



objections ; that in fact it is such that it *must* not be adopted as it now stands. I trust the Laity of our Church will come forward* and assert their own "unquestionable rights"—that they shall give such expression to their sentiments of attachment to their Protestant Rights and Christian Liberties as shall secure the abandonment, now and for ever, of every attempt to impose upon them a yoke of bondage which in days gone by, neither they nor their fathers were able to bear.

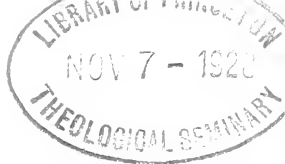
WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS, THERE IS LIBERTY.

STAND FAST, THEREFORE, IN THE LIBERTY WHEREWITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, AND BE NOT ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE.

* I know that there is a very strong feeling on the part of the Laity against those provisions of the Code upon which I have commented. But that feeling ought to assume a definite form. The Sessions and Committees of our Congregations should meet and adopt Resolutions condemning the proposed interference with their rights and liberties. In some instances this has already been done. The following has been adopted, unanimously, by the Committee of my own Congregation:—"Regarding subscription, in any form whatever, to Articles of Faith, as being opposed to the best interests of religion, and, at the same time, as inconsistent with the Fundamental Principles of the Remonstrant Synod; and having seen in the Draft Code of Discipline lists of questions proposed to be put to Candidates for License and Ordination with a view to test their soundness in the faith,—Resolved:—That we strongly disapprove of all such questions, and earnestly entreat Synod not to adopt any measures calculated, in any manner, to interfere with the freest exercise of the Right of Private Judgment in matters of Faith."

Before the unexpected adjournment of the November meeting took place, Synod had entered upon the consideration of the portion of the Code here reviewed. The following motion upon the subject was introduced by myself, and seconded by John Miller, Esq.:—"That, while recognising the right and duty of Congregations to satisfy themselves of the fitness, in all respects, of the persons whom they select as their religious Teachers, we believe that Presbyteries ought not, in matters of religious faith, to require anything of Candidates for License and Ordination beyond their professing themselves disciples of Jesus Christ;—and that the Code be altered accordingly." The discussion of this motion will be resumed at the March meeting.

REPLY



TO

REV. DR. MONTGOMERY'S SPEECH,

&c. &c. &c.

BY

DAVID MAGINNIS.

LONDON:

E. T. WHITFIELD, 178, STRAND. BELFAST: H. GREER,
HIGH-STREET.

1858.



INTRODUCTORY.*

SPEECH IN SYNOD, NOVEMBER 4, 1856.

Moderator, I claim permission to offer a few remarks upon the important subject now before the house. I concur in all that has been said touching the grave importance of the present meeting, and the necessity of calmly and seriously deliberating upon the various important subjects treated of in the proposed Code. The section now before us, however, and that relating to ordination, are, in my mind, among the most, if not the most, important we have to consider,—not because of any intrinsic pre-eminence attaching to the subjects, but because of their treatment. You are aware that it is proposed to put certain questions to candidates for license and ordination, with a view principally to ascertain their theological opinions. To the proposed catechetical examination I feel constrained to object. And here I wish, once for all, to state that my objections are not to the particular questions here enumerated. Upon them I am not to be considered as expressing any opinion. They may be such as I could conscientiously answer in the affirmative, or they may not. My only concern with them is this—they are theological, involving the principle of a test; and, therefore, I oppose them, as I should oppose any other questions having a similar object—the matter of their being less or more searching being very subordinate. It is not, then, to the particular questions proposed I am to be considered as objecting; it is to the principle involved in the questioning.

It need not be attempted to be concealed that to adopt the proposed plan is, in effect, to revert to subscription to articles of faith as a condition of

* As an introduction to my reply to Dr. Montgomery's pamphlet, I print here the few observations I made at the special meeting of Synod, in Nov., 1856, when proposing, and also those which I offered at the adjourned meeting, in March last, when defending, my Amendment on the Draft Code's Provisions relating to "license" and "ordination," that the reader, who has perused Dr. Montgomery's pamphlet, having before him, in these observations and in my published discourse, all that I have either spoken or written on the subject, may be enabled to see for himself, 1st, the views I did advocate and the misrepresentation to which they have been subjected; and, 2nd, whether there is anything, either in the matter or the manner of my advocacy, to justify the violent assault which it becomes now my painful duty to repel.

In reference to these "Observations" I have to add that, believing I was the advocate of a most important principle which might be imperilled by any indiscretion into which I might be tempted in extemporaneous speech, I took the precaution, on each occasion, of writing out at full length what I wished to say, and on each occasion, with a few unimportant alterations, I read as a speech what I had written. I am, therefore, enabled to give my observations as nearly as possible as they were delivered.

admission to our pulpits. The candidate for license is to be asked, Do you believe this doctrine, that doctrine, and the other doctrine? And, after a congregation has selected a minister, he shall not be ordained or installed until he shall have given "satisfactory" evidence of the soundness of his faith regarding a series of doctrines. Nay, more, I find it suggested in the draft Code for the consideration of this house, whether the minister-elect shall not be further required to give a "definite written statement of his religious opinions." Can there be a rational doubt as to the meaning of all this? It manifestly aims at establishing a system of testing the theological opinions and consciences of entrants into the ministry, not less objectionable in principle than that of Subscribing Protestant Churches. The articles to which you require assent may be neither so numerous nor so objectionable in themselves as those of surrounding churches; but the question is not whether they are true or false, nor whether they are nine or thirty-nine—the principle is the same, and it is to the principle I object.

I object to it, first, because it has proved itself to be opposed to the interests of religious truth and freedom of conscience. Were I addressing a different audience, I should endeavour to establish this position by arguments derived from the history of the Christian church; but on the present occasion it is not necessary to adopt that course, as, perhaps, all whom I address know as well as I—many much better—that subscription to articles of faith, as a bond of Church union, has been most injurious in its influences, in regarding the progress of truth, and in encouraging hypocrisy and insincerity among those whose office requires that their character should be without spot or blemish.

Secondly, I object to the principle involved in the testing questions referred to, because it is opposed to the fundamental principles of this Church. To establish this position, I shall quote the 3rd and 4th of the Resolutions adopted by this Synod at its formation, and to which I entreat your serious attention. They are as follows:—

"That all exercise of Church power, which attaches rewards to the profession of one class of doctrines, and penalties to that of any other, is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and directly calculated to undermine that sincerity without which no profession of faith or form of worship can be acceptable unto God. That the imposition of human tests and Confessions of Faith, and the vain efforts of men to produce an unattainable uniformity of belief have not only tended to encourage hypocrisy, but also to restrict the sacred right of private judgment—to lessen the authority of the Scriptures—to create unrighteous divisions amongst Christians—to sanction the most barbarous persecutions—to trench upon the natural and civil rights of men—to place undue power in the hands of the few—to throw a shield over the timeserver—to expose the honest to injuries and persecutions—to perpetuate errors in almost all Churches—and to prevent that free inquiry and discussion which are essential to the extension of religious knowledge."

Do these resolutions leave any doubt as to the spirit and aims of those who laid the foundations of this Synod? To remove that doubt (did it exist) it were only necessary to reproduce some passages from the eloquent speeches of gentlemen who, in the stormy and trying times in which our Church was founded, manfully, heroically, and successfully contended for the rights of conscience, full, free, unfettered inquiry, and the exercise of the sacred right of private judgment in all matters of faith. I am sure I express the feelings of my younger brethren when I express my own feeling of sincere admiration and of gratitude for the important services rendered to the cause of religious liberty, at the period referred to, by the founders of this Church—so few of whom, alas! are here to-day to assist us in deliberations on questions of much moment to its future prosperity. But, though dead, they yet speak! They speak through those resolutions, solemnly adopted as the basis of this Church. They speak to us in the columns of the liberal press of the day (newspaper and periodical), and in none more than in those of *The Northern Whig*, which gave its services at first, and has continued to give them, to the cause of civil and

religious liberty, in a manner which ought not to be forgotten. One extract, and one only, shall I delay you with. It is in the spirit of many such, as every one acquainted with the local religious history of the period will know. It is an extract from a speech of the Rev. Wm. Porter, on his being elected Moderator of the meeting of Ministers and Elders which formed the first Remonstrant Synod:—

“The present meeting, however, is one of no ordinary character. It is marked by circumstances of a peculiar nature, and which can hardly fail to make the breast heave with emotions not easily suppressed. Cold must be the blood that is not warmed—dull and phlegmatic must be the spirit which is not animated, by contemplating the situation in which we stand, and the object which we have in view. We have come together on a most interesting occasion. We have come together to lay the foundation-stone of a temple dedicated to religious liberty—a temple under whose ample dome every individual who chooses to enter will be allowed to worship, in his own way, the one God and Father of all. After years of patient endurance, we have succeeded in throwing off a yoke which was by no means easy—a burden which was far from being light. We have emancipated ourselves and our Congregations from a state of spiritual thralldom, and established our claim to those invaluable immunities wherewith Christ intended to make mankind free. The privilege of free and fearless inquiry is the groundwork of the Church we are now preparing to build; and ‘Prove all things’ will be the motto inscribed on its front, in characters of gold. We do not associate as Calvinists or Armenians—we do not associate as Unitarians or Trinitarians; we are Presbyterians.”

Now, Sir, these facts in view, how shall we justify the present proposal? Were the change proposed a widening of the basis on which the Synod was formed, we could understand, and, perhaps, approve of the intended change, as being in the spirit of the founders of the Church and the framers of its constitution. In their mind, if they expressed themselves as they felt, the only finality contemplated was an end of human creeds—a death-blow to authority in matters of conscience—in every other direction the way was open, and the motto “Onward.” Why reverse that glorious decision?—why desire to place on the neck of your successors that yoke which neither you nor your fathers were able to bear?

I object to this test-principle, thirdly, because its operation in the Churches around us, at the present moment, proves it to be unsuitable to an enlightened Church. Merely to name the Church of Rome—the only Church that carries through the principle—is quite enough for my purpose, in the hearing of an intelligent audience. The Church of England has its Creeds three, and Articles thirty-nine; and yet members of her communion may be found entertaining almost every point of doctrine in the theological compass, from Deism to Popery. Surely it is not the condition of the Calvinistic Church that enamours us of the fleshpots of Egypt! Never more emphatically than at the present hour did Subscribing Churches proclaim the insufficiency of the Creed-principle—nay, more, never did their circumstances more strongly exhort us to widen, rather than narrow, the basis of our union. The Methodist Church finds its basis too narrow to sustain the superstructure itself has raised; so, also, of the Calvinistic Independents; and so, also, of the Church of England, which, though Catholic enough to find room for a great variety of sentiment, has not room enough for all who desire to be of her communion. Is our Church too large, that we desire to narrow its limits? Or, do we fail to read the lesson of the times? Do we shrink from the responsibility our position entails? Do we furl the banner our fathers unfurled? If so, let us take good heed to ourselves. If we are not prepared to go forward, keeping our place in the general movement, then let us share the fate of the unfaithful! We shall meet our reward, but the ends of Providence shall not be defeated; the cause we desert shall find other and more faithful advocates.

I object, fourthly, to this test-principle because our experience, as a Church, does not justify it. Hitherto, you have admitted candidates to the Ministry on the most liberal terms—I may say on their own terms—and have you had

any good reason to regret having done so? It is possible there may have been cases in which you deemed some of your pulpits might have been more usefully occupied. But, would a searching catechetical examination on matters of belief, prior to license and ordination, have prevented such instances? You all know, full well, that, if you have to deal with an unprincipled man, all the creeds you could invent would not disqualify him, on the ground of doctrine, for entering the Church. He could subscribe three score articles, as readily as your three or four. And when, in the course of one's reading, in the progress of his mental growth, one's views on important points of doctrine change—as the views of all thinking men do change—it cannot be unknown to the members of the Synod that there are other means of relieving congregations of the services of such ministers, if not acceptable to them, than the production against them of the proposed written articles. The Synod would lose nothing in dignity by assuming that its members were men of honesty and integrity, who would not remain in a position where their services were not acceptable; and I venture to assert that, in, perhaps, every case in which such change of opinion has taken place, and been openly professed, the minister has placed his resignation in the hands of his congregation. I can speak for myself. When the views I entertained on entering on the ministry here, being then a youth scarce out of my teens, enlarged with time, I felt bound to give my congregation an opportunity of relieving themselves of my services, if they so desired. I gave them the opportunity, and I am with them still; and I don't think I was a whit more honest than any other member of the body would have been under similar circumstances.

