his deposition. "The people (says a historian) were willing to have sacrificed all that was dear unto them in defence of the gospel in adhering to him. Indeed, Mr Guthrie had some difficulty in getting their affection to him so far moderated, as to keep them from violent proceedings against the party who came to depose him. They would actually have prevented the church from being declared vacant, and were ready to have *resisted even unto blood striving against sin*, had they been permitted *." However, the Curate made little by this jaunt. For he never preached more; but in a short time died in great torment of the iliack passion. The church of Finwick, it appears, continued vacant until about 1672, that one Mr Thomas Wayle one of the indulged, was appointed unto it. He had, before the Restoration, been minister at Kirkcudbright, and had suffered many hardships after he was thrust out of that charge. And indeed he was amongst the best of that denomination. Witness the two papers given in by him to the privy council concerning these restrictions and rules by them imposed upon the indulged, which he could not in conscience obey. He caused build several of the bridges in that parish. The occasion was, that several lost their lives by water amongst that numerous multitude that from the adjacent parts flocked to his ministry. After he had been there about four years, the administration of the prelates took place in that parish, one Mr Ogilvie being some short time curate, then one Mr Crawford, and last of all Mr Main.—This parish, from its first erection, till the
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* For a more copious account of this, consult Wood's history, vol. I. page 210. Mr Guthrie's treatise in preface concerning his life. And Scots Biography, p. 295.

Tod, Clk. Ps." The scroll of the call and paper of compeance was by them returned to the presbytery, and found signed by no person whatsoever. A large concurrence of persons from the parish of Finwick attended this meeting of presbytery, and James Cuthbertson elder in their name, gave in two papers signed by him as their preses, signifying their opposition to the settlement of the presentee, which were read and ordered to ly on the table till next meeting of presbytery.

At next presbytery, Feb. 6th, were produced and read three letters in a way of concurrence with the patron from three non-residing heritors, *viz.* Col. Muir Campbel of Rowallen, Dr. M'Night, and Mr. Banantyne of Gardrum. Upon the other side, from the parish of Finwick compeared, John Barr, Robert Kirkland, James and William Cuthbertson, elders, John, Adam and Robert Brown, heritors, Alexander Gemmel, Robert Wardrop, Robert Dunlop, Adam Miller, John Falton and John Blackwood, heads of families. The papers tabled at last presbytery were called for and read: the tenor of the first was the minute of a meeting of the generality of the parish of Finwick, Nov. 23d, James Cuthbertson being chosen preses: they appointed the above named persons to appear at the presbytery, and oppose the settlement of the presentee, signed by the preses. The other paper contained their intention and desires; wherein, after shewing that Mr. Boyd "can have no call or concurrence unto this parish for a pastor; they come to obviate that objection, that they would accept of no minister at all," thus: "If it is the will of Almighty God, we want to be soon settled, because we have no stated ordinances in this place; &c. we can be fixed, and give our report to the moderator as to the particular man in a regular time according to the constitution of this church in its reformed period, which we the members of the church are solemnly bound to by you in

our solemn engagements, &c. The presbytery without a vote, "did and hereby do refer simpliciter to the ensuing synod of Glasgow and Air, for decision, the whole affair relating to the settlement of Mr. William Boyd, probationer, presented to the parish of Finwick for their minister, &c." About this time, the managers of the affairs of the parish wrote a very spirited letter and sent to Mr. Boyd, to which he returned no answer. It contains about nineteen queries; and, tho' these at full cannot properly be here got inserted, yet that the reader may have some faint views what notion the parish had of Mr. Boyd and his ministry, I shall insert, for a specimen, these few queries following.

Quer. 1. Is this manner of proceeding of yours, when the people have no desire for you, any way agreeable to the rules laid down in the word of God?

Quer. 6. Do you think that this way of being pastor in a Parish by a patron does not rob Christ of his prerogative, he being the great Lawgiver, Head and King of his church?

Quer. 15. Does it not become a people to be anxiously concerned about the choice of a pastor, that, by the blessing of God, may be a happy instrument of winning souls to Christ?

Quer. 16. Is the reading of a preaching on a paper from a pulpit any way agreeable to the apostolic rule?

Quer. 19. Do you see or find in all the New Testament that Christ or his apostles gave orders to go and read the gospel, but to preach it? *Lastly,* Do you think that this procedure does not offend some of these his little ones, and do you not observe the woe pronounced. But to return;

The Synod of Glasgow and Ayr, April 10, 1781 took up the reference, at which compeared Mr Robertson of Parkhill, as Agent and Commissioner for the Patron and Presentee; and for the Parish, John Ritchie, John Adam, and James Smith, heritor James and William Cuthbertson, elders, Alexander Gemmel, Robert Dunlop, Robert Wardrop, Adam Mille

Miller, John Fulton, and John Blackwood, heads of families. Parties on both sides being heard, some of the Parish Commissioners spoke at some length, and to good purpose, upon that freedom of right purchased unto them by the church's Head, &c.

April 11. the affair came to a decision, in which the vote was, Refer or Decide. It carried by a majority, Decide. Upon which two motions were made: the first, that the presbytery of Irvine take Mr Boyd on trials, and proceed to his settlement: the second, that as there was no concurrence of a Call, &c. the Synod should sist all procedure in the affair. The votes being called and marked, the last carried by a majority. The decision as it stands in the minutes runs thus, " And therefore the Synod do sist all procedure in this affair of the settlement of Finwick, understanding thereby that the Presentee is laid aside, and the presbytery of Irvine are appointed to inform the right honourable Patron of Finwick of this step of the Synod, and to beg of him to present *de novo*." The parties being called, and this sentence intimated, the Agent for the Patron protested and appealed to the next General Assembly for redress of grievances, offering to give in his reasons of appeal in due time. — Upon which, Mr Patrick Wodrow in his own name, and in the name of all who should adhere to him, dissented from the sentence, and craved liberty to complain against the same to the next General Assembly; Messrs. David Shaw, William Dalrymple, John Couper, John Wilson, H. Graham, Matthew Biggart, James Wodrow, Wm. M'Gill, and Alexander Hutchison, ministers. Whereupon they took instruments in the clerk's hand, promising to give in their reasons in due time. The Synod appointed Messrs. William Auld, Alexander Moodie and John Ruffel to make answers to these when given *.

Accor-

* As for the reasons of dissent, any thing worth notice in them is touched a little in the considering the objections

Accordingly the affair came before the Assembly, May 30th, 1781. Both parties being heard, a motion was made to reverse the sentence of the Synod, and remit the cause to the presbytery of Irvine to take in, and consider what additional concurrence may be offered, and use their best endeavours to reconcile the parish to the Presentee, and thereafter to proceed to the settlement according to the rules of the church. Another motion was made, "To reverse the sentence of the Synod,—and sustain the concurrence with the Presentee, and appoint the presbytery of Irvine to proceed toward the settlement of Mr Boyd with all convenient speed."—The Assembly, without a vote, agreed to reverse the Synod's sentence. The question was, Appoint or Remit; it being understood that Appoint carried the second motion, and Remit the first. It carried, Appoint. So the second motion was adopted, proceed to the settlement with all convenient speed, &c.

From this judgment, the following members dissented, *viz.* Dr Hunter, Edinburgh; Dr Johnston, North Leith; Mess. Spankie, Falkland; Buchanan, Stirling; Davidson, Kippen; Kemp, Edinburgh; Dumbar, Dunning; Johnston, Holywood; Paul, Newbottle; Walker, Cramond; Cald, Cray; Martin, Monymid; Wright, Trinity-gask; Snodgrass, Dundee; Bryce, Logie; and Port Jardine, Bathgate; Mochrie, Colmonel; Nisbet, Montrose; Williamson, Finwall; Forlong, Rutherglen; Robertson, Kirkconel; Thomson, Carnock; Lyon, Strathmiglo; Lundie, Old Hamstocks; Dalgliesh, Ferry; Puriten, Craigs, ministers. Bailie Miller, Canongate; Bailie Orr, Paisley; bailie Hutton, Dunfermline; bailie Walker, elders. An abbreviate of the reasons of dissent here follows.

" 1. Be-

ons in the following letter; and for the answers, I could not obtain them, the only copy being left in Edinburgh.

“ 1. Because the sentence of the Assembly sustaining the Call to Mr Boyd, is contrary to the essential forms and established practice of the church. There was not a single subscription adhibited to the paper intituled and produced as a Call. Four letters from non residing heritors were indeed laid before the Assembly, two of which were never judged of by the inferior courts; and though the other might have been admitted in aid of subscriptions to a call, they could, in no consistency either with equity or common sense, be sustained as a call, or received as an evidence of a concurrence, where no call existed.

“ 2. Because, though there had been no objection in point of form to the call of the Presentee, the sentence appointing the presbytery of Irvine to proceed to the settlement is in our opinion both unconstitutional and inexpedient. It proceeds on the concurrence of four non residing heritors without any regard to upwards of forty residing heritors, to the whole elders of the parish, and to the great body of the people; all of whom seem firmly united in opposing the Presentee. To proceed immediately to the settlement has a manifest tendency to rivet the opposition, and to render Mr Boyd completely useless and unhappy as a minister of Finwick.

“ 3. Because, to have remitted the cause to the presbytery of Irvine in its present state, as was proposed, with instructions to receive such concurrence as might yet be offered, &c. might have produced the best effects on the future comfort, respect and usefulness of Mr Boyd in the parish of Finwick.

“ 4. Because the sentence is calculated to support and carry on measures in the settlement of ministers, which, in our opinion, have a manifest tendency to alienate the minds of the people of Scotland from the established church, and to destroy the credit and influence of the established clergy.

“ 5. Because sentences of this kind must, in our apprehension, put an end to the confidence of the people

people in the supreme ecclesiastical court, and of consequence weaken the authority and effects of its decisions.*

The Commissioners from Finwick, John Ritchie, James Cuthbertson, and Alexander Gemmel, could not help thinking their cause to be, in no small degree, injured by several members in this Assembly; but that the character of the parish of Finwick was, by none more encroached upon, than by their own countryman the Moderator, who charged them with several things anent Mr Reid, (some of which have been only mentioned in their proper place) the falsity of which they could have there proven, had he been so manly as to have stated them in due time, when, with Paul, they were permitted to answer for themselves; but their diet of hearing being now over, they behoved to content themselves for the present with this or the like silent solution: "O infatuated clergyman, to shift or exchange the chair of verity for an attorney's place, that thou mightst play the advocate against a poor people who had nothing but their innocence and simplicity to recommend them. O befooled church-man, to spend thy strength, and exhaust thy eloquence upon such a poor, naughty, seditious, turbulent and insignificant people as thou representest them to be. But, had they set up for free will, maintained the tenets of Lælius or Faustus Socinus, and reprobated the doctrine of original sin, would they not have been by far more acceptable unto thee?"

At the first presbytery after the assembly, except some reasoning, nothing more was transacted with respect

† It were needless here to observe unto any thinking person, that although these reasons are in general truth, yet they never enter into the merit of the cause, the word of God, the reformed standards of the church, the freedom of Christ's purchase, or the practice of the church in her primitive and best times.

spect to the affair. At the next presbytery, August 14th, the Commissioners from the parish got no hearing, because they said they had no right, the affair being ordered back to them from the Assembly.— So they took Mr Boyd upon trial, in order for settlement. Mr Ruffel and other four elders dissented, and protested against this ; but to no purpose. October 2d, the presbytery again met, and heard Mr Boyd deliver a discourse; the ministers all approved of it, which was the substance of all the was done in this matter at this presbytery.

At the two subsequent presbyteries, little occurred in the affair, excepting some reasoning, or rather banter, betwixt some members of presbytery and Finwick Commissioners ; only Mr Boyd's trials went on. But at the next presbytery, March 19th, they told the Commissioners, that, according to former agreement, Mr Boyd should no more come to Finwick to preach, till he got a letter signed by some number of the parish for that purpose. But in the afternoon's sederunt, they took Mr Boyd on his private trials, unto which all the Commissioners, except the presbytery elder from Finwick, were refused access. His trials being over and approved, they agreed, that Mr Brisbane in Dunlop should go to Finwick upon Sabbath come a fortnight, in order to serve his edict, and the time of his ordination referred to next meeting of presbytery.

Accordingly Mr Brisbane fulfilled his appointment by serving this sham pretended edict, whereby the parish were ordered to give in what objections they had against the life and doctrine of Mr Boyd to the next presbytery ; which was to be held at Irvine, upon the 7th of May following. A Committee being, by the appointment of a meeting of the parish, ordered to draw up their objections,—the parish of Finwick had no opportunity to know what Mr Boyd's life and practice is ; and, for his doctrine, they could not, in conscience, go to bear it, neither could those who did

attend, by reason of his low voice in delivery, understand properly whether it was truth or error. Therefore they condescended upon the following particulars.