If we are not prepared for the full exercise of the right of private judgment and its results, then let us mount the wave that will bear us back to Rome! I am quite sure that the younger members of this Synod will not consent to such a course; and, is it not melancholy to think that our fears are chiefly for those who know, from experience, the bitterness of the servitude they would impose? Fathers—ye who arose in giant strength, and burst the chains that spiritual despotism had forged to enslave you—render one exception to the rule, by abstaining from re-welding the chains you burst for the enslaving of others!

I have to apologise, Sir, for having occupied so much of your time; but, as the question before the House appeared to me to be one of paramount importance, and as, whatever may be my other failings, I seldom trespass upon your attention by lengthened remarks, I hope that, under the circumstances, I shall be forgiven, and that the points I have so imperfectly raised will be duly considered. I conclude by moving the following Amendment:—

“That, while recognising the right and duty of Congregations to satisfy themselves of the fitness, in all respects, of the persons whom they select as their religious teachers, we believe Presbyteries ought not, in matters of religious faith, to require anything of candidates for license and ordination beyond their professing themselves disciples of Jesus Christ; and that the Code be altered accordingly.”

SPEECH IN SYNOD, MARCH 3, 1857.

Moderator, Allow me to assure you, that, in rising to address the house on the present occasion, I feel my position to be one of great difficulty and responsibility. Responsibility, in that I feel that the interests of a great principle are involved in the character of my advocacy, and difficulty, in that I have the misfortune to be opposed to men eloquent and skilful in debate, and some of whom have earned a title to the gratitude of us all for valuable services, rendered in times gone by, to the cause of civil and religious liberty.

Still, believing, as I do, that the adoption by this Synod of the testing clauses of the draft Code would be highly injurious to our Church, and, *pro tanto*, detrimental to the interests of religion, I am compelled,—all difficulties notwithstanding,—to oppose the measures submitted by the committee, and to contend for the principle affirmed by the Amendment now before us.

I shall only premise farther, that, in the few remarks I shall now offer, it shall be my endeavour to guard myself against introducing anything irrelevant to the questions at issue; and, particularly, to resist every temptation to be personal. If either example or ungenerous treatment were any justification, I might indulge freely in personalities of questionable propriety. Such personalities, however, I shall scrupulously avoid, feeling assured that, however pungent in discussion, they are beneath the dignity of the solemn duty I seek to discharge.

Two schemes, defining the limits of the power of Presbyteries and Congregations, respectively, to test the theological opinions of candidates for the ministry, are now before the house. One of these, the Code Committee's, proposes to confer nearly all the power upon the Presbytery; the other, that of the Amendment, proposes to confer nearly all the power upon the Congregation.

Having already* expressed my views upon the scheme of the Committee, I do not consider it necessary, on this occasion, to enter upon any lengthened examination of it; and, particularly, as I feel that nothing has since been advanced by its supporters to materially strengthen the positions I have assailed. I have shewn that the proposed Code, as a whole, is not what the Synod, in 1848, directed its Committee to prepare. I have shewn that the particular provisions now under review are in a high degree objectionable, as being tantamount to the adoption of the old creed system, with all its evils, retarding progress, and encouraging hypocrisy; nay, as being worse than the adoption of a real creed, inasmuch as, while it does not afford the advantages of a creed in being a programme of Church principles, it places conscience more thoroughly at the mercy of arbitrary caprice. I have shewn, further, that the antecedents of our Church, its fundamental and oft-professed principles, its responsible position as a recognised exponent of the principle of non-subscription, together with the ecclesiastical signs of the times, all conspire in imperatively demanding that this Synod shall not allow itself to become accessory to the extension of the dominion of spiritual slavery. All that I have elsewhere said in support of these views, I shall, in order to save the time of the house, consider as if now submitted, and proceed to notice such points and comments as appear to require explanation, defence, or refutation.

It has been alleged that I entirely mistake the nature of the scheme I oppose, and, consequently, do injustice to its promoters. There has been an expenditure of much effort and eloquence to shew that there is no intention to interfere with our religious liberties,—that the spirit which resisted ecclesiastical usurpation in the old Synod is as fresh and healthful in this modification of our Synodical constitution as in the Fundamental Principles themselves. Nothing, however, which I have yet heard, either here or elsewhere, disproves the correctness of my representation of the spirit and tendency of these sections of the new Code; while various additional circumstances and arguments conspire to establish the justness of my estimate.

Sir, I dissent entirely from the allegation that there is no desire to abridge our liberties. Such desire, I am convinced, *does* exist; and so strong is it that it has not always been able to conceal its aims.

You remember the treatment to which the Synod of Munster and the Presbytery of Antrim were subjected by certain members of this Synod, both at our regular meeting in July last, and at our special meeting in November. At the former, it was proposed that those two bodies, constituting with the Remonstrant Synod, the "Association of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians in Ireland," should be respectfully requested to co-operate with the Remonstrant

* In my Discourse, reviewing some Provisions of the new Code.

Synod in the preparation of a joint Code for the three bodies; but the proposal, from the determined opposition it encountered, fell to the ground for want of a seconder. And, at our November meeting, as many will remember with great pain, a most unusual and unhandsome proceeding was recommended in reference to those bodies—that, contrary to all courtesy and custom, any of their members who might happen to be present, should not be permitted to sit with the Synod. And what was the *motive*, not concealed but openly avowed, for all this? These two bodies, it seems, have peculiar notions about religious liberty. They have not yet lost their first love of it. *They* would not consent to the re-imposition of the yoke of bondage upon the consciences of their brethren. And, therefore, they must not be allowed to enter our councils while we are engaged in the preparation of our Code, lest they might influence us, in any degree, in favour of the Christian liberty they themselves love and enjoy. Therefore, the November treatment of the Antrim Presbytery,—a body which, by its example at a time when it was something to speak for freedom of conscience, taught us the rudiments of religious liberty, and when our own difficulties came, helped us through them by its sympathy, counsel, and aid. That that body, through its representatives present on the occasion,—and, especially, in its respected member, the Rev. Samuel C. Nelson, who bears, and does honour to, a name that has long been honourable and honoured in the annals of our Irish nonconformity, and who, besides, was himself one of the few who laid the foundations of our Synod, and was, therefore, peculiarly qualified to render valuable assistance in remodelling our constitution,—that that distinguished body and the Synod of Munster should be attempted to be excluded from our deliberations upon the ground that they might influence us in favour of liberty of conscience, is evidence too clear to admit of doubt that there *is* a strong desire, somewhere, to put the drag upon the wheel of the advancing cause of freedom of thought.

And there is something significant in the fact that these recent exhibitions are in direct opposition to the formerly declared wishes of the Synod. I find by our printed Minutes of 1850, that at its annual Meeting of that year, Synod adopted the following Resolution:—

“That the Committee appointed by this Body, at our Annual Meeting, in 1848, to draw up a Code of Discipline, be directed to request the Synod of Munster and the Presbytery of Antrim, to give them their assistance and advice, with a view to the production of a Code that might suit the Three Bodies.”

Now, I should like to be informed by the Code Committee whether these instructions were ever complied with: if so, with what result; if not, why not. I have good reason to believe that such request was never made. Why it was not, will, no doubt, be explained by those who set aside the unanimous and explicit instructions of this Synod.

In further illustration of the correctness of my representation of the real aim of the sections of the Code now under review, I might refer to instances, unmistakable and noted, exhibiting a growing tendency to restrict, even by penalties, freedom of thought; but I abstain, lest I might be drawn into personalities such as I have determined to avoid.

There is one patent fact which I must not fail to adduce in support of the correctness of my interpretation of the sections under notice,—and that is the verdict of the public. The draft Code has been printed and circulated, the sections before us have been published in the newspapers; the public have read them and concluded that our Synod is abandoning its principles and seeking to take a place in the ranks of creed-bound Churches. This is the verdict of the public, Orthodox and Unitarian. Note the comments upon our November meeting in *The Banner of Ulster* and *The Inquirer*. I have had letters from several of the most distinguished members of our denomination on the other side of the Channel, deploring the retrograde tendency our proposed Code exhibits. And it is notorious that the collectors for our Manse

Fund have been obliged to suspend their labours until the result of this meeting be known,—as the laity are determined, and I believe wisely so, not to contribute to such project, if Synod should prove unfaithful to its position ;— which, while it shews very clearly that I am not alone in my view of the spirit and tendency of these sections, proves that even if a few amongst us desire, in any manner, to “lord it over God’s heritage,” the members of our Church generally prize highly the “liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free,” and are determined, at all hazards, not to allow themselves to be “entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”

But, Sir, I refer you to the Code itself. Its provisions afford the fullest confirmation of my representation. It provides that no person shall be licensed or ordained until, among other things, he shall have answered, to the “satisfaction” of a Presbytery, a series of questions upon theological subjects. Before being ordained it is intended that he shall be subjected to the catechetical test and the declaratory test, tests oral and tests written, and must pass through all to the complete “satisfaction” of his clerical conscienciers. The slightest flaw in his Orthodoxy, and he is liable to be rejected. The temper of his mind, the manner of his life, these, though of the utmost importance to ministerial usefulness, are subordinated to Orthodox soundness of mere belief. The Presbytery is constituted the judge of the Orthodoxy of our young ministers. And even though it might undertake the office without any desire to unduly interfere with the religious opinions of its candidates for the ministry, it is a dangerous power to confer upon any Church Court, a power which, in every Church that possessed it, has been abused ; and I have no doubt would in time be abused in our own. And, even were that danger not imminent, it is not wise, nor proper, to make admission to the holiest office dependent upon a young man’s professing religious opinions which shall be “satisfactory” to a Presbytery, or to an influential party therein. It is opposed, besides, to the Fundamental Principles of our Body, which declare, Article III.

“That all exercise of Church power, which attaches temporal rewards to the profession of one class of doctrines, and temporal penalties to that of any other, is contrary to the Holy Scriptures, and directly calculated to undermine that sincerity, without which no profession of faith, no form of worship can be acceptable unto God.”

It has been alleged, again and again, that the testing proposed is not of the objectionable kind I have represented : that there is nothing inquisitorial intended : that it will tread so slightly and press so gently, that the most sensitive conscience will not be disturbed. It is perfectly harmless ; merely designed to enable Presbyteries to ascertain what are the distinguishing views of the persons they license or ordain,—intended for the *information* of Presbyteries, not to direct or influence the opinions of candidates.

I cannot, Sir, at all concur in this view of the testing powers proposed to be conferred upon Presbyteries. Upon a little reflection it appears obvious that mere information is not what is sought. It is not strangers, persons of whom little is known, that are to be put through this testing process ; but persons well known to the Presbyteries and Committees of the Church,—persons who shall have been for at least two sessions under the Association’s Professors, receiving almost daily instructions in Doctrinal Theology, Biblical Criticism, Church History, and kindred subjects, and who shall have passed through an extensive course of examinations, and delivered discourses upon almost every important question in Controversial Theology,—and all to the satisfaction of a General Committee of the whole Body at large ; and who, over and above all this, are assumed by the New Code to have been under the Care of a Presbytery from the date of their first session at College, and to have been examined by their Presbytery on the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelation, to have delivered before their Presbytery at least *five* discourses, (*four* of them on subjects prescribed by the Presbytery), and to have been examined, at stated intervals, by Presbytery, on Church History, the original languages of Scrip-

ture, Pastoral Theology, Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion, and Doctrinal and Controversial Theology. And, after all this, it is deemed necessary to invent a special machinery for the innocent little purpose of enabling the Presbytery to get just the merest glimpse at the Candidate's opinions! Sir, I venture to assert that there is not a man in this House who does not feel assured that the Provisions of the Code now under review are designed to accomplish a very different purpose.

For these reasons, in connection with my main argument elsewhere presented, and to which these remarks are but supplementary, I am convinced that Synod should reject the testing clauses of the sections now before us; and adopt my Amendment, which constitutes *Congregations*, and not *Presbyteries*, the judges of the religious opinions and other qualifications of Candidates for their pulpits,—*Presbyteries* resting satisfied with a profession of Christian discipleship on the part of Candidates for License and Ordination,—and even that restrictive requirement, only because we are a Christian Church. I confess that I feel the force of the argument from my own reasoning against this requirement. I have, all along, felt it to be my weak point. I am prepared, however, to yield up any little advantage to be gained from it by those opposed to me; and am fully satisfied with the large compensation for a slight logical loss, derivable from the increased moral power resulting from Christian discipleship as the religious condition of Christian union. Such condition gives us a living centre, around which, at any intellectual distance, the soul may freely move; and, notwithstanding the length of the radius, may still be indissolubly bound thereto, and derive therefrom the most abundant supply of spiritual light, life, and power. It thus combines the largest freedom with the divinest spirit and the highest law of life.

Mr. Porter proposes to add to my Amendment a clause requiring the Candidate, besides professing himself a Christian, to acknowledge the Scriptures to be God's Holy Word. This requirement is similar to the second of the Code's testing questions,—which is as follows:—"Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a Divine revelation?" Disapproving of this requirement, I think it right, from the prominence which it has acquired in this debate, to state, briefly, the grounds of my objection to it. I am opposed to it, 1st. Because it is unnecessary, superfluous. In reality, it affirms nothing the Christian values, beyond what is affirmed by my Amendment. The Christian Scriptures, it is admitted on all hands, are the highest source of our information respecting Christ, his doctrines, his life. To know anything of these we *must* go to the New Testament. Now, I should like to be informed, why the Candidate, after professing Christian discipleship, should be required also to affirm the sole source of his information on the subject. The adoption of this provision would prepare the way for the introduction of any number of superfluous requirements. It would tend to multiply provisions at the expense of simplicity; and that, so far as I can see, without any corresponding advantage. 2nd. I am opposed to it on the merits, also. It requires the Candidate to affirm that the Scriptures "*contain* a divine revelation." No doubt they do "*CONTAIN*" a divine revelation. But how many ordinary readers would interpret these words as you interpret them? A cursory reading would lead to a very erroneous opinion as to the real character of the provision, and ultimately no doubt to a very unfavourable estimate of the Church that could sanction its adoption. While we all prize the sacred Scriptures as an invaluable heritage of spiritual wealth, there can be but few (if any) in our Church in the present day prepared to adopt them from Genesis to Revelation as a written revelation of God's will. Hence the terms of the question. It is not attempted to define what is the divine revelation in Scripture. It is left to everyone to discover that for himself, and when he has found it, he has merely to cry, "*Eureka.*" It leaves us all free to deal with the Bible as we choose. We may pare it down until we have not left as a revelation as many lines as it now contains books. But while the initiated will thus view your provision as meaning almost nothing, the uninitiated will regard it very differently—as, in fact, good Orthodox doctrine. Sir, I dislike double-dealing, with the public as well as with the

individual conscience; and, though I do not for a moment charge the framers of this proposition with any unworthy motive, I believe that the adoption of their proposal would be injurious to the character of our Church. I cannot, therefore, give my sanction to this provision of the Code.

It is argued that my Amendment would be attended with great danger to the Church, inasmuch as it affords no protection against the admission of all sorts of heresies. Then, if it be dangerous, it is Christian, nevertheless. Christ himself established no theological test of Church membership. The Apostles were satisfied with a profession of discipleship. No conscience-queriesheet was put into the hands of Candidates for the highest offices in the Apostolic Church. They were satisfied to have men of a "holy spirit" and good report, and to such the Church was gladly opened. No conscience-prober stood at the door to test the orthodoxy of those who sought to enter the Church of Christ. And, brethren, are we who are wont to boast of our attachment to primitive Christianity, to follow the crowd in renouncing this good old Christian practice, forgetting that "where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty;" and that it is a high function of Christianity to preserve perfect "unity of spirit" amidst wide intellectual divergences.

But, Sir, is not this the very cry that was raised by the majority in the Synod of Ulster against the proposals of the minority—they would let infidels into the Church? And what was the reply of the minority? John Mitchel, (who has this day been called the Melancthon of the Remonstrants,) thus replied at the Synod in Strabane—"I declare before God that I would rather see in this Body ten ministers unsound in the faith than one hypocrite." And here, to-day, I adopt the language of our Remonstrant Melancthon, and, in God's name, say, Even so. But why fear? In any encounter between truth and error, truth must triumph; and all the sooner, and more successfully, the less it is hampered by expediencies. And even though temporary inconvenience might result from the adoption of a right principle, let us remember that consequences are in the hand of infinite wisdom, and that it is ours the right and true ever to seek after, recognise, and obey.

I shall adhere to my resolve not to indulge in offensive personalities. One or two remarks of rather a personal character I must make. Dr. Montgomery has all but said that the articles in the London *Lequirer*, in support of my views and strongly censuring himself, were written by me. The articles were *not* written by me. To write in the public papers in commendation of myself is an artifice I have never yet stooped to adopt.

Dr. Montgomery has threatened that if you pass my Amendment he will never again enter this Synod: he has also urged, in a remarkable manner, his claims to your support, on personal grounds. I need hardly tell you, that these and many other considerations he presses upon you, are entirely beside the question. If he had consulted his own dignity, or the interests of the Church with which he is identified, he would have argued the question at issue entirely on its own merits.

Allow me, Sir, in conclusion to impress upon the members of this Synod the serious responsibility of their present position, and of the decision they now make. With deep anxiety the result of this meeting is watched for by the friends of liberal Christianity, both in this country and the sister island. Let your decision be such as shall prove you to be worthy of the position you occupy as a Non-Subscribing Church.

Remember your solemn vows. At the time of the separation you guaranteed* to all such Congregations as might join you, the fullest freedom in the choice of their ministers. What becomes of that guaranty, publicly and solemnly given, if you adopt the testing clauses of this Code? What becomes of your own character, and of all the fair promises of your early history as a Church?

I now leave the matter with the House. I may be outvoted; for I have seldom the good fortune to vote in a majority; but, whether I have numbers on my side or not, I believe that I have truth and justice; and with these to

* Fundamental Principles, x., xi.

sustain me,—however I may regret an unfavourable issue now, I shall not despair of ultimate success. But I do entreat you to prove, by your decision on this question, that you are determined to maintain the rights and privileges, and especially the religious freedom, bequeathed to us by Christ, and confirmed by the blood of the Reformers.

Before sitting down, I wish to say that if, feeling as I do, very strongly upon the subject before the House, I have expressed myself so strongly as unnecessarily to give pain to any one, I am prepared, and hereby engage, to make any apology that may be deemed reasonable.

R E P L Y . *

It will be remembered by those who take any interest in the affairs of the Non-Subscribing Churches in Ireland, that, at the meetings of the Remonstrant Synod, held November, 1856, and March, 1857, for the purpose of considering and revising the Provisions of a Draft Code of Discipline, there was considerable difference of opinion as to the propriety of certain measures relating chiefly to the "license" and "ordination" of Candidates for the Ministry. Believing, in common with several other members, that the measures referred to were unsound in principle and injurious in tendency, I felt constrained, by a sense of duty, to oppose their adoption. In my place in Synod, therefore, at the November meeting, I stated briefly my objections to those measures, and proposed others, based, as I believed, on sounder principles. Circumstances occurring which rendered it inconvenient, at that time, to proceed with the discussion, Synod adjourned till the following March. At the adjourned meeting, Dr. Montgomery, who had undertaken to reply, made a very long speech, occupying several hours in its delivery; and which,—instead of being a calm, thoughtful, dignified discussion of the question really at issue,—was an impassioned harangue, largely in praise of himself, and in depreciation and denunciation of those who had the misfortune to differ from him. Myself he singled out as the object on which he seemed to take especial pleasure in venting his indignation. My *views*, when he condescended to notice them, he fairly represented in no single instance, and on the main question entirely misrepresented, though he had before him, and professed to quote from, the printed Discourse that contained them; while no opprobrious epithets were too hard to fiercely fling at me, no motives too mean or gross to attribute to me.

Feeling well assured that the views I had advanced were not open to any serious objection, when the most powerful arguments with which they were assailed were misrepresentation and vituperation, I bore the assault with far more patience than was due to such a wanton violation of good taste, fair discussion, and Christian feeling. I did not even ask for the protection of the Court, which, perhaps, would have maintained its dignity and discharged its duty full as well by prohibiting, as by permitting, a member to indulge in such license of the tongue against a brother minister. And when, towards the conclusion of the debate, it devolved upon me to reply, I will say that, notwithstanding all the provocation I received, I allowed no harsh word to escape from my lips. I did hope, however, that, when the storm of discussion was once over, all ill-feeling would speedily sub-

* Throughout this reply I speak in the first person singular. My reason for doing so is that I am unwilling that others should be considered responsible for anything I may say or omit to say.

side ; and that when any of us should revert in thought to what I deemed our honest differences of opinion, it would be, chiefly, for the purpose of re-weighing the arguments in the juster balance of calm reflection. For myself, I declare that even the gross personalities with which I was assailed, produced in my mind no permanent unkindly feeling towards my assailant,—being conscious of the purity of my own motives, and believing that those who differed from me did not doubt my sincerity and integrity. I was vain enough to think that even Dr. Montgomery himself, did not really believe that I was such a man as, in his manifest excitement and irritation, he represented me. It was without the slightest concern, therefore, I heard from time to time, during last summer and autumn, that the Doctor was about to publish his Synodical speech ; feeling certain that, in preparing it for the press, his own judgment and sense of justice would compel him to expunge its irrelevant and offensive personalities, and to present only whatever of argument it contained.

In this reasonable expectation I have been disappointed. At the end of eight long months after its delivery, the Speech, carefully written out and considerably enlarged, has been published, with introduction, copious notes, and postscript,—forming, altogether, a large pamphlet of nearly 100 pages 8vo ; and not only retaining the gross personalities of the spoken speech, but introducing others still more gross. Time, instead of mellowing, has but imbittered and envenomed the Doctor's feelings. He has so brooded over the subject of his pamphlet, and has worked himself into such a paroxysm of terrible indignation, that plainest facts he does not see as they are, and deals with the abnormal conceits of his own fancy as if they were sober realities. The pamphlet itself furnishes ample proof that such was the mental state of its author while composing it, and on almost every page there is evidence that it was written with a pen dipped in bitterest gall.

Trusting to the rectifying influences of providential arrangements, I have hitherto—invariably, I might say—allowed the secret whisperings and muttered insinuations of unbrotherly brethren to pass unchallenged, confident that, in time, under a righteous Providence, slander would be silenced, and justice done. But when all the calumnies that were ever whispered or insinuated to my disadvantage are brought together and marshalled for my destruction, and that by one whose position ought to give weight to his act, I owe it as an imperative duty both to my Congregation, who have committed to me a sacred trust, involving, in some degree, the soul's highest interests for time and eternity, and requiring for its due administration a man of irreproachable life, and to my family, to whom I may have little to bequeath except my memory, to vindicate my character (which, God knows, is marked by too many real defects,) against the foul charges with which it has been assailed. Necessity is laid upon me to defend myself,—painful and humiliating though it be to descend into the mire of personalities, even when one's antagonist is a learned Doctor and professor of ethics and theology.

I have been frequently told of late that had I shewn less forbearance when, on former occasions, Dr. Montgomery chose to be uncourteous towards me, I should not now have forced upon me this disagreeable task. Probably those who think so are right. At the same time, it must be admitted that, if merely to overthrow an opponent were my desire, I have acted prudently ; for, encouraged by impunity, the Doctor has permitted himself to indulge in misrepresentations so palpable and perversions so gross that he has rendered his defeat the easiest thing imaginable. Not even the weapons of the stripling shepherd are needed to lay

our Goliath in the dust. Mine accuser has written "a book;" and in that book lie his weakness and my strength.