1st, That he does not enter in by the door appointed by the church's Head, that is, the free choice, call and consent of his people; but rather by the will and laws of man; and therefore we cannot look upon him as a lawful, sent minister of Jesus Christ †. And, says the Lawgiver himself, *Whosoever entereth not in by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.* And without the consent of both parties no pastoral relation can be fixed betwixt a people and a pastor. A

Second objection or reason why the parish of Finwick cannot accept of Mr Boyd for their minister is, Because he reads, and does not preach the gospel. For proof or illustration of this, every intelligent person knows, that reading the word is one thing, and preaching the gospel is another. We have this commission, *to go and preach repentance and remission of sin*, sometimes mentioned in the Old Testament, and often in the New. But shew us one word of precept from the one end of divine revelation to the other, of a commission to go and read the gospel. Several reasons might be given in support of this; as, that such as read are always of a low voice; and oftimes more straitened in the matter, as trusting too often more to their notes than the assistance and enlargement of the Spirit. But what need is there of reasons? It is the will and command of him who is the sum and substance of the gospel itself, to go and preach the gospel,—*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.* This alone may be a sufficient ground of plea for all his mystical members in the church militant. A

Third

† See this objection more fully proven in the following Letter.

Third reason is, that, by reason of his weak voice and low way of speaking, we cannot hear what he reads or delivers, and so can be no ways advantaged by it. For proof of this, *faith cometh by hearing*: but no hearing, no faith; for how can one be profited, while he is not able to make sense of one sentence to an end? This can be little better than speaking in an unknown tongue, or a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Several other objections might have been given, such as, the settlement in the present circumstances will be inconsistent with the glory of God, the interest of the gospel, the edification of the parish, the peace and harmony of others: As also, that Mr Boyd's conduct all along has discovered that it is mercenary gain, the fleece, rather than the flock that he desired; (which is just the contrast of the character and disposition of every true gospel-sent minister), otherwise he would never have continued this struggle to thrust himself in upon this parish, maugre all opposition.

The above objections were given in to to the said presbytery, may 7th, and by them heard and considered; but were so far from being sustained, that some of the members seemed clear for his ordination, and even upon that day. However, it was by them agreed unto, to refer it to the ensuing General Assembly. And though it is difficult to say, as things go now, what reasons or objections really will be sustained by the judicatories of the established church against a clergyman, one of their own denomination; yet it is hoped, that the above, though properly neither of life nor doctrine, will stand the test of God's word, and be sustained as sufficient and relevant objections by all serious and thinking people who have not lost all sight and sense of their just rights, privileges and reformation principles.

Upon the former decision of the presbytery, the parish of Finwick appointed three of their number to attend the General Assembly, as their commissioners,

viz. William Cuthbertson, elder, Robert Wardrop, heritor, and Alexander Gemmil, to represent the heads of families: And, that no stone might be left unturned, in order to obtain their just and reasonable desire, they agreed upon a petition or representation of their grievance as the last resource, to be given in by their commissioners, the sum of which is as follows:

That they have been long destitute of a pastor by having probationers presented which they cannot own as their minister; that no doctrine can be useful from a person without concurrence, and who has discovered no peaceable disposition by accepting and holding fast a presentation, when there is no gospel door opened whereby he can get access unto the parish: when a man acts so directly against the interest of the gospel, the interest and advantage of precious souls, and his own professed principles and engagements, a congregation's dissenting from his settlement upon these grounds, cannot be accounted causeless prejudice: And, beyond all, it is the general complaint of this congregation, that, by reason of his weak voice and low way of speaking, they cannot hear him in the church of Finwick, and so cannot be profited thereby, when they cannot make sense of a sentence to an end, &c. And as there is a proposal of petitioning the parliament for the removal of patronage, it is hoped the General Assembly will not proceed, but rather reverse the sentence of the last assembly; for, have not violent settlements been the fatal source of all these divisions? &c. And we humbly crave, that you will not still pursue such measures, as must unavoidably terminate in the dissolution of this place of worship, and in the increase of disorder and confusion in the church of Scotland in general, and in this part of the country in particular. Let it not be said, that the judicatories of the church, unto whose immediate care and guardianship the religious privileges and interest of the people are committed

committed, are the only authors of hardships and grievances.

The above petition being marked by the committee of bills, was, on the 29th of May, brought before the General Assembly; and, after some reasoning thereon, was dismissed as inadmissible; as was also a memorial from the presbytery of Irvine, praying, that the assembly would, on account of the great opposition which appeared in the parish of Finwick to the settlement of Mr William Boyd, appoint a committee of their number to ordain him. The assembly after some debate came to the following state of the vote, "*enjoin* the presbytery to proceed to the settlement of Mr Boyd on or before the 25th of June next, and order all the members to attend; or, on account of the situation of affairs in the parish, *delay* the settlement, that the presbytery may have time to endeavour to conciliate the minds of the people. It carried *Enjoin* by a majority of 72 against 49." And here the commissioners from Finwick found, that the members from their own presbytery employed their parts so well in favours of Mr Boyd's abilities and character, and to their prejudice and disadvantage, as made several of the members conclude they were no indifferent friends to patronage. Shortly after this, the parish received a kind ofmissive designed by the title of a written obligation subscribed by Mr Boyd, declaring that he would allow them the choice of any licentiate after his ordination to preach in the parish church of Finwick, and, to encourage them, give 15 l. of his stipends for his maintainance: That he, the said Mr Boyd, should not insist on preaching there for four months after his ordination, &c, and after that, only once in the fortnight or three weeks; That he shall allow this assistant to exchange pulpits with any minister in the presbytery for discharging the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper; and that any person who

may

may have a child to baptize, should, upon a line of their character from the elder, make application to any minister in the presbytery for this privilege without application to him. These offers, however plausible at first view, plainly import, that Mr Boyd really was convinced, that his settlement was an injury to the parish; or else he was about to grant them what they were neither desiring nor deserving: and tho' some perhaps would have, in the like circumstances, thought this a generous offer; yet these proposals they absolutely refused: for they thought they had made too good a struggle in opposing patronage to exchange a patron's Curate for a kind of Bishop, only with this difference, that those who now occupy the name and office of a Bishop pay all the curate's fees, and preach once a year or a quarter if they please but this paltry Bishop would only pay a part, and preach once a fortnight. But to go on;

Upon June 18th the presbytery of Irvine took the affair again in hand. Some members were for having Mr Boyd ordained there that day; for, the longer they delayed, it would be the worse. Others were for it deferred till that day eight days, that the patron and absent members might all attend upon previous notice given them, and that it should be at Irvine. The reason advanced for this by a member, was, that, though they needed be in no timidity, having the civil law for a screen or shield; yet they did not choose to put themselves in danger, or that any disorder should be raised to impede the settlement: to which they finally agreed; and Mr Brisbane was to ordain him. From this sentence, that it was to be at Irvine, the most part of the elders dissented, and took instruments in the clerk's hand; and all the elders, except one, dissented from his being ordained to Finwick at any rate. But this dissent was refused by the presbytery, because, they said, it was not their deed, but the assembly's deed. Accordingly, all the members of presbytery, except Mellis, Brisbane and

and Fullerton, met in the council-chamber in the tolbooth house in Irvine, June 25th, and to grace the solemnity, from different presbyteries attended Messrs. Thomas Clark, Eglesham, John Wilton, Nilston, John Cooper, Lochwinnoch, and Robert Boig from Paisley. Some few of the people of Finwick attended; some of whom got in; others had the door cast in their faces. According to the attestation of those present, * after reading the assembly's appointment for their warrant, and the minute of last presbytery with the dissent of Alexander Longmuir, Andrew Brown, &c. from or against these proceedings, without the formality of a sermon or any other ceremony, they proceeded to his ordination; and that one man might not have all the honour of such a noble, at least singular, action, Mr Dow put the questions in ordinary unto him; Mr Lang from Largs prayed and laid hand first upou him; and then Mr Lawrie, the moderator, gave him his directions by way of exhortation; wherein, amongst other things, he exhorted him to faithfulness in the discharge of his duty, reminding him of the faithful watchman mentioned in Ezek. xxxiii. &c. and said, though your case, sir, be not so desirable as you and we could have wished, yet you must take courage: for the days will come, when people will not *endure sound doctrine, having itching ears*. Mr Maxwell said, there are some of Finwick folk here, sir; you may give them their directions; to whom Mr Lawrie answered, if they be Mr Boyd's intended hearers, I have no objection; but if otherways I have nothing to do with them.

The action being over, the moderator asked the members, what censure should be inflicted upon Mr Brisbane for not attending? Mr Lang rose, and made a speech shewing that he had been a disorderly brother

† This relation is in substance as given under the hand of these, who were eye and ear witnesses.

ther, and moved, that a committee be appointed to commune with him; that, if he confessed his fault, he might again be received into the bosom of the church. Whether it was this masterly speech, or the joy of having got such a remarkable solemnity over, and with whole skins, that made him laugh at sitting down, I cannot say; but his motion was not agreed unto; but that Mr Brisbane and Mr Fullerton should be passed, and Mr Boyd inrolled minister of Finwick in the presbytery book, and notice sent the Commission, that the ordination was over; and so the conclave concluded. All this was done with such expedition, that the shortness of the time would be almost incredible to relate,

The church of Finwick had (excepting the Sabbath that the pretended edict was served) been now thirty seven weeks without sermon — And therefore Mr Boyd the first Sabbath but one after his ordination made his appearance there. He had for his attendants Mr Boig from Paisley, and some people there from Kilmarnock and other places, which made up his small congregation *. But there was not one adult person in the parish attended, except the beadle, who now labours under the dotage and inconveniences of old age. The church doors, having previously undergone a certain operation, could, by no industry of any man in the company, be got opened; which made them at last get in at a window, to get some of the doors unbolted and opened to make way for the rest of the company. It is also said, he had a kind of officer or constable from Stewarton: whether he came for a life guard, while he went in procession round the church, or out of curiosity, like some of the rest, I cannot determine. However, there was no disturbance; but they entered about 12 of the clock,

* Some say, there were in whole 40 or 50, and some 70 or 80 persons; but I have not heard the positive number yet ascertained.

clock, made two discourses, one from Isa. ix. 6. the other Luke ii. 10. and by 3 o'clock, the interval included, all was over. After which they went off. Here was the conclusion or upshot of a process of near three years existence and dependence, and a very odd one too. And as I have all along kept so close by the text of the history, excuse and bear with me a little, while I shut up the whole narrative with a few remarks by way of observation.

Obs. 1. According to the directory for election of ministers, 1649, the presbytery is to send preachers for trial to the vacant congregations, and if they desire others, they are to procure them unto them. But here the parish of Finwick could have, upon their utmost intercession, a hearing of none but the patron's Presentees, and not them neither, till they had the presentation in their pocket.

Obs. 2. In the 7th and 9th of the questions agreed upon by the General Assembly 1711, which every minister engages to at his ordination, "Have you used no undue methods—in procuring this Call? Do you accept and close with this Call?" &c. plainly import, that every ordained minister must have a Call †. But here was one ordained to a parish without the least subscription of a Call from one individual inhabitant in it.

Obs. 3. In the form of church government contained in our Standards, which every minister in the established church must acknowledge, if they own themselves Presbyterian, it is twice declared, "That no man is to be ordained for a particular congregation,—if they can shew just cause of exception against him." Agreeable to that act of the General Assembly 1736, which ordains, "That none shall be intruded into any parish contrary the will of the congregation."

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But

† Unless they read Presentation instead of call, as is affirmed was done at this ordination.

But here one thrust in, maugre the will of the parish and all objections and opposition whatsoever.

Obs. 4. According to the above-mentioned form of church government, every minister is to be ordained in that church wherein he is to serve in presence of the congregation, who are to testify their willingness to accept of him. But here one was ordained not only in absence of the people, but even some eight miles distant from the parish church and great body of the congregation.

Obs. 5. In the directory for the ordination of ministers it is ordered, that there be a solemn fast day kept that day, and a sermon preached to the people concerning the office and duty of a minister of Christ. But here one set apart to that office, without one word of sermon: and whether a fast was either by the presbytery enjoined or kept,—themselves can best answer.

Obs. 6. This settlement seems all along to have had the civil sanction for its basis, and ecclesiastical acts founded thereon to support it.—In like manner, it appears they could have no agreeable access unto any church or place of public worship to instal him in that office, otherwise they needed never have taken the town council-house to it, the place appointed to agitate and discuss civil and political matters.

Lastly, The presentee all along made his advances of admittance in by climbing the ladder of a presentation, and by the windows of patronage, similar to which they were obliged to get in at the window before they and he could find admittance into the parish church of Finwick. All these things considered, with more that I cannot stay here to notice, I doubt if there can be an instance of a settlement in every circumstance similar to this produced in Scotland since the reformation from Popery, at least under the phases of Presbyterian church government.

Upon the whole, had my work or design been a vindication of the people of Finwick, and not a histo-
 rical

ical narration of facts, which every way serves the purpose, I could have advanced a number of well-grounded reflections in their behalf.—However, if the testimony of a third party, who is noway concerned the affair can be sustained, I shall conclude with noticing a few of these accusations laid against them. And

1st, It has been objected by the appellants and dissenters from the Synod's sentence last year, That nothing will satisfy the people of Finwick, if they be not allowed to act as patron themselves, and so deprive him of his right of presenting altogether.—And if just, why not? The parish of Finwick, so far as I know, make no pretence to invade the natural, civil or religious rights of any man. They ask no more than what the law of God, right reason, and the practice of the primitive churches allow; and that is, A voice or free choice in the call of their own minister, which has been absolutely refused them.—And it would be no easy task to persuade them, that the Earl of Glasgow or his tutors, have any other right of presenting, than possession, even by the civil laws now in force, until he or they produce better documents than what they have yet done, excepting force. It is galling, indeed, to be thus trod upon by the sanction of an iniquitous law; but to be thus denuded of their most valuable privileges upon a mere chimerical pretence, should it be found to be so, were altogether intolerable.