In replying to Dr. Montgomery's Pamphlet I should like, were it possible, to keep perfectly distinct the important question I raised in Synod, and the irrelevant personalities that, for an obvious purpose, have been dragged into the discussion; but they have been so mixed up together, and that in proportions in the inverse ratio of their relative importance, that I find it impracticable to discuss the former on its merits, and, at the same time, to deal with the matter of the pamphlet. And here I must, once for all, enter my solemn protest against such prostitution of the right of free discussion as Dr. Montgomery has thought fit to resort to. Of course, it was quite legitimate for any member of Synod, who considered the scheme I proposed as impracticable or unsafe, to do his best in fairness to prove it so,—to shew the unsoundness of my views or the inconclusiveness of my reasoning; but instead of adopting this course, Dr. Montgomery has chosen rather to employ his rhetorical powers in caricaturing the scheme I presented, magnifying himself, and depreciating all who sympathized in my views. Dr. Montgomery was a great man; and, though slighted by his brethren in England, was not unknown at the Castle, Dublin; he had got for the Synod some State loaves and for himself some State favours: he had always been the friend of the Remonstrants; and surely they would not allow him to be put down now, by adopting an Amendment of which he disapproved,—an Amendment, which though professing to deal with the constitution of the Synod, was really levelled at the Doctor himself,—for it was proposed by an ungrateful, revengeful, hypocritical, immoral infidel who had the unheard-of hardness, ere he was five years in the ministry, to form an opinion for himself, and to express it, too, without having previously ascertained whether it was quite accordant with the views of the Synod's only Doctor! A declamatory oration in this spirit may be very successful in turning the tide of public opinion against an opponent, but it is neither creditable to the speaker nor complimentary to his audience, and possesses no legitimate claim to being considered fair discussion. I shall protest against every attempt to silence the respectful expression of sincere conviction by a torrent of vile abuse; and shall resist to the utmost the introduction into our synodical debates of such gross personalities as, thirty years ago, so frequently deformed the public performances of certain fathers in the Church, whose weakness on this point was then tolerated on account of services to the cause of civil and religious liberty; services for which we are duly grateful, but which, nevertheless, do not form such a store of supererogatory merit as is inexhaustible, particularly when the demands upon it, as some think, are much larger than are the contributions to it. I believe, however, there are few so far gone in indiscriminating admiration of Dr. Montgomery as to approve of the spirit, temper, and character generally, of his late performance; and I have good reason to believe, further, that in some quarters where, no doubt, he desired to benefit himself and injure others, he has certainly done injury—but only to himself.

I now proceed to expose the misrepresentations, and refute the charges, with which the Doctor's bulky pamphlet abounds, in so far, at least, as they relate, first, to the question really at issue, and, secondly, to myself personally.

In relation to the former of these, necessity is laid upon me to expose one of the most unscrupulous and unblushing perversions of an opponent's views I have ever met with in the records of controversy. Determined,

as it would seem, to make my views appear hideous, the Doctor does not hesitate to draw upon his own imagination for the requisite colouring ; and, like a true Raphaelite, sets much less value on conformity with the actual, than on the realization of his "conception." A short statement of simple facts will make evident the enormity of the injustice of which the Doctor has been guilty.

In the Draft Code, it was proposed that Presbyteries should be empowered to require Candidates for "license" and "ordination" to answer a series of questions relating to their theological opinions,—the replies, in every instance, to be "*satisfactory*" to the Presbytery. It was further proposed that, besides answering "*satisfactorily*" the questions, the Candidate for ordination should, in addition to an oral statement now optional, be required to prepare, and deliver up for safe keeping, a "*definite WRITTEN statement of his religious opinions,*"—both statements to be "*satisfactory.*" The Presbytery, though nominally composed equally of ministers and lay elders, is with us in reality a clerical body ;—elders, except on particular occasions, rarely attending ; and, having very little confidence in clerical corporations in matters of conscience, I was strongly opposed to investing Presbyteries with any authority that would constitute them judges over the faith of others. In my speech in Synod, last March, I shewed, clearly, I think, that such catechising and declaring are not necessary for the purpose of information, the whole professional training of the candidate being under the immediate direction of the Presbytery. Having full confidence, resulting not from cut-and-dry answers to prescribed questions, and carefully prepared declarations, oral and written, at the end of his course, but from knowledge acquired in the diligent and faithful discharge of its duties to its students throughout their whole course of studies, that the intellectual, moral, and religious qualifications of the candidate are such as fit him for the sacred office to which he aspires, I hold that the Presbytery's only remaining duty is to send him forth, with its best wishes and prayers, in the name of the great Master, to labour in his spirit in the vineyard of the Lord. But here, I hold, is the limit of the Presbytery's legitimate function. I therefore proposed that, instead of all this catechising and solemn declaring, the Presbytery should issue "license" to the candidate, who had completed his prescribed studies, upon his professing himself a disciple of Christ ; leaving it entirely to *Congregations* to judge of the particular opinions, as of other qualifications, of Candidates for their pulpits. This course, while it would, on the one hand, protect the conscience of the Candidate against clerical authority, and on the other, preserve the Christian character of our Church, would, at the same time, afford our Congregations the fullest freedom consistent with Christian union, in the choice of ministers. Our Congregations have a right to this freedom of choice. It was publicly and solemnly guaranteed to them. The tenth of the Fundamental Principles forming the Original Constitution of the Remonstrant Synod, declares :—" *We hereby publicly and solemnly GUARANTEE to the Congregations which are now under our care, and to those which hereafter may form a portion of our Church, the FULL, FREE, and UNRESTRICTED exercise of their UNQUESTIONABLE RIGHT to elect, in all cases of vacancy, ministers entertaining SUCH VIEWS OF DIVINE TRUTH AS THE CONGREGATIONS THEMSELVES MAY APPROVE.*" And to exercise this right to the best of their ability, is a duty the members of a congregation owe to themselves, to their children, and to the Church of Christ. It is their duty, I hold, to adopt every legitimate means to satisfy themselves of the thorough fitness of the man who would become their spiritual teacher—his fitness

in every respect, in the disposition and temper of his mind, the complexion of his views, and the habits of his life. And when the members of a congregation are satisfied that they have found such a teacher, I hold it to be the duty of the Presbytery at once to sanction their choice, inaugurating the union with such solemn services as may seem best calculated to make the occasion profitable to both pastor and people.

Entertaining these views of the limits of Presbyterial powers on the one hand, and of the extent of congregational rights on the other, in regard to candidates for the ministry, I embodied them in my Amendment and supported them in my speeches. Nothing can be more obvious to those who have read the introduction to this pamphlet, than that my scheme contemplated the distinct action of the Presbytery and the Congregation in distinct spheres, and that, while I disapproved of *Presbyteries* or clerical corporations being invested with authority over the consciences of candidates for "license" and "ordination," I maintained (as I still maintain) the right, and duty too, of *Congregations*, as far as possible, to ascertain, by all fair and honourable means, the religious opinions and other qualifications of candidates for their pulpits. The Amendment is itself sufficient proof of this. I quote it here in evidence :—

"That, while recognising the RIGHT AND DUTY OF CONGREGATIONS to satisfy themselves of the fitness, IN ALL RESPECTS, of the persons whom they select as their religious teachers, we believe that Presbyteries ought not, in matters of religious faith, to require anything of Candidates for License and Ordination, beyond their professing themselves disciples of Jesus Christ;—and that the Code be altered accordingly."

Such was my proposal. Let us now see how it stands in the Doctor's pamphlet.

"What then," writes Dr. Montgomery, "is the proposal submitted for our acceptance? Simply this—that any Minister or Licentiate, of any Church, may CLAIM POSSESSION OF OUR PULPITS AND PROPERTIES, on asserting that he is 'a disciple of Christ;' and there, in the face of a people revolting from his opinions, he may pray to the Virgin Mary and a thousand dead saints, or teach the gloomy doctrines of Calvinism, which our congregations believe to be directly subversive of Gospel Truth! To be sure, this will vindicate 'the liberty of prophesying' demanded for Ministers; and our congregations will also enjoy the pleasant option of having views which they utterly repudiate thrust upon themselves and upon their children, or of giving up to the enemies of their faith the ecclesiastical properties created by their ancestors and themselves! Remonstrant Elders, is this the LIBERTY which you have come hither to maintain, the liberty of being PRIEST-RIDDEN and PLUNDERED by any man who may steal into your pulpits under vague statements, or false pretences, and then turn round and laugh at your gullibility? I do not believe that you are so besotted as to permit yourselves and your children, and your children's children, to be utterly robbed of all genuine Christian truth and freedom, by the influence of unmeaning phrases and idle declamation."—Pp. 46, 47.

"In relation to the well-being of our perishable properties and bodies, it is admittedly right that we should be cautious; but, in the estimation of transcendent liberals, when we come to that Profession, the enlightened and honest discharge of whose duties not only mingles with all the interests of time, but reaches, likewise, into eternity, we are then to make no inquiry at all respecting the Candidate's opinions, principles, or purposes! Brethren, stripped of its peacock feathers, THIS MOCKERY OF COMMON DECENCY, COMMON SENSE, AND COMMON HONESTY, is what you are called upon to sanction by your votes this day!"—Pp. 53, 54.

“Mr. Maginnis and Mr. Hall, in their profound anxiety for the liberty and honesty of ordained Ministers, *advocate the arraying of our Candidates in ‘a cloak of darkness :’* in other words, *they wish them to have an opportunity of STEALING into pulpits, with any principles, or no principles, ENTIRELY IRRESPECTIVE OF THE RELIGIOUS OPINIONS ENTERTAINED BY CONGREGATIONS.* This arrangement, I admit, would be very convenient for young Divines of the ‘advanced school,’ holding views opposed to those of the people : for, though dark and scheming at first, they would be quite free, ever after, to hold their pulpits, to laugh in the faces of their simple dupes, and to tell them, perhaps, as I have heard was once done *in this place,** that whilst the Lecturer avowed a sort of speculative belief in the immortality of the soul, ‘he wished to guard himself against being supposed to rest it in any degree on the authority of the Nazarene !’ Doubtless, this would be the very perfection of clerical freedom,” &c. “I do, therefore, most earnestly and affectionately implore the respectable Elders of this Synod, to spurn the attempts which have been made to enslave their congregations, by hollow declamations, and manfully to stand up in defence of their own inalienable rights and liberties.”—P. 63.

“I solemnly protest, that I have no conception (!) of the man who declaims about ‘honesty’ in the abstract, and, at the same time, *advocates such base, scheming, practical dishonesty,* in the most sacred and important of all human contracts—that between pastor and people.”—P. 64.

“Look at the other case, and you will instantly behold the *snare which Mr. Maginnis and his liberal supporters would lay for your feet.* A Candidate under ‘a cloak of darkness’ and a well-fitted mask . . . might be regularly ordained; and thenceforth . . . might preach Popery, Trinitarianism, Calvinism, Deism, or Atheism, in the face of a moderate Unitarian congregation, and yet retain its pulpit and emoluments. . . . *Now, Christian Elders, this POSITIVELY IS THE VERY THING which Mr. Maginnis and his coadjutors have the effrontery to ask you to sanction !*”—P. 65.

“Against *such foul cheating of the many for the gain of the few,* I ever have raised, and ever will raise, my earnest voice ; for there is nothing I so scorn and abominate as the wretch who would *sneak into a fortress on pretence of aiding its defenders, yet with the sole object of betraying it to the enemy.* You may sanction such baseness, if it please you ; but, for my single self, nothing shall ever induce me to give Christian wages for Infidel work, or permit our congregations, if I can prevent it, to be hoodwinked in the choice of their ministers.”—P. 74.

I might fill pages with extracts of this kind, but I have not patience to quote farther. In fact, the whole pamphlet, so far as it attempts to argue the question at issue, proceeds on the assumption that it is my desire to introduce into the ministry men of unsound views, masked and cloaked ; that I am the advocate of concealment, of imposition. This representation is purely a fabrication of Dr. Montgomery’s own brain,—entirely opposed to my private convictions and public advocacy. Cowardly, and particularly scheming, concealment of matured convictions, has ever been my abomination ; and, if anything so disagreeable could give pleasure, it would be my delight to unmask the sneaking, self-seeking, time-serving, scheming hypocrite, whether enacting a borrowed part in the pulpit for a small reward, or out of it for the chances of a larger prize. And yet I am represented as having advocated, and urged upon the Synod, the adoption of the very thing I most loathe ! And what is the method

* “This place” necessarily means the Chapel in which these words purport to have been spoken. That they formed no part of the spoken speech I am almost certain, as, if uttered in their present connection, they could hardly have failed to catch my ear. But whether so spoken or not, I have merely to observe, that if I am “the Lecturer” referred to, the statement is entirely without point, as, so far as I am concerned, it is entirely without foundation in fact.

adopted by Dr. Montgomery to give colour of truthfulness to his representation? Why, he coolly and deliberately *mutilates and falsifies* the Amendment which embodies my views, and which would, of itself, vindicate my advocacy against the charges he prefers! The first part of the Amendment explicitly affirms that it is both the *right and duty* of "*Congregations to satisfy themselves of the FITNESS, IN ALL RESPECTS, of the persons whom they select as their religious teachers.*" But this important provision, Dr. Montgomery thinks it fair and honourable not only to ignore in discussion, but even to *erase from the Amendment itself*. At p. 45, of his pamphlet, the Doctor writes of my plan :—

"Here it is, however, at full length. 'We believe that Presbyterians ought not, in matters of religious faith, to require anything of Candidates for license or ordination, beyond their professing themselves disciples of Jesus Christ; and that the Code be altered accordingly.'"

Mark the words—Here it is "*at full length.*" Now, by referring to the Amendment itself the reader will find that instead of giving it "*at full length,*" the Doctor has suppressed one-half of it,—that part whose absence is indispensable to give colour of justification to the line of criticism that pervades his pamphlet. Had he really quoted my Amendment at full length, he could not have ventured to characterize my scheme as he has done; but he draws his pen over what does not suit his purpose, and presents the remainder as my amendment; and, lest any one should doubt the completeness of his version, the Doctor gives his word of assurance that it is my proposal, whole and entire. Here it is "**AT FULL LENGTH.**" Is that honourable? Is it honest? To decapitate a system, and then to expose the headless, mangled trunk, hideous to look at, and pass it off as a genuine monster, portending untold evils,—hoping thereby to create a little capital!

But Dr. Montgomery's dishonest treatment of my scheme does not end here. He has not only suppressed one-half of my amendment, but has *actually altered the phraseology of the remaining half to suit himself!* I place here, side by side, my Amendment, as I proposed it and printed it in my Discourse, from which Dr. Montgomery professed to quote, and the Doctor's improved version of it, prefaced, "Here it is, however, *at full length*":—

THE ORIGINAL.

"That, while recognising the right and duty of Congregations to satisfy themselves of the fitness, in all respects, of the persons whom they select as their religious teachers, we believe that *Presbyteries* ought not, in matters of religious faith, to require anything of Candidates for license and ordination, beyond their professing themselves disciples of Jesus Christ;—and that the Code be altered accordingly."

THE DR.'S VERSION.

"We believe that *Presbyterians* ought not, in matters of religious faith, to require anything of Candidates for license or ordination, beyond their professing themselves disciples of Jesus Christ;—and that the Code be altered accordingly."

Let the reader note the words I have italicised, and he will see that for "*Presbyteries*" in the original, Dr. Montgomery has *substituted*, in his version, "*Presbyterians,*" which, though apparently a slight change, has the effect of *completely altering* my scheme, and of *making it deny that which it most emphatically affirms.* "*Presbyterians*" is here obviously equivalent to the Presbyterian body or Church, including both the lay

and clerical element, the Congregation and the Presbytery. Consequently, to deny the right of "*Presbyterians*" to inquire into the religious opinions of candidates for vacant pulpits, would of course be to deny the right of either Presbytery or Congregation to make such inquiry or investigation. Thus, the apparently trifling alteration of "*Presbyteries*" into "*Presbyterians*" makes the Doctor's "*full-length*" Amendment actually deny what the suppressed clauses of the Amendment, as I proposed it, assert, viz., "the right and duty of Congregations to satisfy themselves of the fitness, in all respects, of the persons whom they select as their religious teachers." And then, after having suppressed one-half of my Amendment, while he professes to give it "*at full length*," and altered the phraseology of the other half so as to force it to bear a meaning at utter variance with the Amendment itself, the Doctor vents his eloquent indignation against his own mutilated and metamorphosed version of it. Through page after page he labours to shew the terrible consequences that would result from its adoption, and works upon the sympathies and prejudices of his readers to secure its condemnation. I, too, could sympathize in much of the Doctor's eloquent denunciation of the evils he depicts, did I not revolt at the means resorted to in order to get a theme to be eloquent upon. The simple truth known, and the whole fabric which the Doctor has so elaborately constructed upon the foundation of my Amendment, mutilated and metamorphosed to his own liking, melts away, leaving behind nothing save indignation at the man who could resort to such dishonest means in order to gain a temporary applause or victory.

The evidence upon which I have convicted Dr. Montgomery of this gross dishonesty, vindicates, at the same time, the character of my scheme. My Amendment, restored to its original state, is itself the refutation of the calumnious charges the Doctor has preferred against it. Except in one place, hereafter to be noticed, the Doctor's pamphlet, wherever it attempts to reason on the subject, takes as its axiom—Mr. Maginnis's scheme prohibits inquiry into the religious opinions of Candidates for our Pulpits. And how could Dr. Montgomery venture to lay down such a premise and reason from it, with my Amendment before him! Reader, you have but to look at that Amendment to find a complete refutation of the charge. So far from prohibiting inquiry into the religious opinions of Candidates for the ministry, the Amendment sets it forth not only as "*the right*" but "**THE DUTY**" also "*of Congregations to satisfy themselves of the fitness IN ALL RESPECTS, of the persons whom they select as their religious teachers.*" True, it would not permit a Presbytery, a clerical corporation, to sit in judgment upon the orthodoxy of the Candidate, for such corporations cannot be safely trusted with authority over the consciences of men—(Dr. Montgomery himself, as we shall see, by and bye, *formerly* entertained this opinion); but while it refuses to invest Presbyteries with such power, it would confirm to *Congregations* what was "*guaranteed*" them when the Synod was formed,—"*the full, free, and unrestricted exercise of their unquestionable right to elect, in all cases of vacancy, ministers entertaining such views of divine truth as the Congregations themselves may approve;*" and it represents it as "*the duty*" of Congregations to exercise that right. To refute the charge under notice, I have, then, but to confront it with the Amendment itself,—not the Doctor's garbled, mutilated, metamorphosed, "*full-length*" version of it, but the real Amendment, as I proposed it in Synod, and printed it in my Discourse.

The evidence I now propose to introduce, besides confirming the testi-

mony of my Amendment, completes the proof that Dr. Montgomery has entirely misrepresented my views on the subject in debate. My scheme, according to the Doctor, is so framed as to afford every facility and encouragement to men of any views, or no views, to enter the ministry, and to dupe and plunder congregations. (See extracts, pp. 17, 18, and the Doctor's pamphlet, throughout). Such representation is not merely incorrect, but diametrically opposed to facts known to the Synod at large. I take leave to call upon *Dr. Montgomery himself* to introduce the proof, by evidence that will only need a few supplementary remarks to shew that in this matter, the practice of the learned Professor of Ethics does not harmonize with any very elevated theory of the science he undertakes to teach. On the last page of his pamphlet, after detailing *his* rejected plan for removing ministers from their congregations on account of any change that might take place in their opinions, the Doctor adds :—

“There was an absolute rush of opposition on the part of the malcontents ; and some others, whose *judgment and sterling Christian principles I sincerely respect*, proposed, to my surprise, the following *larger measure of protection for congregations, to which I at once assented* :—‘That it shall be competent for any Congregation, at any time, by a vote of a Synodical majority, to dispense with the services of its Minister ; such vote to be taken by a Committee of Presbytery, duly appointed for the purpose, on application from the Committee and Session of the Congregation,—the Minister having the right of appeal.’ Doubtless, *this proposition*, which now stands as part of our Code, *is, in many respects, superior to mine*,” &c.

There can be no doubt but that this Resolution affords Congregations the means of disposing of ministers who may become unacceptable from whatever cause. It is entirely their own fault, if day after day, and year after year, they have doctrines obtruded upon them from which they revolt. This Resolution commends itself even to the Doctor himself. It was proposed by men “*whose judgment and sterling Christian principles*” he sincerely respects ; it is “*in many respects superior*” to his own ; and is a “*larger measure of protection to our Congregations*” than he contemplated. Now, by whom was this lauded Resolution proposed ? It was moved by the Rev. John Montgomery, and seconded by the *Rev. David Maginnis* ! (See *Whig* of March 5th, 1857). In reality, however, my relation to this Resolution is even more intimate than appears from the newspaper report. I not merely seconded it, but I am actually its author. I was the *first* to suggest it. I wrote it out, submitted it to Rev. Henry Alexander, who undertook to second it, and was in the act of rising to propose it when the Doctor's nephew, who had been looking over my shoulder, obligingly saved me the trouble by proposing it, verbatim, as I had written it ! This polite service I publicly acknowledged at the time, the “uncle” and the “nephew” being both present. And yet, with the knowledge that I am the author of that Resolution, which enables Congregations to dispense with the services of unacceptable ministers, and which the Doctor has characterized as affording “a larger measure of protection to our Congregations” than he himself ever dreamt of,—under the old Code, ministers not being removable, except by the Presbytery, and that only in cases of gross immorality,—the Doctor could sit down and write out for the press, without a word of qualification, the following, and very much more to the same effect :—

“You will instantly behold *the snare* which Mr. Maginnis and his liberal supporters would lay for your feet. A candidate, under ‘a cloak of darkness’

and a well-fitted mask, avowing no distinct opinions,—talking plausible generalities and deceiving the people, might be regularly ordained; and thenceforth, save on the ground of established immorality, *he could not be removed*. He might preach Popery, Trinitarianism, Calvinism, Deism, Atheism, in the face of a moderate Unitarian congregation, *and yet retain its pulpit and emoluments*. To be sure, the people might desert him—they might build another meeting-house—they might spend £2,000 or £3,000, and leave him the much-lauded liberty of preaching down their principles in their old temple; and, if so, what would they gain? Just another dark man, with another mask and cloak, and the old career to be run over again! Now, Christian Elders, *this, positively, is the very thing which Mr. Maginnis and his coadjutors have the effrontery to ask you to sanction*. They dare to ask you to forge such base chains for yourselves, your children, and your children's children," &c.—P. 65.

"*Any minister or licentiate, of any Church, may claim possession of our pulpits and properties, on asserting that he is a 'disciple of Christ;'* and there, *in the face of a people revolting from his opinions*, he may pray to the Virgin Mary and a thousand dead saints. . . Remonstrant elders, is this the liberty which you have come hither to maintain,—*the liberty of being priest-ridden and plundered by any man who may steal into your pulpits under vague statements, or false pretences, and then turn round and laugh at your gullibility?*"—Pp. 46, 47.

In his postscript, p. 82, the Doctor assures the reader that—

"*The main object is to get possession of Christian properties and emoluments by any means—by dexterity, word-fencing, concealment—and then, 'in God's name,' possibly to preach infidelity!* Such is the religious sincerity and such the moral code, from which our poor Churches have escaped—at least, for a season."

Comment is hardly necessary to expose the gross injustice of such statements. *My Resolution*, which the Doctor's nephew was so magnanimous as to appropriate, which the Doctor himself has commended, and which the Synod unanimously adopted (though afterwards not a few ministers, but *no elders*, expressed regret that they had sanctioned it),—that Resolution is a complete vindication of my scheme against the Doctor's serious charges. I wanted to introduce masked men into the ministry, and to saddle them upon unwilling Congregations! I characterize the charge as wantonly and maliciously false—opposed to my Amendment, directly and absolutely opposed to both the letter and the spirit of my Resolution. My Amendment would confirm to Congregations the "guaranteed" right—(of which modern attempts at legislation would deprive them,) to obtain as their ministers persons holding such views of Christian truth as may be acceptable, not to a clerical corporation, but to the Congregations themselves; and my Resolution, so far from saddling unacceptable ministers upon unwilling Congregations, invests our Congregations with power to dismiss such ministers,—a power which they never before possessed, and which, till I proposed it, none else, it would seem, had thought of conferring upon them. My Amendment and Resolution, then,—the former setting it forth as "the right and duty of Congregations to satisfy themselves of the fitness, *in all respects*, of the persons whom they select as their religious teachers," and the latter enacting "that it shall be competent for any Congregation, at any time, by a vote of a synodical majority, to dispense with the services of its minister,"—these constitute a complete refutation of the Doctor's endless charges of dark and sinister designs upon the Church; and they do more,—they shew that no man capable of comprehending the import of the English language, could, with my Amendment and Resolution before

him, make those charges without *wilfully and deliberately perverting plain facts*.