2^{dly}. It has been said, That the people of Finwick have not only been unreasonable in their demands, but troublesome to the judicatories of the church.—Well, what of all that? if there is any error in this, they have been attached to the established church even unto an extreme, and borne their insolence even to a fault, until they were in a manner set adrift and driven from her *. They went from one judicatory to

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* That the above is no wanton charge, thrown out at random, plenty of evidence during this process can be produced

another, in order to obtain their just desires, and all without success; for, to their mortification, they have been made to behold, that in *the place of judgment, wickedness was there.* So that their dilatory disposition procured them nothing but vexation of spirit. And

Finally, It has also been shrewdly insinuated by some members of these church judicatories, that they are a sort of turbulent, contentious and litigious persons. This needs little or no further reflection than this, That, as the fruits of faithful Mr Guthrie's ministry, the people of Finwick, for a long time, were in general accounted a very sagacious and religious people; many of whom, for their faithfulness, endured a series of hardships, and some even death itself, during the persecuting period; which, doubtless, yet calls for a testimony from their offspring and successors. At present, although there are good and bad in it, as in all other places, yet it may be said, they are generally a calm and civilized people, and a number of judicious and, I hope, religious persons yet amongst them. And for tumult or confusion, no doubt, they have had some provocation for it: *Oppression* (says Solomon) *makes a wise man mad*: so that in a thing of this nature something disagreeable is

duced: for instance, a member of Synod last year, there said to some of Finwick Commissioners, "Desert from the church of Scotland, and get a minister of your own, in God's name, and pay him."—Another, at the same time and elsewhere, said, "He believed them two (Mr Reid and Mr Boyd) to be the best or most famous ministers in the church of Scotland; and if he were to die just now, he could proceed to settle the last in Finwick."—But as it is the public cause and interest of religion have in view, and not particular persons, I forbear more of this kind at present;—only I cannot help thinking the first of these to be a profanation of God's name; and for the last, if they are not privileged with more fit and suitable exercise in their dying moments than Mr Boyd's ordination work was, I am afraid it will prove but very uncomfortable and undesirable work.

is still ready to appear. But where has a parish contended as long, and with as little popular disturbance, excepting the attempts of a few boys, of which there has been made no small handle against them? But who in Finwick approves of such a conduct? Every thinking person knows, that this is no proper way to redress their grievances, or to avail themselves of their proper right and privileges; *for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*

And in a word, shew us a parish that has stuck so long together. What the termination of the matter may be as to religious sentiments, † I cannot say: God alone can determine; and time must declare it. No doubt, they will be broke: some will fall in again, and some go to different parties, and perhaps some to little or nothing, as in other parishes who labour under the inconveniences and woeful consequences of patronage.—May the Lord himself, one of whose titles and properties is, the *Wonderful Counsellor*, give them counsel and direction, in this critical moment, unto what shall be for his own glory, tend to the good of the church, and their own comfort and eternal salvation at last.

N. B. Mr

† As to this, from a meeting lately held in the parish about a supply of preaching, there have arisen various conjectures and reports. The true state of the matter, as related by the principal managers, seems to be this: That, as they had been long destitute of the preached gospel it was proposed, the minority should submit to the majority in their choice in the call of a supply of preaching for some months. In the mean time, every person was at liberty to search the different testimonies, and to join that party unto which their own consciences by the word of God was directed.—And when that time was elapsed, the minority might either bring in their choice for preaching in order of course, or take the minds of the people in general again.—This paragraph is attested under the hands of the Preses and Clerk of that meeting, and desired to be inserted here.

N. B. Mr Boyd and some of his well-wishers, July 21, made their second appearance at the church of Finwick. The beadle, it is said, delivered him up the keys, and refused to officiate any longer. However, there could be no admittance at either door or window. This made them get an ax and hammer, and break an outer case of a window to get in. The congregation was computed at some 30 or 40. Here two things are observable, some of these small congregations, both days, seemed none of the best either in character or behaviour; as also, some boys acted such a part this last day, as no good man, I suppose, will or can approve of.

PATRONAGE

ANATOMIZED, &c.

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

HAVING, with some degree of pleasure, heard of your unanimous and stedfast refusal, once and again, to concur in the moderation of a Call to the pretended patron's Presentee, on account of his not intending to enter by the door, Christ, that is, the call and invitation of his flock, but climbing up by virtue of a presentation another way unto the legal benefice of the parish of Finwick: which at once robs Christ of his authority, and his people of their privileges. Therefore, in all humility, I would offer these few things following unto your consideration: not that I take you to be altogether ignorant of the evil nature, and bad tendency, or consequences of Patronage; but that you may be the more established and confirmed in the justice of that cause, wherein you have been for some time embarked; for, says the apostle, *it is a good thing that the heart be established*, Heb. xiii. 9. And

FIRST, In general, I would premise, That the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole Head and Founder of his church. Zion is wholly built and founded on himself;—*for other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, even Christ Jesus*, 1 Cor. iii. 11. And he has so completed this structure in her being, constitution

constitution, laws and government, that she can admit of no possible or supposable defect to be supplied by the pretended wisdom and authority of men, without the highest reflection and encroachment upon the wisdom and honour of him who is her great Head King and Lawgiver.—And as all her ordinances, rule and policy are of divine institution, so it must inevitably and undeniably follow, that her origin is from heaven; and therefore wholly exempted from the will, pleasure and authority of men to make such alterations, laws and innovations in her constitution, as may prove most subservient and conducive to their own carnal interest and local circumstances.—She is one of the most free and dignified societies on earth. — In point of privilege she is called,—*The city of the great king : —beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth is mount Zion : —he shall choose our inheritance for us the excellency of Jacob whom he loved : —walk about Zion, and go round ; tell the towers thereof ; mark her bulwarks ; consider her palaces : —for the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired her for his habitation, —* Psalm xlvi. 2, 12. and cxxxii. 13. How criminal must it then be for any set of men, whether secular powers, patrons, or apostatizing church-men, to invade or alienate any of her rights and immunities purchased at no less a rate than the costly and precious shed blood of the eternal Son of God, who came into the world, not only to ransom and redeem her from the curse of a broken law-covenant, the dominion of sin, and the intolerable yoke of Jewish prescriptions,—but also to free her conscience from every command and imposition of men, repugnant unto the laws of her sovereign Head ? And as it must be rebellion in the highest degree ; yea, an invading of God's throne, for aspiring mortals to usurp the church's right, and make merchandise of what is not really in their power to take or give away ; so, I think, the consideration of this may be an enforcing argument and incitement to every true confessor in Christ's kingdom

dom, earnestly to contend for every branch of the church's right and their Christian liberty, especially at this critical juncture, when a set of wicked gentry and corrupt church-men seem to have so combined and conspired against *the Lord's anointed* and his heritage, that nothing will gratify their avarice and ambition, unless they have the whole rights and liberties of the church engrossed into their hands, to dispose, cut and carve thereon at pleasure.—But, says the apostle, *Let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*, Gal. v. 1. But

SECONDLY, And more particularly, I might briefly shew you, that patronage is inconsistent with scripture, without foundation there,—subversive of Christ's kingly authority and essential qualities of his kingdom,—destructive to the natural rights of mankind,—inimical to the practice of the church in her primitive and purest times,—abjured in our covenants,—contrary to right reason,—destitute of good order,—and of woeful consequences.—And,

1st, It is inconsistent with divine inspiration, as is evident from many texts of scripture, particularly these few following:—*In these days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (The number of the names were about an hundred and twenty) Acts i. 15. And they appointed* (or presented, as Beza translates it) *two*, that is, “openly and by the voice of all the whole company,” as he comments upon the word in the said Geneva translation:—with chap. vi. 2. *Then the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them*, that is, the heads of the congregation of the Christians in Jerusalem, and said, *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out amongst you seven men of honest report, &c.* “The persons must be duly qualified; the people are to choose, and the apostles to ordain, &c.” as Mr Henry expounds the text, which must hold good in choosing ministers as well as deacons. And so chap. xiv.

23. *And when they had ordained, (or as the Dutch divines translate the words, When they in every church with lifting up of hands, had chosen them elders ; or more literally according to the Greek, They ordainin by the joint suffrages of the people, presbyters in ever church).* In confirmation of which, says the apostle 2 Cor. viii. 18. *But who was also chosen of the churches to travail with us ;* on which the said Dutch divines annotate thus : " The Greek word properly signifies a choice, which is made by lifting up or stretching forth of hands ; so that Paul had not only ordained this person himself hereunto, but also the churches of Macedonia, &c." After whose example, if we shall credit the primitive historian, the apostles, disciples, kinsmen of Christ, with one voice, choose, or judge worthy Simeon Cleophas to succeed James the Just to be Bishop or Presbyter of Jerusalem.—In the same manner was one Alexander called to the same place, *Anno 213* *.

I might also add several proofs from the Old Testament, would time and paper not forbid me.—Therefore, once for all, observe, Deut. i. 13. *Take ye unto you wise men and understanding, &c.* And, though this respects civil rulers and moral powers, yet can any rational being conceive that people in choosing their spiritual rulers (which respects both faith and manners, and the means of their salvation) should be deprived of that privilege which political states do enjoy!—And, as for practice or example, we find Solomon, Jehoash, Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c. endowing, building and repairing the temple at Jerusalem ; and the centurion that built the Jews a synagogue : but, pray, did ever any of these claim a power (and far less their heirs or assigns) to nominate, present, or appoint priests or teachers to officiate in these places of worship ? †

2dly,

* Vide Eusebius Eccl. hist. lib. 3. chap. 11. and lib. 6. chap. 7

† For this see The plea of Scotland against Patronage, page 5, 8.

2dly, As patronage is inconsistent with scripture, so it must be a structure reared up without the least countenance or foundation there. For, from the creation of the world to the sealing of scripture canon, we find but three instituted ways of appointing men unto this office: 1. God's nomination and immediate call; 2. Natural generation; and 3. The people's call and election. But Scots patronage has no foundation in any of these. Where shall we then find its origin? Why, you will find it in the old Popish canon of the see of Rome, and in the 10th. of Ann. cap. 12. Which laws, having no better foundation than the antichristian supremacy of Rome and England, will just as well free and relieve both granter and acceptor of presentations from the charge of manifold encroachment upon, and sacrilegious robbing the church of her just rights, as the law of the Jews could exempt their Sanhedrin and their high priests from the awful charge of the murder of the church's head, when they said, *We have a law, and by our law he must die.*

3dly, Every species of patronage is subversive of Christ's kingly authority, &c. I could produce a number of instances to demonstrate this; but shall confine myself to what follows:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ, by virtue of his being King and Head of his church, has the sole power of appointing office bearers therein: *And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.* But here the patron takes the throne, and nominates and appoints whom he thinks proper for that employment and office.

2. His kingdom is a spiritual and independent kingdom. Christ himself is the sole lawgiver thereof.— *The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, &c.* But here the patron's power is established by law: he has no more to do but to say unto this man, *Go, and he goeth, and unto another, come, and he cometh.*

3. The authority of Christ removes all superiority and distinctions in his kingdom : all are on a level ; and so will be before the tribunal of the great Judge of the quick and dead.—*Submit yourselves unto one another in the fear of God.* But here lordly patrons by virtue of their pretended right, assume a commanding power over both the bodies and souls of men.

4. Patronage not only subverts Christ's kingly authority, but inverts the order of things in his spiritual kingdom : For, antiently, the term Patron was applied to the person who manumitted a slave and who in consideration of the favour, required some certain acknowledgment from the freed person * ; or one who protected or defended the cause of the poor or injured, against such as oppressed them.—Now Christ himself has purchased his church's freedom with his blood. He is also her advocate with the Father : and so, in both senses, her heavenly PATRON. So that she cannot, in point of her spiritual privileges, admit of another in heaven or in earth.—It is true, as she consists of men and Christians, she oftentimes stands in need of the patronage or protection of civil authority, both in matters civil and religious but, in this, they have no just power to injure her in her proper right, either as men or Christians. But here our Scots patrons have inverted the order : for instead of defending her in her just rights, they have reduced her unto a state of abject slavery and bondage.

4thly, As patronage is subversive of Christ's kingly authority, so it is destructive of the natural right of mankind, the privileges of a free-born people, and the laws of every well regulated society. For

1. Every rational person, come to years of discretion, has a just right and natural power to choose his own physician, lawyer, tradesman, servant, coun-
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* Compend. Jur. Imperat. Just. lib. i. tit. 17, 18.

dant, or peculiar friend. Nay, he must be the best judge by whom he is most profited. I had almost said, better by experience, than the college of physicians, or of advocates either. Nor will the furnishing of the physician at the public expence, or the giving of the medicines enervate this right, as may foolishly be argued †. But here the most judicious and knowing societies of Christians are accounted, by the votaries of patronage, a giddy-headed mob. Give them no voice in political matters; deprive them of their religious liberty: then what next? Make them cyphers, and reduce them to a state of infancy, or idiotism, which is worse, seeing they can make no choice for themselves.—Would any patron or minister take it well, if any Christian, or all the hundreds in a parish, (upon whom they impose) would presume to let them know, that they could not choose their own chaplain, or waiting-man, children's tutor or teacher:—they would do it for them. Sure they would not.

2. Hath not every free society a right to choose or elect their own members or office bearers? And why should the church, which is one of the most independent societies under heaven, be precluded from this privilege, (by one, and only because in providence he was born heir of an estate) a privilege which other free republics and corporations do enjoy?—Have they not as good a right to choose their spiritual guides, as to read their Bibles? Hath not he who says, *Search the scriptures*, said also, *Faith cometh by hearing; and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach without they be sent?* And can there be a lawful mission without a call from God and his people?

3. Scots

† Champion Sinclair made an attempt to display his talents on this topic against the people at the last Assembly, but was so unfortunate (as the most part of its advocates are) that, instead of making it unanswerable, he rendered his illustration ridiculous, meriting only an answer of contempt.

3. Scots patronage is not only destructive of the natural rights of mankind, but it falls short of the true maxim of patronage itself, or even what the cannon law requires as its foundation in other countries, viz, *Patronum faciunt dos, edificatio, fundus*. He who makes the grant, or builds or endows a church, has a right to present to the right of the benefice.—Now, the parish churches in Scotland are not built by the patrons alone, nor are they endowed out of any one private estate in the parish: nay, nor even from the rents of the crown; for the crown cannot alienate this without consent of parliament.—But the building of churches and manes, the bestowing of glebes and stipends, &c. are a burden which, by law, equally affects all the heritors of the parish—Their pockets can be the best vouchers of this. So that all the right a patron has in Scotland, must be, that he was born heir to, or purchased such an estate with money, and so holds it of antient possession or custom; for the tithes were declared, by act of parliament 1567. to be the patrimony of the church: and seeing they belong to God and his church, *Jure divino*, it might be a question, how far it can be lawful, if lawful at all, for any lay-man to dispose of them at pleasure.

But, further, I might observe, supposing Scots patrons had once had a proper right (which we cannot rationally conceive they had) for it is long since they forfeited their title to that right; for, according to the cannonists, the patrons received the gift or grant from those ghostly fathers, the pope and his bishops, upon conditions none of which they have fulfilled, viz. that they should repair churches, and rebuild them when destroyed by any accident; that they should preserve the benefice from being dilapidated or misapplied; and should see that the pastors be provided with sufficient maintainance; and that they should not sell the right of patronage to others.

Now,

Now can it be said, that their claim upon these terms now stands valid? Once more on this particular, permit me to say, that Scots patronage stands upon a more dangerous footing than even in her harlot sister the prelatical church of England; for though the inferior clergy be there also presented by lay patrons, as in Scotland; yet their superior clergy who bear all rule, have their immediate dependances upon, and interests connected with, the concerns of the nation in general: whereas, in Scotland, being *pares*, having equal authority, and being equally dependent upon their respective patrons they have the same reasons to serve their different interests in their respective congregations.

5^{thly}, Patronage is inimical to the practice of the church of Christ in her primitive and purest times. The first three centuries, as is evident from scripture and antient history, knew little or nothing of its fascinating influence. The Demosthenean, Ciceronian and Philonian ages were only known by the suffrages or hand stretching out of the people*. But the bishops, by the increase of their episcopal power, were veering still towards this point, till they grasped the people's right into their own hands altogether. In that fatal course they continued, till at last the Pope, as universal bishop, spoiled them of it by assuming the power of universal patron too †. But no word of lay patrons till Popery came near its Zenith about the eleventh or twelfth century. Then the popish clergy becoming numerous, a set of ignorant Romish priests, in concurrence with the Pope, by an imaginary plenitude of power, sold that right of presenting which they had robbed the people of, into the hands of gentlemen, that they might build more churches

* For this see the suffrages of the people, p. 73.

† The reader will find a more copious account of this in a letter lately published on Patronage from Mosheim's church history, See p. 57 &c.

ches for, and bestow benefices upon, them. There were kings and princes also, that contended with the clergy on this head, who expressly founded their titles likewise on the rights of the people against them, namely, Henry the viii. of England, who cast off the Pope's supremacy, assuming it to himself: by virtue of which he and all the succeeding kings of England, and now of Britain, are patrons *paramount*. But, in general at the dawn of the reformation, this heterogeneous monster patronage began to vanish, and the christian people began to retrieve their ancient right. The reformed churches in Germany all maintain'd the people's right in less or more, as their own confessions bear †. And no sooner did the morning-blush of our reformation begin to appear in Scotland, then patronage began by restraint to retire back into its gloomy regions; which is evident both from acts of parliament and the books of good order and discipline of the church. The book of common order, or order of Geneva provides thus; "The ministers and
 " elders at such times, as there wanteth a minister,
 " are to assemble the whole congregation, exhorting
 " them to advise and consider, who may best serve in
 " the room and office: and, if there be a choice, the
 " church appoints two or three upon some certain
 " days to be examined by the ministers and elders,"
&c. In the first book of discipline compiled after this, in head iv. it is expressly said, "no man should
 " enter into the ministry without a lawful vocation:
 " which

† In the Belgick confession the article of their belief is this, "we believe that the ministers, elders and deacons ought to be called to these their functions, by lawful election of the church, &c." In the confession of Helvetia and Switzerland it runs thus: "When it is God's true election, it is approved by the suffrage of the people and laying on of the hands of the ministers." The synod of Middleburgh decreed anno 1581 that the election of ministers should be in the power of the church and by suffrages publicly in the temple. See form of order, p. 12.

" consisteth in the election of the people, exami-
 " nation of the ministry, and admission by them
 " both. No minister should be intruded upon
 " any particular kirk without their consent." In
 the second book of discipline, chapter iii. and 12.
 The matter runs this: " in the order of election it is
 " to be eschewed, that any person be intruded in any
 " office of the kirk, contrary to the will of the con-
 " gregation to which they are appointed, or without
 " the voice of the eldership. The liberty of electi-
 " on of persons called to the ecclesiastick function,
 " and observed without interruption so long as the
 " kirk was not corrupted by Antichrist, we desire
 " to be restored and retained within this realm. So
 " that none be intruded on any congregation by the
 " prince or any inferior person without lawful electi-
 " on, and the assent of the people over whom the
 " person is placed, as the practice of the apostolick
 " and primitive church and good order crave."

These were the principles of our reformers on this
 head, which were afterward engrossed for their pre-
 servation in the records of the general assembly, 1581,
 and sworn to in the national covenant by persons of
 all ranks betwixt 1580. and 1590. Indeed king
 James got prelacy brought in, and patronage with
 it restored 1612. But no sooner did the second re-
 formation take place in 1638, than the General As-
 sembly did reject patronage in the very same words
 of the 2 book of Discipline above quoted.

Again, the church received several favourable acts
 from the state until the year 1649, when it was ut-
 terly abolished by act of parliament in these words:
 " The said estates being willing to promote and ad-
 " vance the said reformation foresaid, that every
 " thing in the house of God be ordered according
 " to his word and commandment, do therefore dis-
 " charge for ever hereafter all patronage and presen-
 " tation of kirks, whilk belonging to the king or a-
 " ny laick patron, presbytery or any other within

“ this kingdom as being unlawful or unwarrantable
 “ by God’s word, and contrary to the doctrines and
 “ liberties of this kirk, and do repeal, rescind,
 “ make void, and annul all gifts and rights granted
 “ thereanent and all former acts made in parliament
 “ or inferiour judicatory in favours of any patron or
 “ patrons whatsoever §.

And thus patronage was brought under a total eclipse, settlements being carried on with the good will of the people, till it was again restored with prelacy by act of parliament 1661. by Charles 2, and so continued, till at the revolution that it was taken from patrons and lodged in the hands of such heritors and elders as are qualified by law, upon their paying 600 marks against the term of Martinmas next †. Here the privilege of a christian people behoved to be a second time bought and sold for money, a small equivalent indeed for the eyes of men’s understandings, consciences and salvation. However, matters were more moderate for a time. But, like Nebuchadnezzar’s tree, though the branches were cut down, yet the root of patronage remained firm in the ground, till 1712, when toleration and patronage were restored unto all their antient splendour. And though another act was made in 1719, with this provision, that presentations were of no force if they were not accepted by the person presented by the patron. But what effect had this? Who could refuse a stately manse, a fertile glebe and one or two hundred pounds of stipends annually?—Mr Chalmers broke the ice, adventured upon a presentation to the church of old Machir; and, in a few years after, whole shoals of this herd followed his example. And here it might be justly observed, that, since patronage had its existence in the world, popery, prelacy, ignorance, corruption and error has always stalked along hand in

§ Vide act xxxix. Abolishing Patronages of kirks March 9th, 1649.

in hand with it. " And now as the antient dispensing power is revived, and tyranny, with its antient chains and other engines of slavery, has made its appearance once more, is it not to be expected that the same consequences shall follow? Was it ever known, since the world had a being, that tyranny, civil or religious, produced any but the most alarming effects? The moment men are obliged, under civil as well as ecclesiastick penalties, to pin their understandings and conscience unto a rich man's sleeve, and to be edified and saved by a minister of another man's choosing, it is high time to take the alarm; spiritual tyranny has already entered; ignorance and the *hydra* immorality will soon follow †."

6thly, This monster patronage is abjured by our covenants. In the national covenant we are sworn to the books of discipline, which maintain the people's right in these words: " And we shall continue in the obedience of the doctrine and discipline of this kirk, &c." In the Solemn league and covenant, we are bound to " the preservation of the reformed religion in the church of Scotland in doctrine, worship discipline and government according to the word of God and the best reformed churches." And " to endeavour the extirpation of popery, prelacy, superstition, heresy, schism, profaneness and whatsoever is contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness." Now what else is patronage, at best, but an old rotten exploded superstition and condemned figment of the anti-christian hierarchy of the church of Rome?

7thly, I might aver, that patronage is contrary to right reason also. For,

1. Can there be any thing more absurd than that this power, which is of a spiritual nature, should be bought or sold with money, or conveyed in the same conduit with other civil inheritances; or any thing

† See an attempt to prove every species of Patronage foreign to the nature of the church, &c. page (mihi) 76.

more shocking than, that this power should be devolved into the hands of the church's enemies, so that a notorious infidel, a blasphemer, a profaner of the holy sabbath, a deist, an atheistical neglecter of the worship of God private or public, an unclean whoremonger, a habitual drunkard, in fine, one who has not as much religion as, with the devil, *to believe and tremble*, and, in a proper sense, without the pale of the visible church altogether, must yet, if he be a patron, make choice of persons to be ambassadors for Christ and pastors to the souls of his people.

2. Is it not unreasonably wild to the highest degree, that a whole parish of men and women should pin their conscience and understanding upon one man's sleeve, because he is rich, or perhaps has a thousand pounds or two *per annum*? Can such terrene qualifications impower or qualify a man to treat his fellow creatures or Christians like *beasts that have no understanding*? or authorise him to force others to be edified by a priest of his own dubbing? Indeed these are qualifications that may enable him to overmatch his fellow creatures in their civil concerns, if God and nature has appointed it so. But, in matters of truth and error, sin and duty, every man must stand upon his own legs, and bear his own burden, otherwite the apostles words are vain, *to his own master he standeth or falleth, &c.* Rom. xiv. 4. And

3. Doth it consist with common sense or sincerity that any body of men or women, who would put any due value upon their immortal souls, and would put them under the care and tuition of proper spiritual guides for their eternal concerns, that they should put the choice of these into the hands of patrons, men who for the most part seem to be altogether unconcerned and indifferent about the eternal concerns of their own souls? And how can such be intrusted with the care of others! *If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?* Luke xvi. 11.

8thly, This mongrel brute patronage, begot by the kings and great men of the earth upon *the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth*, is also destitute of all decency, decorum and good order in the church. And,

1. The granting and accepting of presentations open a door for simoniacal practices and other intrigues of that nature: and whether a tongue bribe, an officious bribe, or ready cash be the currency, it is all a matter.

2. It kindles commotions, scatters congregations, raises divisions, oppressive concussions, and the most obstreperous animosities, which oft times terminate in prosecutions, appeals, protests, &c. all which are opposite to that good order and decorum required by the word of God and rules of his church. nay, it is expressly contrary the obligation the acceptor comes under at license when swearing these words in the formula, "And I promise I shall follow no divisive courses." And were there ever greater divisions and disturbance in the revolution-church, than what has been occasioned by the granting and accepting of presentations?