Before passing from Dr. Montgomery's treatment of my Amendment, I have to call attention to another notable proof of his disingenuousness in this controversy. In some of the extracts I have made,—and these are but samples of very much to the same effect that might be culled from his Pamphlet—the Doctor paints in very dark colours the evils that would ensue if my Amendment were adopted. Christian discipleship would constitute no adequate barrier against *dishonesty* and *infidelity*, and the Church would be ruined! Well, I never said that it could keep out the *dishonest*. But would Dr. Montgomery's cumbrous scheme accomplish that purpose more effectually than my plan? He knows it would not, and could not be made to do it. A dishonest man, wishing to enter the ministry of our Church, or of any other Church, would have no difficulty in answering or signing anything necessary to secure his admission. And, because my scheme might let in (what neither Dr. Montgomery's nor any other scheme could keep out) dishonest men, the Doctor was almost ready to "die on the floor of the House" rather than let it pass! "From such a fate I shall strain every nerve to defend, not my own good people only, but all present or future Congregations of this Synod." (P. 64.) And, as to obnoxious opinions,—why the Doctor's own scheme is not a whit more efficient than that which he so strongly condemns. He represents it as a capital charge against my scheme that it would not exclude Roman Catholics and Calvinists, nor even Mahometans and Deists. And yet Roman Catholics and Calvinists, and even Mahometans and Deists, could all as fairly answer in the affirmative the Doctor's own four testing questions as profess themselves disciples of Christ. They could readily answer "Yes" to the question, "Do you believe in one God, the Creator and Governor of the Universe?" They could all, affixing their own meaning to the query, answer "Yes," if asked, "Do you believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament *contain* a divine revelation?" And, as fairly as they could call themselves disciples of Christ, even Mahometans and Deists could answer "Yes," if asked, "Do you believe in the divine mission and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the World?" Why, after the hue-and-cry raised against my Amendment for its laxity, and the Jeremiad upon the terrible consequences that would ensue from its adoption, who could suppose that the Doctor's own scheme is really quite as defective,—affording no stronger barrier against either dishonesty, Deism, or even Mahometanism getting into our Church? Be it known, then, as a farther illustration of the fairness and ingenuousness of Dr. Montgomery in this discussion, that he poured out the vials of his fiery wrath upon my scheme because of its inadequacy, while, for the purposes he sought, his own is not a whit more adequate; and that, consequently, there is not a hard epithet which, on account of such inadequacy, he has applied to my scheme, that is not equally applicable to his own. I will, however, do the Doctor the justice of expressing my belief, founded upon the evidence of his own speech, that it is not his fault if the meshes of our ecclesiastical net are too wide to catch any fish.

Of the wonderful transmuting powers of Dr. Montgomery we have already had a striking example in the transformations which my Amendment underwent in his hands. I have now to introduce an operation quite as remarkable, performed upon myself. In some of the passages already cited, the impression is obviously sought to be created that I am not over-orthodox; in the postscript (with which I shall deal in due

course,) I am a rank infidel; and throughout the pamphlet generally, all my doctrinal tendencies are latitudinarian! But, all in a sudden, with a view, I suppose, to display his wondrous powers, our Wizard of the North waves his wand, and the scoffing infidel stands before the audience a thorough-paced Calvinist, "the genuine brother of Dr. Cooke," only more orthodox,—yes, more orthodox than "the whole Irish General Assembly!" It is a positive fact that Dr. Montgomery represents me as advocating the imposition of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, whole and entire, upon our Synod!

"As some of you may not exactly know the full extent of the boon which these furious friends of freedom [my humble self and others] would have conferred upon our licentiates and incipient pastors, I solicit your attention, for a few moments, to their proposals. They proposed then, first, that Presbyteries, before licensing a candidate to preach the Gospel, should be authorized 'to ascertain his soundness in the faith' by requiring him to subscribe, without qualification or explanation, to the Westminster Confession of Faith, a document of 174 pages, drawn up in the year 1643, under the dictation of King Charles I., by a nondescript conclave of divines and laymen, in a place appropriately denominated 'the Cock-Pit,' in the city of Westminster. Now, my Christian brethren, Mr. Maginnis, who declaims so grandiloquently against the absurd length of our proposed New Code, which contains precisely five lines of doctrinal questions, expressed in purely Scriptural phraseology, *would allow Presbyteries to demand, on pain of exclusion from our pulpits, 'the unfeigned assent and consent' of candidates to thirty-three chapters of a Confession*, drawn up in human language, from beginning to end! And is the matter of these chapters very simple and pleasant? I shall point out a few of the *bon-bons* of this favourite banquet of Mr. Maginnis, that you may judge for yourselves of the species of spiritual food which it was desired to force all your future pastors to swallow. Here they are."—P. 43.

After enumerating the principal contents of the Confession, the Doctor proceeds:—

"Now, Christian elders, what do you think of the men who, whilst canting about liberty, and conscience, and progress, *advocated our crawling back into the darkness of 1643, and subjecting all your future ministers to 'the rack and torture' of the Westminster Confession?* You perceive, my friends, that *the genuine brothers of Dr. Cooke are David Maginnis and Robert Hall*; but, in point of fact, they would go *beyond* the Doctor and the whole Irish General Assembly, in the stringent *exercise of human authority*; for, lest the Confession should not be able to catch all heretics, they advocated, in the second place, the propriety of permitting Presbyteries to test 'the soundness of every candidate's faith,' by a process of *unlimited interrogatories!*"—P. 44.

[Mr. Maginnis and his coadjutor] "*laboured to perpetuate subscription to a fixed creed of thirty-three chapters, [and] also to leave in full force the inquisitorial system of capricious interrogation; and permanently to saddle this Synod with a fixed Creed, of 174 pages, full of mysteries, and metaphysics, and contradictions.*"—P. 45.

Here, again, Dr. Montgomery is eloquent against a fiction. As the reader is no doubt prepared to believe,—Dr. Montgomery's statements notwithstanding,—I never had the remotest idea of anything so preposterous as saddling the *Westminster Confession of Faith* upon the Remonstrant Synod. In fact, the Doctor's own speech affords abundant evidence that he himself did not believe that I desired anything of the kind. However, as the fiction is not *entirely* fanciful, I shall now exhibit to the reader, the small germ of fact out of which this wonderful history has been developed.

The first chapter of the Code is mainly devoted to an attempt to establish Presbyterianism upon a Scriptural basis. That it does not accomplish this object in a very satisfactory or scholarly manner, will be the verdict of most persons competent to form an opinion of it; while many will pronounce it not over-candid. Believing that a form of Church polity is very much a matter of expediency, and that, if we are to have a discussion of the import of Scripture testimony upon the subject, it should be an adequate one, and not a mere collection of texts culled from a Concordance; and, furthermore, that such discussion should be conducted in a tractate rather than in the pages of a Code of Discipline, which, according to the terms of the Synod's own instructions to the Code Committee, should be "*plain, brief, and practical, adapted to the circumstances*" of our Church,—I moved* the omission of the sections treating of this subject, and proposed to substitute what I considered a more appropriate introduction to our Code, viz., the Fundamental Principles adopted as the Constitution of the Remonstrant Synod at the time of its formation,—not meaning thereby to imply that I considered that Constitution as perfect, or even proper in all respects. Still, it was the Synod's original Constitution, its declaration of independence, the charter of its rights and liberties. I, therefore, did think, and I think still, that the Fundamental Principles, forming the original Constitution of the Synod, would have been a most fitting introduction to the new Code. That I was not singular in this opinion appears from the fact, that, previous to the meeting at which I made this motion, as I afterwards learned, one of our Presbyteries had, unanimously I believe, resolved that the Fundamental Principles should be prefixed to the Code; and in Synod, though but three members voted for the omission of Chap. I., *nine*, against fifteen, were in favour of printing the Fundamental Principles as a preface or introduction to the Code.

Now, this statement exhibits the whole and sole foundation in fact for the Doctor's chapter on my efforts to saddle the *Westminster Confession of Faith* upon the Remonstrant Synod. I wished to preserve the flag under which our Synod was enrolled and fought its earliest and most successful battles. True, but are you "so ignorant" as not to know that the original Constitution of the Remonstrant Synod implied the reception of the *Westminster Confession*? "The tenth rule in the original Constitution of the Synod," writes Dr. Montgomery, p. 32, "*bound the Westminster Confession upon our backs, and conferred unlimited and irresponsible power upon Presbyteries in the matter of license and ordination.*" This is quite a modern discovery. So lately as November, 1856, Dr. Montgomery saw no deadly serpent coiled up in the Fundamental Principles; and was then opposed to their being prefixed to the Code only because it would be superfluous; as it would be found upon an examination of the Code itself, (he said,) that "*ALL the principles of the fundamental Constitution of the Synod were embodied and detailed in it.*" (*Mercury*, Nov. 5, 1856.) Does Dr. Montgomery mean to affirm, then, that, "*ALL*" the Fundamental Principles being "*embodied and detailed*" in the new Code, the *new Code binds* "*the Westminster Confession upon*

* This motion I made when the *first* chapter of the Code was under revision. The Doctor, however, in his Introduction, p. vi, represents it as having been introduced, after the discussion of Chap. v, sec. 7, respecting "license," had been entered upon; thereby leading the reader who has no other means of information, to form a very erroneous and unfavourable impression of the character of my advocacy on the occasion. Of course, such misrepresentation is purely accidental!

our backs?" The tenth of the Fundamental Principles, which has recently been discovered to be so very dangerous, is as follows:—

"That we adopt the Code of Discipline, sanctioned by the General Synod of Ulster, in 1824; and to shew that in pursuing this course we are not guided by a view to promote the advancement of any set of doctrinal opinions to the exclusion of others, we do hereby, publicly and solemnly guarantee to the Congregations which are now under our care, and to those which may hereafter form a portion of our Church, the full, free, and unrestricted exercise of their unquestionable right to elect, in all cases of vacancy, Ministers entertaining such views of divine truth as the Congregations themselves may approve."

And this article "*binds the Westminster Confession upon our backs!*" Well, if it does, the Remonstrant Synod is less free than the old Synod of Ulster was, from which it separated. The Remonstrants revolted against an attempt on the part of the Synod of Ulster to require of its members profession of belief in the doctrine of the Trinity; and yet, they themselves, afterwards, voluntarily adopted a standard which, according to Dr. Montgomery, "bound" upon them, not only the doctrine of the Trinity, but the entire system of Calvinism—the *Westminster Confession of Faith!* But the fact is, the old Code, of 1824, did not authoritatively impose* the *Westminster Confession*. On the contrary, it left Presbyteries entirely free either to require of Candidates for license, subscription to the *Confession*, or to substitute therefor any examination Presbyteries might prefer. The Code, as the Doctor himself admits, was but a legalizing of the previous practice of the Synod, under which but four Presbyteries required subscription to the *Westminster Confession*, while the remaining ten "put such questions to Candidates for License as each Presbytery deemed expedient;" and, adds the Doctor—"the result of this system was that Trinitarians and Unitarians, Calvinists and Arminians, were equally admitted." (P. 30.) In his *Outlines of the History of Presbyterianism*, (see *Irish Unitarian Magazine*, Vol. II., p. 359,) the Doctor shews that, by adopting the Code, the Synod of Ulster LAID "*ASIDE the Westminster Confession as the authoritative standard of the Church.*" If, then, the Code itself did not bind the *Westminster Confession* upon the General Synod of Ulster, but, as Dr. Montgomery tells us, admitted equally ministers adopting and ministers rejecting the doctrines of the *Confession*, with what appearance of moral consistency can he assert that its reception by the Remonstrants "bound the *Westminster Confession* upon our backs?" But even supposing the old Code did authoritatively impose the *Westminster Confession*, (which it did not,) the Remonstrants, in adopting that Code, carefully guarded themselves against the possibility of being fairly chargeable with recognising the *Westminster Confession* as the standard of their faith. Why, the very article cited against me, (the tenth of the Fundamental Principles,) guards itself against the Doctor's construction being put upon it, by declaring that the Remonstrant Synod, in adopting the Code, does not desire "to promote the advancement of *any*

* In a letter published in *The Guardian*, of June 23, 1829, a member of the Synod of Ulster, writing on this very point, expresses himself in the following terms:—The idle *pretence* that the committee or Synod *impose subscription to the Westminster Confession of Faith* is so palpable that again I wonder Remonstrants are not ashamed of producing such an argument. I could answer their lengthened argument by one word—'where?' For, *it is not in the Code of Discipline*; it is not in the Overtures; but it is in the imagination of Remonstrants, and nowhere else."

set of doctrinal opinions, to the exclusion of others." How could it say this, if it "bound the *Westminster Confession* upon our backs?" Besides, the fourth of the Fundamental Principles *condemns, in the strongest terms, "the imposition of human Tests and Confessions of Faith;"* and the eleventh declares, as eligible to our vacant pulpits, "Ministers and Licentiates of the *Synod of Munster and Presbytery of Antrim,*" Churches which are *entirely antagonistic* to the *Westminster Confession* as an authoritative rule of faith. It is absurdly false, therefore, for any one to allege that even the *adoption* of the Fundamental Principles, (not to urge that I merely proposed to have them printed as an introduction to our Code,) would bind "*the Westminster Confession* upon our backs."