3. It has all along been the laudable received maxim amongst all genuine presbyterians, that the consent or call of the flock is as necessary to constitute and fix the pastoral relation as the consent of the minister, seeing the tie is mutual and reciprocal. But here the validity of the presentation is the only thing enquired into, and, if found with all its usual formalities, all other objections and obstructions are got over. And

4. This pernicious practice of patronage (for so I may call it) is the sole occasion of so many violent settlements and intrusions upon reclaiming congregations, whereby headless mobs and lawless riots are sometimes raised which are most disagreeable and uncommendable: but *oppression* (says the wise man) *maketh a wise man mad*. Eccl. vi. 7. But to suppress these, or
rather

rather to oppress the people in their just rights, a detachment of military men must be brought to install the hireling into his benefice; and so, instead of a congress of elders and a joyful congregation, church and church yard are guarded and lined with red coats; and, instead of the apostolick cheirotouia or stretching out of the hand in testimony of their willingness, guns and screwed bayonets are poised up to welcome the incumbent to his pastoral charge. And, alas! how unbecoming are all these, with many other irregularities (that I cannot stay here to notice or observe unto you) disagreeable unto the ministerial character, and much more unto a professed friend and follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, *who when he was reviled, reviled not again, and when he suffered, threatened not*, 1 Pet. ii. 23. Thus patronage natively clothes with that divine injunction, *Let all things be done decently and in order*, 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

9thly, And lastly, patronage is attended with the most direful consequences. For, in general, it is not only itself one of the errors coined by the church of Rome, but it and toleration are the very teeming stocks out of which all other errors, corruption and profanity, like so many lofty branches, rear up their towering heads. But more particularly in the

1 Place I observe, it lays a foundation for an ignorant lazy sort of ministry; for it is but seldom the study of a modern candidate for the ministry new to be possessed of, or to improve, these gifts which are calculated to edify the people; experience has taught them a more easy and effectual way and method than this: for, if a gentleman clad in black has been so auspicious to get in to be a teacher of some gentlemen's children, or has curried favour with some nobleman in the neighbourhood, these are sufficient qualifications to gain him a presentation to a benefice: and the patron can, by virtue of his dispensing power, make him pass for a qualified man in every respect. Says a very smart and witty writer on this point:

“ Though

" Though this presentee therefore be the arrantest
 " blockhead that ever obtained a degree in any of the
 " four universities, he can instantly dubb him the
 " brightest genius of the age, the very pink of eru-
 " dition, and phenix of literature. Though his
 " presentee may be better acquainted with Bailies
 " dictionary than his bible; and as for systems of
 " divinity, never read through the West-minster con-
 " fession of faith, yet a patron can pronounce him
 " at once the most flaming pattern of orthodoxy and
 " piety in the church. Though, in point of gifts
 " and qualifications, a presentee may be just equal to
 " the task of teaching a few school boys to construe
 " Horace, unfit to speak, incapable of being heard
 " beyond the third pew of a large house, yet the pa-
 " tron by his sole pontifical imprimatur, shall find
 " him sufficiently qualified for undertaking the most
 " numerous and important charge in Scotland †." But

2. The granting and accepting of presentations
 strengthen the hands of wicked men in the most hag-
 gard tyranny over the church; and most corrupt
 principles and enormous practices among gentlemen
 patrons go on, *volens volens*, without check or con-
 trol from these creatures of their own appointing.
 Nay, it lays the accepters under the egregious infamy
 of perjury, while they swear to the confession of faith
 as a test of their orthodoxy, and take the formula,
 both of which are contrary to patronage, not to
 mention practice and doctrine. And how can they
 be answerable to God and his people, when engaged
 in these words at their ordination? " 6. Are not zeal
 for the honour of God, love to Jesus Christ, a desire of
 saving souls your great motive and chief inducement to
 enter into the function of the ministry and not worldly
 designs and interest? 7. Have you used any undue
 methods by yourselves or others to procure this call?"

And what a mere farce is the whole, when they en-

gage

† Vid Patrons A. B, C, page 1.

gage in the ninth and last article in these words :
 “ Do you accept and close with this Call, &c. ? ” †
 when sometimes there is not the face of a call. While
 these ghostly guides enter upon their charge with a
 manifest fallhood in their mouths, how can their life
 and doctrine prove advantageous unto others ? “ For
 how can a man prove either acceptable or useful to a
 congregation, unless he be persuaded from the heart
 that he is convinced of the truth he delivers, and that
 an unfeigned desire of promoting their best interest is
 the great and governing motive with him in under-
 taking this office of the ministry amongst them ? and
 if these were his determining reasons for devoting
 himself to their service, many other disadvantages
 would be looked over, and their ears would (at least
 should) be open to his instructions.” ‡ Nor

3. Is this all ; error and profanity stalks along
 with it. It dispenses with, and admits men to the
 place of teachers, who are leavened with the errors
 of Pelagius and the Romish church.—Nay, with the
 blasphemous tenets of Arius, Socinus and Arminus ;
 which are worse : Did I say worse ! Yes, for papists
 have only their worshipping of God by idols and works
 of supererogation ;—but good works proposed as
 the foundation of our acceptance with God ; *Repent
 and believe, love God and keep his commandments, all
 which we* (according to them) *perform at any time in
 our own strength, then we may look for favour with
 God, that he will love us in return.* Such is the doc-
 trine taught by many of these patronage heroes ;
 which overturns the gospel plan of salvation, and
 leads poor ignorant people blind fold into destruction.
*O my people, they that lead thee cause thee to err, and
 destroy the way of thy paths.*—And, “ thus the great-
 est beauty of the reformation (says one) is defaced :
 instead

† See these questions at large in the folio volume of acts
 of Assembly for 1711.

‡ Candid enquiry—tracts, pag. 234.

instead of an orthodox, learned, laborious, lively, pious, humble, holy, self-denied, and exemplary ministry, the pulpits are filled, and parishes cessed, with an ignorant, indolent, dead, graceless, erroneous, self-conceited, saucy set of incumbents, who know nothing but to make any pious minister yet amongst them the butt of their most ungentle buffoonery; and who, however well they are qualified to ring the oratorical chimes with all the musical cadence of Seneca upon virtue and disinterested benevolence, are far enough from being exemplary in the most ordinary social virtue," &c. *

4. The holy Sabbath is oftentimes greatly profaned thereby; for, not to mention the playing on drums and fifes by military men when guarding these incumbents on the first Sabbaths of their admission, which has sometimes taken place,—how greatly is that day abused by people who from curiosity and worse motives attend, even where this takes not place? And what unseemly carriage and disorders have, thro' occasion of this, in some places been committed by people's gauding about for their own recreation and diversion, to say no more?

5. The seals of the covenant are also, in consequence of patronage, oftentimes by these incumbents prostituted unto low and base ends: for instance, if he is a man of an obliging temper, to gain the affections of his parishioners whom he has justly offended, he will go and administer the seal of baptism to their children even at their bed-sides, and perhaps without asking one question at them, even so much as, if they keep up the worship of God in their families, or not?—And for the other sacrament, the Supper, before the set number of years prescribed by the rules of the church elapse, lest he should lose his place, he will dispense it to a few, perhaps some of the most ignorant and scandalous in the parish, and even to some

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who

who never attend him in the church from the one sacrament to the other :—And for visitation and examination, in some places, perhaps they must wait for it until some future period of their life ;—not to mention so many church censures that are by them bought or sold for a piece of money, in imitation of the Pope's absolutions and indulgences, more or less according to the circumstances of the delinquent.—*Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, &c.*

6. It is an abuse of that solemn appointment of Christ, Ordination in the church, which is a solemn setting apart a person by prayer and imposition of hands unto the sacred office of the ministry unto such a parish or people. Now, it were an insult upon common sense to say that they can be appointed or ordained to this, where there is no call or consent ; and consequently no people to be ordained to. So that prayer and laying on of hands become thus essentially necessary to give a title to the benefice or temporal emolument, as the test act makes the taking the sacrament in the church of England an essential and necessary qualification for all that enjoy places of power and trust, civil and military. Both of which, are a manifest prostitution of sacred institutions, and solemn appointments in the church of Christ.

7. Another evil arising from the right of presentations to the benefice with the countenance and concurrence of church judicatories, is this : Because with the Ephesian mechanic, *They know that by this craft they have their gain* ; while these Demetriuses stand their ground with the patron, to whose nod they must prove most obsequious, there is hardly a misbehaviour or immorality that will cast them out of their office, or deprive them of their temporal living ; which, doubtless, is an ensnaring temptation to men of an extended conscience, for rendering them lazy and careless with respect to people, charge, character or office.

office. If one is a good speaker, and can play well, if a better stipend occurs, then that parish may get rid of him. But if one of our modern readers with the above qualifications, then that parish and people must have a pest for life. And, sure, there cannot be a greater plague to a poor church or people than an unfaithful, heterodox, corrupt, profane, dead and lazy ministry,—*For from the prophets of Jerusalem is profaneness gone out unto all the earth.*

8. It not only renders the ministry base, mean and contemptible before a profane world, who are ready on every occasion to depreciate and disesteem the gospel and its preachers; but incites men unto, and confirms them in, Atheism, Deism, Scepticism, &c. It makes those, who are ready to snatch at every thing of this kind to keep them in countenance, conclude that religion and every thing sacred, or divine revelation itself, are only whim, a mere engine or system of priestcraft to keep its villanies in credit. The productions of such stuff are daily teeming both from the press and men's mouths in these days wherein we live. And

9. It breaks and scatters congregations, when the ministerial office is thus filled with a set of indolent, idol shepherds. Multitudes are provoked to leave their own parish churches, some of whom, to the decay of true piety and scandal of all religion, are destitute of principle, and live almost altogether without the stated means of grace: and this not only proves a mean of increasing ignorance and immorality, but is an incitement to fall into the most erroneous notions of sectaries, and even Popery itself, the north and southern parts of the kingdom not excepted*.

H 2

This

* Instance the Parish of Terreagles case, which was at the Assembly last year, wherein there are a number of Papists; and, through the dormancy of their last incumbent, and the prospect of no better, are said to be still on the advance and increase.—Such are the direful effects of patronage!

This evil is still more encouraged from the countenance lately given it by supreme authority † ?

10. I might observe, that it inverts, or turns upside down the very end and design of every true gospel minister, whom Christ commissions and sends for the good of his church. For their language with the apostle is, *I seek not yours, but you*—But here the language of these mercenary, time-serving hirelings virtually is, *I seek not you, but yours*.—*Put me into the priest's office, that I may eat a piece of bread.*

11. And, though there were no more in patronage, it is imprudent and injurious to the poor, especially householders. For, in a numerous auditory or assembly, a large collection is always expected for the poor.—But what can be expected from some 20, 30, 40, or 50 persons, and two thirds perhaps of them boys and girls, as sometimes is the case. And how shall the poor be maintained, unless the patron and his curate the incumbent do it? which, indeed, would be but a trivial equivalent for the expulsion of the gospel. And

12. or lastly, Let me add, that daily experience teaches us, that the blessing of God does not attend their ministry: neither can it otherwise be: for if he should bless this, or any other human institution, foisted into his church, he should go out of his own appointed way. But we are assured from his word, that he will never countenance such bold contemners of his laws and authority.

Also it strengthens the hands of the wicked, and is grieving to the hearts of the godly, and such as are of tender conscience. And nothing strange, when for certain they know, that these patrons can neither secure them against a wrong choice and its evil consequences

† Witness the declaration, read a few years since, after the devastations of the Papists' place of worship, prescribing a certain penalty upon all who should disturb any religious meeting, and though others might have the benefit, yet every one might see this respected popery.

sequences, when cold death shall arrest their bodies in the grave †; nor be responsible for their souls in the great day of accounts, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest by Jesus Christ.

And likewise, it raises and increases the prejudice of many well-meaning people against such, and so cannot receive the divine countenance. No wonder they should be offended, when they see a man choosing rather to climb up by the window of a presentation and violence than entering by the gospel-door; when they see him go about to secure a right or title to the stipends before they can have any proper access to hear, know, or have any inclination for him, thrusting in himself upon them; while he cannot but see that his so doing tends to blast his ministry, and deprive them of the choice of one whom they would own, reverence and love. For, as one well observes, “ what must they think of a man who tells a reclaiming congregation in word or deed, I’ll be your minister in spite of your teeth: I’ll have the charge of your souls, whether ye will or not: and, if ye refuse ordinances and means of salvation from me, ye shall have none? Nay, come of your souls what will, though they should perish in a state of ignorance and prejudice, I’ll possess kirk, manse and stipends, and hold out another minister from you.— Have they not ground to suspect such a man of earthly mindedness, greed of filthy lucre, or, at least, of being more concerned for his *own things than the things of Jesus Christ?*” †

But, after all this, I might observe those objections that are or have been mustered up in favours of patronage. But as these are rather numerous than formidable,

† This wings its way to its almighty source,
The witness of its actions, now its judge;
That drops into the dark and noisome grave,
Like a disabled pitcher, of no use.—GRAVE—Blair
‡ Will. Jon’s impartial testimony, pag. (mibi) 54.

formidable, I shall confine myself to some of these which are most recent at present.

OBJECT. I. *Patronage has been a thing very ancient in the church; and even in the church of Scotland.* Here the first battery opens against the people's right. But, I think with small success. For

1. However ancient, it has no foundation in scripture, nor footsteps in the apostolick age, nor even until the seventh century, according to some historians †. Nay, the Popish church itself speaks very faintly in its justification. The provincial Council at Mentz, 1549, acknowledges the injustice and oppression that attended it: yea, that wicked Council of Trent is made to own the great prejudice the church had sustained by patronage. Granting it is ancient, it must at best be only an ancient evil; seeing truth and equity cannot be pleaded for it as well as antiquity. But

2. Although the church of Scotland was pestered with it in her infant state after the reformation, what is all this to the purpose? For they never left off wrestling against it in its various shapes till they laid it in its dismal grave, (as has been already hinted). At the Revolution, it was reprobated by the claim of right, and testified against by the Commission of the General Assembly in their address to the parliament, 1712, ‡ and an act 1736 of the Assembly itself.—And what a shame and indelible blot is it for us, after the nation had been so highly honoured of the Lord as to be once happily freed from this yoke (as well as others) of bondage, *a yoke which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear*,—to lay the foundation, and rear up this cursed Jericho again on the ruins of our sacred rights and first born privileges—And yet our fore-

† For this consult Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. 3. and 6. Mr Petrie's church history, page 63. &c Turretine De Jure vocationis, vol. 3. quest. 24

‡ See said representation and address at large folio volume of acts of Assembly for 1712.

forefathers had a more plausible plea for it than what we can pretend to have now. The people then were just emerging out of gross Popish darkness;—the ministers few;—the gentlemen were, for the most part, a set of knowing men, well affected to religion, attended gospel ordinances, and were the prime promoters of the reformation: and so, with the people's consent, could be as proper judges of a qualified minister as the rude Plebeians could be. But is not the quite reverse of that the case now? And, I could with as much propriety argue, that the gentry, by their wicked and vicious lives, have so turned the scale of the balance, that they have not only forfeited their right to choose for a whole congregation, but even for themselves as individuals. For, if a person be no church-member, nor attender on gospel-ordinances, how can he be a proper judge in choosing a minister?

And even in our reforming times, when there was some kind or species of patronage, were there any instances of presentations lodged in the presbytery's hands,—of letters of acceptance on the Sabbath day,—of any blank-tailed calls sustained;—violent settlements,—escortings of musqueteers,—iron subjection and steel obedience required? Surely no; says the great Mr Alexander Henderson, when speaking of this period, “No man is obruded upon the people here without their tacit consent and approbation, or without the voice of the eldership, with whom he is to serve in the ministry.” All these things considered, and much more that I cannot stay here to observe, will make that which is by some called patronage then, and patronage now in the present state and circumstances of parishes, to differ as much (*absit invidia*) as *Kedar from Jerusalem, or the tents of Cushan and the curtains of Solomon.*

OBJ. II. *The right of patronage is a right of property to which patrons have as good a right as to their estates.*

estates, otherwise the Scots parliament, when taking it from them 1690, would not have ordered them 600 marks for it, which sum notwithstanding was never paid them. I answer;

I. What right patrons have to present has been already in part observed, *viz.* the simoniacal bargain between the popish clergy, who had no right to sell it, and the priest ridden ancestors of our modern claimants or a compliment of it, from the king or bishops. So that from the act mentioned there can be no reason for people to buy back that which they never sold. Nay, a right that Christ the churches head had paid the utmost mite for; and what parity is there in the claim of patrons? not one word of the divine law, but only the civil laws of the land in force in their favours: not a word of the rights of Christ's spiritual kingdom: no, but the laws of men. But to come to the laws such as they are, it is the patron's fault the money was not paid, seeing the law provided the legal execution of the act at the patrons suit against the parish. But had the act declared, that if it was not payed against such a time, the right should remain to the patron, doubtless it had been better payed. But

2. Granting them a right (which is not easy to make evident) yet how can that claim be now legally revived against the church, after she hath not only obtained her freedom from it by act of parliament 1649; but even the above-mentioned act 1690 became, by the act of security in the year 1707, an irrevocable article of the union? And it is not easy to conceive how civil property can make one a ruler in the church when it cannot constitute him a member in it; *my kingdom is not of this world*: or how men that are so intent on mercenary gain by racking of rents, &c. can, for the gratification of ambition and a little worldly honour, be so profuse as wantonly not only to throw away the 600 marks, but also retain patronage at the lavish expence of the enormous sum of one million

million, two hundred and thirty six thousand and fifty pounds sterling annually, the computed charges of maintaining a standing ministry in Scotland raised for the most part upon the ruins of patronage. †

OBJ. III. *Though the patron presents the person, the presbytery moderates a call whereby people have an opportunity put into their hands to choose their own pastor, his learning and qualifications are by them also tried, an edict served, &c.* To this let me reply,

1st, That, although I know no act or statute in force amongst the archives of the church of Scotland at present, that allows any minister to be settled in any congregation without a call, yet, as the hands of a few, though none of the most knowing or of the best character in a parish, the patron's factor and ground officer, or the names of two or three non-residing heritors, are sustained now to be as valid at the tail of a call, as the hands of the whole parish, what better is this than no call? Nay, as things go now, it is all a matter, whether there be a call or not: these gentlemen will tell you in open judicatory, that a call is only a mere farce or that a blank call from such a parish is a good compliment. But as such mock calls are neither *vox populi* nor *vox dei*, the voice of God nor his people, they can in no sense be called a call either in the sight of God or his church: for what signifies this adhering call at best? For, if it is got, it is well: if not, the settlement goes on with-

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† This is no groundless charge, as has been supposed: in the state of the secession added to P. Hutcheson's considerations on patronage, republished 1773. the annual expence of the maintenance of the Burghers, Anti-burghers, Relief, &c. is estimated, upon a moderate calculation, at the sum of £. 1,236 050, which sum must be augmented now, as there have been a number of settlements since that time. It is here rationally argued by the estimator, that all this might be added to the land holders rent, would they give up with patronage; see page 26 to the end.

out it : Says a late learned lawyer, " The presbytery commonly makes settlements upon a call, after the manner of the act of parliament 1690, but are not bound to that method, not even when the act was in vigour ; for it leaves them to plant churches, *tanquam jure devotuto*, with the same freedom that the bishops might. The sovereign rule is, to make such settlements as tend most to edification, and in that view to regard the inclinations of the people or not, as seems most expedient *." Hereby the law of patronage, or laws of the land, the people's right of choice is no way essential : a principle very agreeable to the practice now in fashion †. But let us next hear what a learned divine says upon the plan of divine laws : The relation betwixt a pastor and a flock as *relatos* must be introduced at the same time by mutual voluntary acts of one another or of each party ; for one of the *relati* as such without the other can have no being or existence ‡, &c.

2dly, The whole prerequisite parade must, with some face of religion, be observed ; the presentee's learning and abilities must also be tried ; but who doubts of a gentleman's qualifications and education who has the address to procure a presentation ? His judges here are, for most part, stones of the same fabrick and babel building : we commonly say (according to our old country proverb) *that one raven will not*

* Vide Advocate Macdowel's institutes of the laws of Scotland, vol. 2. page 21.

† A glaring instance of which we had last General Assembly when they voted the moderation of a call to be of immemorial and constitutional practice in this church, and ought to be continued : and at the same time, voted a settlement to Finwick where there was no real call at all ; How they will get out of the nooze of inconsistency here I know not, but sure this Sanhedrin deserves a medal from the faculty of patrons for this admirable addition to the system of patronage.

‡ Dr. Owen on the true nature of a gospel church p. 76.

not pick out anothers eyes. And, tho' there may be some member or members that would wish, yet, to deal honestly in the matter; yet they are soon brow-beat, borne down and overvoted. And grant he is cast in his trials (which, alas! is seldom now the case) then, with the assistance of his patron, a protest is taken, and an appeal for an inquest of error is made; and it must to the assembly, where the patron and presentee gain their point; the presentee is either absolved, or ordered to trials anew, which terminate in his ordination at last. The like oft times becomes the case in sustaining of presentations and calls also §. And though a presbytery or synod should either evade the decision, or pass a sentence in favours of a parish, (that the odium may fall upon the back of the General Assembly which is broader than theirs is to bear the maledictions of the people) yet they must, at the orders of their superiors, proceed to the settlement of the same presentee under the pains of threatned deposition. For so obsequious are the dernier court of appeals unto the nod of the head patron in England † and his underlings in Scotland, that to refuse

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§ Instance, the presentee at Shots, who was once and again judged unqualified or insufficient by the presbytery. But on the patron's appeal to the Assembly, he was by them at last referred to the commission for trials (1766), who judged him qualified and more, so he must needs be settled. And did not the Assembly reverse both the sentence of the presbytery of Auchterarder and synod of Moray ordering them to take Mr Lawson and Mr Smith on trials 1779: but what needs more instances of this kind?

† Francis Hutchison L. L. D. in his considerations on patronage first published 1735. says that, of 950 the king was in possession of the patronage of 550 churches, (which are now augmented in number by these gentlemen's estates forfeited in the year 1745). And of those remaining, "there are not 150 parishes in Scotland where the patronage is in any gentleman of considerable estate, or natural interest in the parish, to whom it is of any real consequence as to himself whether the minister be a person of sobriety, diligence, good abilities in his office or not."

a presentation, or a concurrence to settle one of his or their thus dubbed presentees, is by deed of action accounted a more unpardonable crime, than drunkenness, or even uncleanness it self: for, while the perpetrators of these are assailed, carested or at least overlooked, the other is deposed, drubbed or cashiered in a very odd manner; all which renders the divine law with them inferior and subservient to the law of patronage †.

But stop here: what needs these solemn mimicries? has not the candidate presentee a right by their law to the benefice prior to call or ordination trials either; which not only supercedes the necessity of a call, but
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† That the above is no w nton charge without proof, was not Messrs B—n and B—ne on account of refusing a presentation some time ago by an act of the General Assembly declared, or rendered incapable of ever receiving a presentation on the north side of Tweed? Was not Mr Gillespie deposed by the Assembly 1752 for a simple act of refusal to concur at the settlement at D—f—g? And was not Mr Finlay cashiered to an acknowledgment before the bar and by them rebuked in the Assembly 1775 for settling Mr Thomson to the stipends but not the charge of St. Ninians (though in equity he could do no otherways). Compare these with the case of Mr St—t minister of Cr—f who was deposed by the synod of Perth and Stirling for notour drunkenness 1768 or 1769, but instantly restored to ministerial character and dignity by the Assembly 1770. And was not Mr Nisbet minister at Firth and Stennes while living in notour adultery, cloaked or overlooked by his brethren maugre all Messrs. Irvine and Tyrie could do; nay, the presbytery suspended them and assailed the delinquent, who persisted in that course, until upon a petition of his parish he was by a sentence of the circuit court at Inverness 1766, banished to the plantations.

And was not Mr C—n minister at Sy—n who wrote against the people's right, &c. so left of God amongst others of his irregularities in one of his drunken bacchanal revels as to go through the town of Air about four o'clock in the morning playing on a fiddle with another of the same craft; and tho' he was thus metamorphosed from the character of a minister of Christ to a town wake or fiddler, yet overlooked by his brethren till now he is become contemptible to all men.

oft times precludes a fair trial as well as a fair choice : so that he stands their minister by law, before the moderation of a call or ordination trials can be appointed, which beggars all description.—You know what handle the patrons agent made before the General Assembly in favours of Mr Reid's qualifications from parliament 12. cap. 116. of James VI. 1592, which ordains, " that presbyteries are bound and astricted to receive and admit whomsoever qualified minister presented by his majesty's laick patrons," and 10th of Annæ, " that they be obliged to receive or admit such qualified person or persons, as shall be presented " But he should have minded that the General Assembly 1696, upon better grounds, provided that none should seek presentations to benefices *without advice to the presbytery in whose bounds they ly on pain of being repelled as rei ambitus.* But pray, what is it that constitutes a qualified minister in the eye of the law by which presbyterian church government is established? Is it not the Lord's call, and the call and consent of his people, even such as our Lord and his apostles doth describe : *faithful men, able to teach, keeping that trust committed unto them, rightly dividing the word of truth, by sound doctrine exhorting and convincing gainsayers, shewing themselves patterns of every good work.*

And grant, that they are even qualified as they would, by their law, have it, are their eyes and understandings mine? or are they infallible, that I should warrantably put out the eyes of my understanding, and yield implicit obedience to their approbation or choice? Surely no; no part of the church has a divine warrant to dictate unto the understanding or consciences of another. Indeed the old friar of Rome arrogates this power unto himself; and if any judicatory (be their denomination what it will) will cope with him upon such principles, it avails little or nothing whether their acts be dated at Rome or Con-
stance

stance, Trent, Canterbury, or Edinburgh, seeing it will land them and their cargo at the infallible see at last.

3dly, An edict is for formality's sake also served: but to what purpose is that? for when relevant reasons or objections are given in, and even sometimes against both life and doctrine, they cannot be taken in, or sustained when received †.

OBJ. IV. *Although patronages were removed, the people would not agree in their choice: and what scenes of disorder and confusion would naturally ensue, while the votes of the dregs of the people are equal to those of the honorati et primores plebis, or greatest heritors in the parish.* Here a midge must be magnified into a mountain, and the falling of a leaf becomes like the roaring of the sea, upon an imaginary supposition. But,

1. Although it should seldom or never happen that every individual in a parish should agree in the choice, yet it is the majority of voices that answers the end appointed.—Neither has any popular disturbance that has fallen out when and where the Christian people had their right of choice, had the hundredth part of the disagreeable effects and consequences attending it, which falls out but in one or two parishes of 900 in half a century, in comparison of what the daily invasions of patronage now produce, when almost every parish of course comes to be grasped by its iron hand; nay, what contention arises amongst patrons themselves, when coping with one another: wherein it sometimes falls out, that these anti-patrons in opposition to one another, will present two presentees to one parish at once, whereby processes of declarations

† Amongst other instances, Did not the people of C—b — give in objections relevant against the life and doctrine of the presentee, and offer to prove them, and yet the presbytery refused them, and though a superior judicatory judged they were in the wrong to the people, yet no redress was obtained, the presentee was confirmed.

clarations, protests, appeals, &c. are taken : so that a thousand good consequences might, if needful, be produced, that has attended this ordinance or institution, to confront one single fantastical appearance of this in the institution of the council of Trent.