But, Dr. Montgomery, I must ask you, are *you* really serious when you declare that the reception of the Fundamental Principles "bound the *Westminster Confession* upon our backs?" Answer Yes, and you stand before the Church and the world a self-accused and self-convicted deceiver. Dr. Montgomery himself drew up the Fundamental Principles, one and all, and passed them off upon the Synod as the charter of its religious freedom; whereas, now he tells us they were but chains to bind upon the Synod's neck the yoke of bondage, which it believed it had completely broken and cast away for ever! Answer No, and you stand before the Church and the world convicted of deliberate dishonesty towards an opponent in debate,—representing as a fact what you know to be contrary to fact, in order to carry your point.

I have now to notice some vapouring talk, in which the Doctor indulges, about a "daring attempt" which I made to "forestall the deliberations" of Synod on the subject of my Amendment. In the interval of the adjournment from November till March, I prepared and delivered, at the request of the Committee of my Congregation, a Discourse reviewing some provisions of the proposed new Code,—particularly those relating to "license" and "ordination;" and, in compliance with the unanimous request, and at the expense, of the Congregation, this Discourse was afterwards published; and thereby a *gross misdemeanour* was committed! It was an attempt "to poison the minds of those who were to deliberate and vote on the subject," and to bring "foul influences" to bear upon them. (P. 10.) The Discourse (which the Doctor gracefully baptizes "Munchausen,"* appending, in explanation of the baptismal name, this note—"The History of Baron Munchausen' is well known as the *boldest of fictions*!") "*appropriately concludes with a daring attempt to forestall the deliberations and pervert the decisions of this Synod.*" The Doctor goes on to say:

"Sir, in our ordinary Courts of Law, even where the humblest rights of property or personal interest are concerned, an impartial judge and unprejudiced jury are deemed essential for the ends of justice. So self-evident is this simple principle of common equity and decency, that, if a juror be shewn to

* This, however, is not its only name. It has got a great many *aliases*; such as, "pamphlet libel," "this thing entitled 'A Discourse,'" "scandalous libel, entitled 'A Discourse,'" "a miserable pamphlet," &c., &c. No one can feel more strongly than I do myself that the Discourse so characterized is a very inadequate treatment of the theme to which it is devoted. At the same time, the Doctor can hardly have really considered it so very despicable,—else, surely, he would not have bestowed so much time and attention upon it. Besides, that the Discourse is not entirely worthless is evidenced by the fact (of which I have lately been informed, on good authority,) that it has been instrumental in preventing the young and promising Unitarian Christian Church in India, from adopting a Creed.

have expressed an opinion on the case which is about to be tried, he is instantly ordered to leave the jury-box; and the man who had attempted to bias his mind would be held guilty of a misdemeanour. Well, then, *we are here assembled as judges and jurors*, for important deliberations and decisions in a Court of Christ, on whose proceedings the blessing of God has been solemnly invoked; and *what will the public think of the man*, who has not only attempted to prejudice the minds of both judges and jurors, by ex-parte and unfounded statements, but has even ventured to call upon them to come into this house pledged, by written documents, to support his misrepresentations! *Such an attempt is scarcely credible*; but here are the words of that Discourse with which, through the post and other channels, Mr. Maginnis and his Committee have had the hardihood to inundate all our Congregations," &c.—P. 33.

And "what *will the public think?*" Why, if they are so blind as not to see the obvious sophistry of the Doctor's reasoning, they will think, as the Doctor evidently wishes them to think, that I have been guilty of a most serious offence, more criminal than that of tampering with a judge and jury engaged in the administration of justice. But if the public are only half as shrewd as I take them to be, they are in no danger of being carried away by such a shallow affectation of argument. It can hardly be necessary to expose the transparent fallacy that constitutes this dashing reasoning. Every one knows that an assembly convened for the purpose of *framing laws* is not a *judicial*, but a *deliberative*, assembly; and our Synod met in November, and again in March, *for the express and sole purpose of framing a system of laws* for its government. Had it been, in any sense, a *judicial* assembly, then there would be some point in the Doctor's argument. But, as the case stands, my "misdemeanour" is exactly analagous to that of the man who, by petition or otherwise, expresses his views on any question of legislation under the consideration of Parliament! In this free country of ours, the humblest citizen may, without penalty or censure, freely criticise, and, at any or every stage in their progress, strenuously oppose, should he feel disposed, the measures of the Imperial Legislature itself. But, when the Remonstrant Synod meets to frame laws, it is, according to Dr. Montgomery, a gross misdemeanour in even a member, to draw the attention of the Church at large to any subject which the Synod may have under deliberation! It is a thing so "daring" and "foul" as to be "scarcely credible," that, when a Church, which Dr. Montgomery condescends to patronise and direct, meets to frame a Constitution, its Congregations, though largely interested, should dare to express their disapproval of any measure proposed to be adopted. It is not likely to be soon forgotten by any who were present at the commencement of the proceedings of the March meeting, with what arrogant and awe-inspiring airs the Doctor demanded to be informed whether I acknowledged the authorship of the Discourse which bore my name upon its title-page; and, particularly, how resolutely he laboured to intimidate Elders who might have received instructions from the Sessions or Congregations they represented, to pursue a certain course. "He should like to see the man who had come to that House *pledged* to a particular course of conduct." (P. 10.) Only let the men who have got "documents in their pockets" shew themselves, and for such daring presumption the punishment was ready! Does not all this look *rather* despotic? It is a "foul" and gross "misdemeanour" to discuss, in the pulpit or the press, any measure under the consideration of Dr. Montgomery and the Remonstrant Synod; and any Congregation which, through its lay representative, desires to express its opinions, is snubbed, and its representative sought to be intimidated from discharging the duty

committed to him! Now, if this sort of proceeding is to be tolerated in our Synod; if the right of free and full discussion is to be suppressed by the arbitrary will of one man, then let us have Popery outright. I can respect the genuine thing, but a Protestant Popery I cannot endure. I am greatly mistaken, however, in my estimate of the Remonstrants of Ulster, if they will permit even Dr. Montgomery to continue long to play such fantastic tricks at their expense.

It has passed into a proverb that circumstances alter cases. In his younger days, Dr. (then Mr.) Montgomery had once, like myself, the fortune to be in a small ecclesiastical minority. At the meetings of the Synod of Ulster, in 1827, '8, and '9, certain measures were adopted of which the Doctor did not approve. In the intervals that elapsed between the meetings, Dr. Montgomery never ventured to breathe a syllable in condemnation of the system of legislation that was being developed in the Synod! Of course not! It would have been a "foul" and "daring attempt," a gross misdemeanour, unconstitutional and criminal. And yet, in the local newspapers of those years, I find many a long letter signed "H. Montgomery," full of all sorts of arguments to influence the majority in the Synod. I find, too, traces of "Remonstrances" circulating through the Congregations of the majority, as well as through those of the minority, for signatures. A minister writes, in *The Guardian*, of June 23, 1829—"During about eight months, the Socinian and Arian members of our body have been both privately and publicly at work. They have sent their remonstrances into our Congregations for signatures, and they thus hope to overwhelm the Synod by numerical influence." I also find reports of public meetings held for the express purpose of agitating the public mind on the subject. For example, the *Northern Whig*, of Oct. 23, 1828, reports at great length the proceedings of a large and influential meeting, held in Belfast, in the preceding week, "pursuant to public advertisement," avowedly for the purpose of adopting measures to induce the General Synod to retrace its steps. Dr. Montgomery assisted in convening that meeting, was present at it, and made a long speech, which, by the way, drew forth a reply, as the Doctor no doubt remembers. All this agitation was perfectly irreprehensible, nay praiseworthy, aye, prize-worthy, in the Mr. Montgomery of that day; in Mr. Maginnis, according to the Dr. Montgomery of the present day, it is "foul," a "hardihood," a "misdemeanour," to utter publicly one word of comment upon the doings of his Church. When Mr. Montgomery disapproved of anything in the Synod of Ulster, he might speak against it, write against it; but when Mr. Maginnis is convinced that the Remonstrant Synod is about to be led into a grave error, it is a crime in him to say a word about it!

Having disposed of that portion of the Doctor's pamphlet which treats of the question really at issue, and shewn that, throughout, it is a tissue of palpable misrepresentations, gross perversions, and ad-captandum reasonings,—my very Amendment being mutilated and falsified,* and

* With such practical illustrations as we have now had of his own moral code as a controversialist, we should not perhaps deem it strange that Dr. Montgomery exhibits so little confidence in the moral honesty of others,—and particularly of candidates for the ministry in our Church, he himself being their only Professor of Morals. At all events, it will not be considered an extravagant assumption, that, as a result of the exposure I have just made, the reader will hesitate ere implicitly receiving as indisputably correct, Dr. Montgomery's surmises and insinuations, and unsustained charges, regarding my private feelings and motives. If his reading of documents which lay before him, and his statement of facts within his knowledge, are quite unreliable,—in fact, utterly false, who will receive him as a trustworthy interpreter of my secret thoughts and feelings?

my advocacy honestly dealt with in no single instance, I now approach the second, and more disagreeable, part of my subject,—the personalities with which he has thought fit to lavishly bestrew his pages, to supplement their small modicum of argument. Compelled, as I am, to undertake the defence of my character against serious and coarse charges, I feel that I carry with me the sympathy of every right-hearted reader, and I am quite certain that if I do not carry with me, throughout, his judgment also, the fault will be entirely my own.

In his pamphlet, Dr. Montgomery alleges, over and over again, that I was actuated by *revenge* in proposing and supporting my Amendment in Synod. My advocacy was not that of an honest, conscientious man, contending for a principle, but that of a mean, spiteful, malignant fellow, actuated mainly, if not entirely, by hatred of Dr. Montgomery. All who spoke or voted against the Doctor, with the exception of myself, he generously acquits of “blame,” for they were “*honest*;” though not otherwise, in forming an opinion of the Code for themselves! “Neither do I, *with a single exception*, impute *blame* to any of my younger brethren; for I am convinced that they acted under mere misapprehension of the views of the committee, and from the impulse of an *honest*, though mistaken, zeal for Christian liberty.” (P. 12.) “The *principal actor* in our late Synodical proceedings,” however, was actuated by a far different motive, viz., “*private spleen*.” “*Had David Maginnis been appointed Clerk of the Remonstrant Synod, in the year 1846, we should have had no mischievous disputes concerning a Code of Discipline in this year of grace.*” —P. 18.

The Doctor writes a very long note, (pp. 15-18,) partly historical, and partly argumentative, designed to prove the correctness of his estimate of my character. To the contents of this note I must now call the reader's attention.