2. Should division or disturbance fall out among people at the choosing of their pastor, can that be ascribed to the institution, nature or practice of the duty ? If, in that case, it would hold good in every ordinance or duty : nay, it would equally strike against the freedom of choice in every constitution whatsoever. For when confusions fall out at the choosing of members to Parliament or General Assembly, must we then conclude the constitution is overturned ?—It must proceed from some other quarter, from some piece of bad management in the affair, men's humours, or the remains and emotions of corrupt nature.—But I rather incline to think, that tho' these may be sometimes in the case, yet these divisions must be one of the woeful fruits and consequences of our sins and dreadful apostasy from God,—breach of covenant,—contempt of the gospel,—innocent blood shed, and unpurged and unmourned for ;—*For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, the Lord hath divided them in his anger, he will no more regard them.* But

3. To come to the last member of the objection, the most contemptible begging Lazarus in a parish has a soul of equal intrinsic value at stake, with the greatest nobleman in it ; and if he be in the exercise of reason, or has not forfeited that right by a vicious life and conversation, why should he not, as well as the nobleman, have a choice in the means of his own salvation, seeing he cannot be surety for his soul ?—*for none of them can redeem his brother, nor give a ransom for him.* And this may of itself alone be sufficient to equipoise every argument or objection upon this score whatsoever.

OBJ. V. It is argued by the patron's agents, *That prior to the act 1649, the right of nomination belonged to the presbytery,—by the act 1690, it was vested in the kirk session and heritors,—under neither of which was a call or concurrence of the people necessary.—* This objection I think will sink by its own weight, and needs very little observation.—For

1. If we could warrantably admit of patronage, name or thing, I should think that, in a lawful, well-constituted and regulated church, from the countenance of scripture, the Presbyterial eldership behoved to have some plausible plea for it. But then their work is to judge of the person chosen, and not to elect. It is true, that after the year 1638, the presbytery did nominate a certain number of qualified persons, out of which the patron and people were to make choice of one ; but here the person behoved to be announced qualified by the presbytery, prior to the election, which was no rugged kind of patronage ; yet it was still a grievance to the church, as is evident from the words of the general assembly to the parliament 1649, upon their abolishing of that evil. Say they, “ We do highly commend the piety and zeal of the estates of parliament in promoting so necessary a point of reformation.” And sure we must suppose that that parliament and general assembly had as good a right, and were as proper judges of what was most agreeable to the rights and liberties of the subjects of Christ's kingdom, as the parliament 1712, or the general assemblies 1779,-80,-81,-or--82. For, [while the one seems to have argued from, and followed the divine rule for their guide,—the other seems better acquainted with Erastian laws than the Acts of the apostles ; for they must either manage the argument from this or the other act of parliament, or hear what the Lord President and Lord Chief Baron have to say, or else make laws of their own, and then argue from them.—*But if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.*

2. For elders and heritors, it were reasonable that they have a vote, and the first vote in order too; and if the majority goes into their choice, what needs more voting? But for one or two more of these to have a negative voice over a congregation, would be but to exchange one for a plurality, or one species of patronage for another; which power, I suppose, no judicious and conscientious session ever yet claimed.

OBJ. VI. It is also argued by the same gentlemen, *That the law gives the presentee, if qualified, a lawful right to the benefice, and no other call or concurrence is necessary;—the legal purpose of moderating a call is not to obtain the consent of the people, but to hear their objections. Credat Judæus Apella, let uncircumcised Jews believe this: for I think it will hardly be swallowed down by intelligent Christians; common sense revolts against it. However, Presbyterian principles are once more panned at Antichrist's barr, and nothing brought forth to support the libel but the romo Annæ, and the practice of the Assemblies of the established church in her unhappy train of decisions for some years past. I shall only make a short observation or two upon this. And*

1. Grant, that the law gives a sufficient right to the benefice, what law is it that gives a right to the charge? and sure a minister must make an odd figure in the church, without any people to minister unto. If a man would cause himself to be married unto a woman contrary to her will by violence, and perhaps in her absence, would you not call it a rape? And is not the entering into the charge of a parish, maugre all opposition upon grounds reasonable and just,—a manifest rape upon the spouse of Christ?—"The consent and call of the flock (as one well observes) is as necessary to constitute and fix the mutual relation as the consent of the ministry, seeing the tie is mutual."

2. If the moderation of a call is only to hear the people's objections, what end is the serving of an e-

dict for ? what a mock formality is this ? And if the presentation gives a right to the benefice, without regard to the charge of a parish, what need to pray, and lay hands upon one to qualify him to possess a good manse, fertile glebe, and receive a large stipend, if it be not to profane and abuse a solemn ordinance or appointment in the church of Christ ?—*Ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the Lord of hosts, therefore have I also made you contemptible and base.*

OBJ. VII. But say some of our free-thinkers, *This of settling vacant congregations with the certain forms of church government under the New Testament is a thing ambulatory, that is left to the prudence of rulers to establish methods for settling congregations, as may best suit the state, &c. in the time and places wherein they live.* Although this deserves no other answer but contempt, till they shew us a patent under the broad seal of Zion's king for it, yet I shall briefly in a few words observe ;

1. Although civil societies may have a right to make rules of regulation, providing they be not contrary to the divine rule, the church or house of God has no power to make, alter, or model any of her institutions, ordinances or divine appointments : no, these are already fixed and adjusted by her divine Head, and must so remain until his second coming. Thus, after the Lord had shewed the prophet Ezekiel the house, and all the ordinances and laws thereof, says he, *and mark well the entry into the house.* There could have been no occasion for this, if they might have entered in by ways diametrically opposite to one another, some of whom, destitute of all good and systematical order, can never be God's way : *for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of saints.*

2. It were shocking enough to suppose, that Christ, who is a *son in and over his own house*, after he had redeemed her with his own blood, and pur-

Purchased all her privileges for her, should leave her in such a maze of uncertainty here, as to be at the mercy or precarious humour of pope, prelate, patron or corrupt church men, which might justify all the encroachments hitherto made by such upon her. Nay, it renders Zion's king and his kingdom many degrees inferior unto the monarchs and their political governments in this world: For what emperor, king or stateholder, but what has a certain code of laws and regulations formed and established in his dominions for his subjects to be ruled and to walk by. But here the beautiful form and order of the church in her instituted appointments are rendered as various as the winds, the phases of the moon, or the fluctuating waves of the sea.

OBJ. VIII *The elders, the tenants and the lower people are very improper electors of their pastors, seeing they are such a fluctuating body, liable to be dismissed in a few months, and have no right to choose for their successors* *. What poor quibbling arguments will men, in defending a bad cause, make use of, when driven to their last resource,—shift,—or wit's end! For

1. There is no elder, tenant or cotter I know, that has less than a year's lease; some have 19 years, and some twice and more that time. And has the patron or the minister, or they either, one year or yet one day's lease of their life? So that the one is as liable to be dismissed in a few months as the other: and where is the impropriety of electing? or what becomes of the rest of the heritors? must they be rejected because they live amongst uncertain neighbours?—But

2. Does the uncertainty of the place of a man's residence for the future utterly incapacitate him to act for the present, either in a civil, social, or religious

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* This objection was moved by champion S——r last Assembly.

gious capacity? He chuses for himself and not his successor. Otherwise every man must be a perpetual slave, who is not born a patron, heir to an estate, or acquires one, to tyrannize over another. It was a generous expression of that patriot of freedom, Col. Rumbol, on the scaffold, just when his body was about to be cut and mangled in pieces, for attempting to retrieve the civil and religious liberties of his country; "I am sure, that there is no man born marked of God above another: God never made the greater part of mankind (said he) with saddles on their backs and bridles in their mouths, and some few booted and spurred to ride the rest.—But God has wisely ordered different stations, kings, having as much power as makes them great, and people, as much property as makes them happy †."

But, after all, these patronized gentlemen tell us, *That such is the law at present, and therefore they reckon themselves obliged to submit to it; especially as by two decisions of the Court of Session, one of which, when appealed, was confirmed by the house of Lords, ‡ &c.* A shuffling cobweb salvo indeed, which has only the fluctuating and vibrating decisions of the Court of Session and British Parliament for a pedestal of support,—which renders its authors and the rest of the fraternity to be only mere tools to serve the state; for, by this way of arguing, the state may establish popery or paganism next year by acts of parliament, the ministry must obey and submit to it, because there are decisions and acts of parliament for it,—which, from their former conduct, would, it is likely, be the case, had they the trial and opportunity for it.

But what will these acts or decisions avail them or the British parliament, when sitted before the awful and tremendous tribunal of the sovereign Judge of *the*

† Vide his last speech, *Western Martyrology and history of the sufferings of the church of Scotland.*

‡ In their reasons of dissent to the Synod of Glasgow and Ayr last year.

the quick and the dead, who shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth the clay, upon those who have shuffled their mortal heads below his glorious crown; and all who have made or established laws to the hurt or prejudice of his church and people, and have not ruled for him. Did such learned rabbins not know as much as *id possumus quod jure possumus*.—Men have no just power to do iniquity; or whether it be right to obey God or man, judge ye. It might be a small come off in the matter. But I am afraid it will be indeed found but a trivial excuse in the great day of accounts, should the righteous judge ask such, *What entering had you to my church or vineyard on earth? How did ye treat my people? How did ye acquit yourselves of that charge ye undertook? or what success had the gospel under your administration?*—To say, Lord, we were learned men, and behoved to have a piece of bread, and there was no other way of getting into this office but by a presentation. The laws of the land allowed it to be so, and there was no contending against these; and when thus settled, we were in no danger of losing what we had obtained from our own indolency, misdemeanours or the clamant cries of the people under our charge, which was a mean of making us turn careless and secure, both as to theirs and our own character and salvation. Might not the Judge justly reply, “In so much as I gave you natural abilities, and a liberal education beyond many others, you were under the more obligation to act a distinguishing part in the church for me, not only to defend her institutions, rights and immunities, but also to reject and repel such temptations in witnessing against the unjust laws of men, when trampling upon the neck of my church and people.” May he not justly pronounce this sentence upon such, “*Because ye cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the holy One of Israel, profaned my sanctuary, corrupted my ordinances*

dances, would have none of my reproof: therefore I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh. Ye cringed before the great ones of the earth, for filthy lucre's sake, not that ye might have an opportunity to reprove them for their vices, but rather to palliate their faults, and be so gentleman-like as to follow their example, (while the precious souls of those under your charge ye little minded): therefore ye shall have one destiny, lot and portion for ever."

Upon the whole, I think it is as demonstratively clear as noon-day, and obvious as a ray of the sun, that popular election is consistent with scripture,—founded in nature,—suitable to Christ's kingly authority,—consonant to the practice of the Lord's church and people.—sworn to in our covenants,—agreeable to right reason,—fertile of good order, and of the most desirable consequences, and, I may add, contended for and witnessed unto by the most eminent divines and reformers both at home and in the churches abroad †. And therefore no pope, prelate, nor lay patron can warrantably wrest this power out of the

† I could in proof of the above, produce a great many testimonies of learned men, but for brevity's sake must here confine myself to the following specimens:

Luther in his *Traclate de instituendis*, &c. tom. 2. says, "I freely give this to the Popish orders, that these whom they call priests are anointed and instituted by the authority of the bishops, the consent or suffrages of the people over whom they are placed, being neither required nor attempted, whom nevertheless it chiefly concerneth, being the people of God, that no man should be imposed upon them without their suffrage; but he whom they have known and judged fit for trial should be confirmed." And on the margin, "The ministers of the church are to be chosen by the consent and suffrages of the people."

Calvin in his *Institut* lib. 4, cap. 3. concludes the 15th section thus, "Therefore we esteem that by the word of God this is the lawful vocation of a minister, where these are created or ordained who are judged meet by the consent and approbation of the people. But other pastors are to preside in the election, &c."

the people's hands, (nor can they justly alienate, consign or dispoſe this their right over to them) under the pains of running the dreadful risk of uſurping the royal prerogative of Zion's king, and oppreſſing his heritage, and ſo falling under this awful charge, *They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage* : but here is the penalty, *I will puniſh them that oppreſs thee.*

AND, now, dear brethren, before I conclude, let me with all humility offer theſe few advices following unto your conſideration, whercin (as the miſſive is already lengthened out beyond intention) I ſhall be as conciſe as poſſible. And

1^{ſt}, I ſuppoſe, it were quite ſuperfluous after ſuch a noble, ſpirited ſtand againſt patronage to adviſe, or rather remind you to keep at a diſtance from every one

Cartwright in his ſecond reply, page 226. ſays, "The right of the people is a part of that liberty purchaſed by Chriſt's blood, which the church can no more alienate or diſpoſe of, than ſhe can transfer her inheritance of the kingdom of God, to which this liberty annexed."

Great Rutherford in his his due right or preſbytery, p. 465. ſays, "Every lawful means of entering into the miniſtry is warranted by a word of precept, promiſe or practice. The calling by the patron has neither word of precept, promiſe nor practice in the word, and ſtayerh not the conſcience of the man of God that he did not run aſent."

Mr Livingſton in his letter from Rotterdam to his pariſh of Ancrum, ſays, "I came to Ancrum, — and had the Lord's call by your invitation. Downwards, when ſpeaking of the patron and incumbent, ſays, "It is a deſecration to countenance ſuch an intruded hiring; or join with him in what they call worſhip." I might alſo cite, would time and paper permit, Beza, Bullinger, Jurius, Darcus, Voëtius, Zanchy, Peter Martyr, Hudſon, Manton, Binning, Calamy, Pearſon, Field, Calderwood, Durham, Park, Rule, Jamieſon; but none more than the famous Guldſpie, who before the Weſtmiſter Aſſembly boldly maintained, that the word *ordained* Acts xvii. 28. was truly chooſing in the original, importing the people's ſuffrage in electing their own office bearers. — See Bailie's letters.

one of these intruders, as well as that assigned to Fid-
wick. Do not flatter yourselves, that, because they
were only thrust in upon others and not upon you,
you are at liberty in this: no, the people have im-
mortal souls to save equally precious in the sight of
God with yours, and what has been their case form-
erly seems to be yours at present. And, tho' some
of these may seem to favour you, yet they must all
one way or another concur in the settlement at last.
They are all members of one collective body, and, in
some cases, all fowls of one feather, tho' not all alike
guilty, and for the most part, daubers of the wall
with the intemperate mortar of concurrence with this
Amalekitish generation of patrons, with whom the
Lord hath declared he will have *war from generation
to generation*. Nay, in some sense, they are worse.
These presentees must have a piece of bread: *put me
into the priest's office, that I may eat a piece of bread*:
(a mean and local motive indeed). But what reward
can they expect here or hereafter for thrusting them
in at the window of patronage? Or how can you
expect a wholesome or seasonable advice from those
who, are *socii criminis*, prime promoters or practisers
of patronage, or reap advantage by their ministry,
who, at their infinite hazard, have rushed into this of-
fice to earn their bread, display their talents or grati-
fy their own ambition and pride? You know the
Lord's mission and the call of his people make up a
particular article, might I say, the constituent part,
of the calling of a minister of Christ. And can you
say, that they have these? Then hear the conclusion
from divine inspiration. *I sent them not, nor comman-
ded them; therefore they shall not profit this people at
all, saith the Lord.*

2dly, Beware not only whom you hear, but also
what you hear. *Try the spirits; for many false teach-
ers are gone out into the world.* Arius, pelagius, So-
cinus, and Arminius have those who teach in their
schools daily; for while some boast they can be Cal-

vibists in one place and Arminians in another, others spend all the cadence of eloquence in exalting the power of the intelligent mind, free will and the merit of good works: *do this and do that, (say they), and run the whole course of duties, and ye shall undoubtedly obtain the prize.* A third sort divide the merit and means of salvation betwixt Christ and the sinner, and will tell you, that divine power will cooperate with our imperfect endeavours, if we are but serious and sincere therein; *work and better work (say they); and what ye want, Christ will make up.* A fourth sort of trimmers, who, altho' they do not preach barefaced and downright errors, yet, to accommodate themselves to the taste of the most respectable in the auditory, approach as near it as possible, and think they come clear off the field by hints and equivocal expressions. Nay, to such a pass are things brought now, that if any minister maintain faithfulness in doctrine and discipline, he is baffled and brow beaten by them in the very place of judgment. From all of which you must keep at a distance, if possible. Cleave to these truths that are most attacked in your time, that so you may be established in the present truth. Endeavour not only strength of judgment, but also soundness in the doctrine of the gospel: and keep your hands as clean of every defec-tion as possible, and you shall find the benefit and accomplishment of that promise, *The righteous shall walk on his way and he that hath clean hands, shall be stronger and stronger.* And,

3dly, You have seen what treatment you have met with from those who sit in Aarons seat when craving the benefit of your just rights and privileges, and you may have some prospect what you are likely yet to meet with from them: that is, instead of having a redress you shall be reproached and ridiculed. But let not this scar you at the duties of religion: no, you must not become indifferent, but make application unto the chief shepherd, who will, sooner or later

redress all your grievances. In the mean time, you must walk uprightly and wisely in the way of commanded duty; and cleave to the truth, and the truth shall make you free. Study not only to have strong heads but couragious hearts, that so ye may be the better able to stand out a trial: for I can assure you, if your principles be right, your cause is good, your master is great, and Christ the captain of salvation will go before you, *who was made perfect through suffering*. But then.

4thly, Try your motives in this affair, and see what they are, whether they will stand the test. Many, now a days, are chagrined at patronage, only because it comes to cross their inclinations, but not as it is a dishonour to Christ and an unsupportable yoke upon the neck of his church; a yoke that you need never expect will be got off, till the chain be traced back to its primary, original link, the supremacy. If this were removed, then patronage and all its concomitants that like so many dead weights are lying upon the church would tumble to the ground. But if you can do no more in this, you must pray, plead and contend for the liberties of the church, and remonstrate, witness and testify against every sinful encroachment made thereon; but all in a way agreeable to the measuring line of the sanctuary, platform of the word, and the plan of your known professed presbyterian principles.—And, for your help in this, take a retrospect view of what was the practice of the saints recorded in scripture, and the laudable contendings of our renowned, reforming and suffering ancestors in these lands in the late reforming and persecuting times; particularly, keep the doctrine, principle, and practice of your proto minister the renowned Guthrie (whose memory shall flourish in the dust) in your eye. He was one amongst a thousand. Let it be your study and assiduous care to walk by the footsteps of Christ's flock in former ages and generations that were approved of by him. As says the apostle, *let*

us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.

And,

5thly, Bear this injury, or whatever injuries you may have yet to meet with, patiently; and do not give way to corrupt nature in resenting them in an offensive way. They are indeed hard to bear; but remember that the *wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*. When you see these men left of God to rob and spoil the church of God of her rights and reformation principles, and, judicatory after judicatory, making themselves famous for *cutting down the carved work of the sanctuary*, as says the Psalmist. *But now they break down the carved work thereof, &c.* Break not out in a passionate way against those who are but the poor instruments of these disorders and confusions; but look unto the Lord's hand in it. The Lord for our trial, and the chastisement of our sins, and misimproven mercies, may have said to these men, *go and oppress my heritage, and tread down the rights of the people, until they return unto me, or be cut off in mine anger*. And, tho' they thrust in one of these men upon you, they cannot without a new sanction of law compel you contrary to the light of your own conscience to hear him: and who knows but it may be better for you, at least some of you, ere all be done, than if you had obtained your desire of the judicatories of the church? for *we know, that all things work together for good to them that love God*.

6thly, You must mourn and not murmur over these evils: *take with you words, and turn to the Lord, and say unto him, take away all iniquity: we have sinned against thee, personally, in families, congregations, and as a church and nation: and in order to profit by this exercise, I cannot direct you unto a better method than the exercise of the lamenting prophet in name of the church: say, Woes me for my hurt, my wound is grievous.—My heart within me is broken, because of the prophets.—Many pastors have destroyed my vineyard, and trodden my portion under*

foot.—*They have made it desolate, and being desolate, it mourneth unto me — Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee, and they have not discovered thine iniquity: for these things I weep, and mine eye runneth down with water, because the enemy prevail-eth. — But I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me, he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness,* Jer. x. 19. and xxiii. 9. and xii. 10. Lam. xi. 14. and i. 16. Micah vii. 9 &c. And,

7thly, As we have now, of a long time, revolted and departed from the Lord, both as a church and as a nation. We have broken the bands asunder, and cast the cords from us; for which the Lord *has given the dearly beloved of his soul* into the hands of his enemies. The church in these lands is now in bondage: *she has on her mourningweed: Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her.* When the great men of the earth, the political and religious rulers of these nations, are minding only their worldly ease, wealth, advantage, and grandeur, you must not stand as neutral and indifferent spectators: no, you must put to your hand, and, in your stations, take a lift with poor, low, dejected, and despised Zion. And, if you can do more, (though we be a covenant breaking people, yet we have a covenant-keeping and prayer hearing God), you must pray, and pray fervently, that the *time to favour her may come.* Say with the Psalmist, *lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolation, even all the ills thine enemies have done wickedly in the sanctuary.* Pray, that the crown may yet flourish upon the head of our great Immanuel; that his large and great dominions may be extended; and that he may rid the neck of his church from under the yoke of her oppressors, whether pope, prelate, patron, or haughty church men, that seem to put no higher estimate upon precious and immortal souls than their own worldly interest

and

and preferment. So that the wicked may no more triumph, and the men of the earth may no more oppress, that he may recal our bondage as streams in the south.

8thly, Amongst the other fruits of our apostacy one of the spiritual judgments, that have seized this generation, is, a spirit of contention and division, whereby religion is rendered such a chaos of sentiments as has reduced its professors unto an immense number of sets, sectaries, divisions and subdivisions (witnesses for truth not excepted), and almost every one pretending to be in the right, *some saying, lo, here is Christ, or lo, he is there.* So that many well meaning people who are convinced things are wrong in the established church, and would be content to lift up a testimony for truth, yet know not well what party to join with, whereby they are discouraged in the way of duty. — If this shall fall out to be your case, you must not consult flesh and blood; that is, your own worldly ease and advantage. If you would make a right choice, you must proceed in a solid deliberate way upon rational and scriptural grounds. You must not take up a principle or sentiment upon trust, or be led implicitly by men or the best of men, nor even trust conscience alone in this; for it is a matter of more importance than many are aware of. You'll say, what then? why, you must apply unto the Lord for light and direction. — Say, with David, *teach me thy way O Lord: I will walk in thy truth.* Search the divine oracles, the only rule of faith and manners, and the standards and testimony of the reformed church of Scotland, and see whose principles are most agreeable unto these, and what you find, upon an impartial enquiry, condemned by the spirit of God there. The inspired poet found the advantages accruing from this, which made him say, *thy testimonies are my delight, and my counsellors.* And,

Lastly, My brethren, let me, on the whole, obtest you once more, to cry mightily unto the Lord in this
critical

critical juncture for light and direction in this weighty and important affair. He has promised to *be a refuge to the oppressed, and a tower in troublous days*. Indeed, you may be borne down and overmatched by men in power; and they may plead acts of parliaments and General Assemblies for it. Nay, these low lived hirelings may ascribe what opposition they justly meet with to a being persecuted for righteousness sake, and apply or abuse scripture for that purpose. But the business will come to a hearing again before an impartial judge, when these as well as other injuries will be rectified. Labour, then, to have your judge for your friend. Seek an acquaintance and union with him, and then he will enable you to surmount and pervade all your difficulties; and sooner or later will extricate and deliver you out of all your trouble. *The righteous cries unto the Lord, and the Lord delivereth him out of all his trouble.* And, though you are still to be in the use of all lawful means and endeavours to obtain an agreeable settlement in your religious concerns, yet you must neither rest too much upon, nor be elated with your management in them. No, *commit your way unto the Lord, trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass, wait patiently for him; fret not, because of the man that bringeth wicked devices to pass.* Leave not, nor give over the arduous work, *until he bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noon tide of the day.*

And, for a final conclusion, that this may be your happy attainment, and the attainment of all in the like circumstance under this awful gloom in this dark and cloudy day, (when the church's defections are increasing, and her enemies recruiting their force or reconnoitering her strength, and advancing on her apace) is and ought to be the earnest desire of your souls ever well wisher in the truth,

LOCHGOIN }
March 19th 1780 }

JOHN HOWIE.

P O S T S C .

PERHAPS, Some may think, things in the foregoing pages to cure of the subject not only led grains of allowance; but even th to such an alarming crisis under age, that, in relating things as consistency with truth) no alter this seems to be left.—Others, again, I ka be ready to say, *we are taught, that we may hear and join with every sound teacher in the estab. church, tho' put in by patronage, if he be not throu in upon ourselves, but here you seem to make no materi difference.* To these I would only further say, that as men and teachers, I have granted an odds; for do not despair, that there are yet some (though but comparatively few) good men and orthodox preachers in the church of Scotland. But are we to follow these in an evil course more than others? For as they are a party contributing to uphold the idol supremacy, and its first born brat patronage, and concur with these corrupt hirelings, &c. in point of testimony or witness bearing, where is the difference? Sure the word of God makes none. *He that biddeth him good speed, (i. e. follows, countenances, or encourages in such a course), is partaker of his evil deeds;* and says the apostle of legal ceremonies, which can be of no greater importance than these truths above mentioned, *Touch not, taste not, handle not.* Let us then bear a free, full and faithful testimony for every truth contained in the word of truth. The great patron, supreme witness, and high priest of our profession was not ashamed to avow his part as an example in this. Says he, *To this end I was born, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witness to the truth.*

E R R A T A .

Page 9. line 13. for 1710. read 1718. p. 19 l. 2. for concurrence. concurrence p. 22 l. 23. for Cald. crav. r. Calder, Crox, p. 35. l. 5. after concerned r. in. p. 39. l. 19. for villanies r. votaries p. 60. foot note for declaration r. proclamation.

GLASGOW, August 13th, 1782

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