After asserting a double claim to the gratitude of the Synod, 1st, for *his* having obtained from Government an annual grant as remuneration for the services of our Clerk; * and, 2dly, for his disinterestedness in not appropriating to himself that endowment, when the office of Clerk became vacant by the lamented death of the Rev. William Porter, the Doctor takes further credit to himself for introducing the present system, by which the office is “held, only for three years, by any individual,” so that the ministers of “weak Congregations might enjoy its emoluments in succession.” Though this is not the most fitting place to criticise this arrangement, I may take leave to express my opinion, in passing, that, in the peculiar circumstances of our Church, it is not a wise arrangement. It may, no doubt, commend itself on account of its seeming benevolence; but I question much whether the material advantage it confers upon individuals is not more than counterbalanced by the system of patronage, which it is generating. Besides, there are many reasons why the Clerk of our Synod should be a permanent officer.

In 1846, as the Doctor states, I offered myself as a Candidate for the office of Clerk to the Synod. I announced my Candidature in the most general terms. I made no appeal on the ground of poverty to excite pity, nor did I canvass a single member for his vote. In a small body like ours, the professional income of every clerical member is pretty generally known; and I would, therefore, have deemed it an insult to solicit either minister or elder for his support. That I had the smallest salary a minister in receipt of *Regium Donum*, under existing Government regulations, can

* I observe that the same official communication which announces the Grant to the Clerk of Synod, announces also an *increase* to the endowment of the minister of Dunmurry.

have, and that I was exposed to all the heavy expenses inseparable from residence in a large town, are facts well known to the Synod, and constitute but too ample a justification of my Candidature. It pleased the Synod, however, to appoint to the office a gentleman who was then an assistant minister in a small Congregation, and whose professional income was still less than mine. Of that appointment, considering the terms of the new arrangement, I had no right, and manifested as little disposition, to complain. Dr. Montgomery, however, professes* to believe, with his quondam *protégé* and *fidus Achates*, the Rev. W. H. Doherty, that since that time, I have been endeavouring to avenge myself upon the Synod, and particularly upon the Doctor himself, to whom, it would seem, I attributed my defeat. On three subsequent occasions I was a Candidate for the same office, and with a like result. My hatred of the Doctor, consequently, now knows no bounds! Speaking of me, he says:—“Having been uniformly defeated, however, his *irritation against me has acquired additional intensity*—owing, doubtless, to the ascription of his failure to my exertions, rather than to its true causes—his own past misconduct [of which, presently,] and the superior claims of his rivals. I freely acknowledge, however, that I did oppose him,” &c. (P. 18.) Now, I challenge Dr. Montgomery to cite a single instance of my having either in Synod or out of it, manifested, either by word or deed, the slightest “irritation,” fairly attributable to my defeat, either towards the successful Candidates, or towards any of their supporters. I will not deny that I may have felt disappointed, and I confess that had I known as much as I know now of Dr. Montgomery’s secret diplomacy and strenuous exertions to prevent my election, it is more than probable that I might not have entertained the most kindly feelings towards *him*; but, thanks to my ignorance, I did not cherish the resentful feelings which he attributes to me,—the feelings, I presume, which he considers his conduct was calculated to excite.

I must have been resentful,—but I shall let the Doctor state his own case:—

“Now, I am well aware that ‘*post hoc*’ does not invariably signify ‘*propter hoc*’; or, in other words, that a thing which occurs first in the order of time, is not, necessarily, the cause of what follows; but, as effects must have causes, few men can avoid drawing conclusions from facts; and here is a fact of no small significance. The Rev. Geo. Hill, who lived a considerable distance from Belfast, was assisted by Mr. Maginnis in editing *The Irish Unitarian Magazine*; and, some months after Mr. Smyth’s appointment as Clerk, two anonymous letters appeared in that publication without the editor’s sanction, casting gross reflections upon the Ministers and Licentiates of the Remonstrant Synod. . . . As the strength of Hercules could be inferred simply from the sight of his foot (*ex pede Herculem*), the preceding libel, though anonymous, was immediately ascribed to David Maginnis; every one, as it were instinctively, saw the parent in the child, and declared that no other man could have written it. . . . At the very next meeting of the *Non-Subscribing Association* (1847). . . . Mr. Maginnis was compelled to admit his paternity,” &c., &c.—Pp. 16, 17.

* The following is the passage to which reference is here made:—“Until that time, I have reason to believe, I enjoyed the regard and confidence of my brethren: at all events, I had laboured to deserve them: but, as the Rev. W. H. Doherty subsequently observed—‘Ever since that election, a tendency has been observed, on the part of a disappointed candidate, to undervalue the body by whom his services were declined; to praise the Presbytery of Antrim above the Remonstrant Synod, and to direct, on every possible opportunity, public and private, a series of feeble but *ill-natured attacks* against Dr. Montgomery, to whom he attributes his disappointment.’”—P. 16.

The Doctor here rakes up the ashes of an old controversy, which, I believed, had long since died out; but I find that in one breast at least the embers still smoulder. Since the Doctor has thought fit, at this distant date, to revive that controversy, and misrepresent it to my disadvantage, I must ask the reader to go into it with me,—for I am quite certain that to understand it is to acquit me, and to condemn the man who has absurdly and wantonly dragged it forward on the present occasion.

In the *Irish Unitarian Magazine*, for July, 1847, there appeared a short article,* of which I was the writer, calling the attention of the *Non-Subscribing Association*, whose meeting was then approaching, to the highly important subject of the education of candidates for the ministry, and dwelling upon the desirability of Presbyteries adopting a high standard, and uniformly adhering to it. That article has been called by very hard names. It evidences great malignity: it seeks to create

* In order that the reader may see this much-censured article, and judge for himself whether it evidences the malicious spirit that has been attributed to it, I reprint it here at full length. One sentence, I confess, would have been better put in a different form; but, even as it is, I do not fear that the impartial reader will misjudge its object:—

“ON THE EDUCATION OF OUR YOUNG MEN FOR THE MINISTRY.

“As the meeting of the Association of Irish Non-Subscribers is approaching, I am anxious to direct the attention of the members of that respectable and influential Body to the important subject of the Education of their students for the Ministry. The saying has already become trite, that ‘the schoolmaster is abroad.’ The schoolmaster *is* abroad,—and it behoves every church that is concerned for its stability, to remember the maxim. I do not intend, in this brief note, to enter on the question of ‘the necessity of an educated ministry.’ I will, however, express my firm conviction, (which, I believe, is the opinion of the great majority—if not of every member—of the Non-Subscribing Association,) that unless we are careful to secure a well-educated ministry, our body will fall from the high position it has so honourably occupied. It is a fact, that as a body, our laity stand foremost in the ranks of intelligence; and unless our ministers are able to lead the van, they will lose that influence which is indispensable to usefulness in the sacred office. I do fear that our church does not pay sufficient attention to this important subject. On one occasion, no doubt, zeal waxed warm and strong, and a Course of Studies was prescribed for young men preparing for the ministry, with a recommendation (if not an instruction) to presbyteries to enforce the same. One presbytery, distinguished for the attention it pays the young men under its care, did act on the new law; while the others paid little, if any, attention to it. Ought not this matter to be inquired into at the approaching meeting? If the course be regarded as too extensive, or injudiciously selected, let it be modified or altered to meet the views of the majority. Let a course be agreed on,—and let it be *imperative* on all the presbyteries connected with the Association to act upon it. Let every young man who comes forward as a candidate for the ministry *be obliged* to pass through all the examinations prescribed. Let him feel convinced that he can enter only by the one door. Let there be no exceptions. Then our young men will become in reality what they have been hitherto too often in name only—*Students*. They would put their shoulders to the wheel—and work. Then, we would no longer turn out half-educated men as the people’s instructors in concerns of the highest moment,—men than whom the mechanic in his workshop has read more—knows more—has studied more; and, when we compare our ministers with those of our denomination in the sister island, how far below them do they sink! We have a few men among us in this country of whose attainments we may be proud; but, as a body, we are infinitely inferior to our English brethren in the amount and variety of our knowledge. But these hurried remarks are extending beyond the prescribed limits. I therefore conclude, by urging on the attention of the brethren of the three Non-Subscribing Bodies the importance of providing and strictly enforcing a systematic plan for the education of their young men.

“June 6th, 1847.”

“P. P.”

jealousy between the Presbytery of Antrim and the Remonstrant Synod; and, above all, it injures the character and prospects of our students! Now, I beg the reader to look into this. Because I wish to avenge myself on Dr. Montgomery for supporting a rival candidate for the clerkship in July, 1846, I publish a short article in July, 1847—*almost a full year after*—manifesting some anxiety about the education of our students! and I wreak my vengeance upon unoffending candidates for the ministry and others, because I am angry with the Doctor! The charge is simply absurd. The fact is that, so far from the article in question having any connection whatever with the election in 1846, it was in reality, as I stated in 1847, in one of my published letters, but the reproduction of a communication on the same subject, addressed to the editor of the *Bible Christian*, in 1843, and noticed by the editor (Rev. C. J. McAlester) in the number of that periodical for January, 1844. That article, written in 1843, was, of course, conceived in revenge, by anticipation, of my defeat in 1846!

But, it seems, I was not only guilty of *writing* the article, but also of surreptitiously inserting it in the *Unitarian Magazine*! "The Rev. Geo. Hill, who lived at a considerable distance from Belfast, *was assisted by Mr. Maginnis in editing*" that periodical; and this article was inserted "*without the editor's sanction.*" The Doctor's treatment of facts is here no happier than in former instances. *It is not true* that I assisted Mr. Hill in editing the *Unitarian Magazine*. I was editor for some time of the *Bible Christian*; but never was either editor or assistant editor of the *Unitarian Magazine*. The article was forwarded to the editor in the usual way. When the value of the Doctor's facts is understood, the reader will have little difficulty in disposing of his fancies.

In the paragraph quoted above, the Doctor alleges that, at the meeting of the *Non-Subscribing Association*, in 1847, I was "*compelled to admit*" the authorship of the article, as "every one, as it were instinctively, saw the parent in the child, and declared that no other man could have written it." It is not the fact that I admitted the authorship under any compulsion or pressure. The acknowledgment was perfectly *spontaneous*! In introducing the article to the notice of the Association, Dr. Montgomery said that, in his opinion, it must have been written either by a mistaken friend or a secret enemy; whereupon, with a view to assure the Doctor and the Association that it was written with the best motive possible, I at once acknowledged myself the author of it; though, I felt certain, at the time, that there was not a human being aware of it, save myself and a brother minister, to whom I had shortly before communicated the information. The Doctor, it is well known, has a good memory; but in relation to this matter it seems to be *too good*! In 1847, Dr. Montgomery stated in the Association, when speaking of the article, that he did not know who was its author; his words (as reported in *The Whig*, of July 22, of that year,) being, "*it was IMPOSSIBLE for him to say!*" In 1857, Dr. Montgomery states that the article was "*immediately ascribed to David Maginnis;*" and not only he, but "*every one, as it were instinctively, saw the parent in the child, and declared that no other man could have written it!*" The statement of 1847 is quite correct; at that time I believe it was quite impossible for either the Doctor or any one else, save the parties excepted above, to say who the author was. I leave it to the reader to characterize the statement of 1857.

The Article charged Presbyteries with neglect of duty in relation to the education of Students. Did Dr. Montgomery disprove, or attempt to disprove, the charge? He did no such thing. But, finding in the Article

a certain phrase, which, torn from its connection, might give a disparaging idea of the attainments of Students, he fixed attention* upon it; and, notwithstanding my explicit disclaimer, made on the instant, of having the slightest intention “of casting any reflection whatever” upon the Students of the Body (see *Whig*, July 22, 1847), Dr. Montgomery forced forward, and succeeded in carrying, a Resolution pronouncing the statements in my Article “unfounded in fact, and calculated to injure

* That the reader may learn how my Article, and the treatment it received from Dr. Montgomery and others, were viewed by disinterested parties competent to judge of the whole subject, I reprint here a letter addressed to me at the time, with leave to publish it, by the Rev. W. Bruce, B.A., T.C.D., then Professor of Latin and Greek in the Royal College, Belfast. Such a letter, from such a quarter, needs no comment. It is, of itself, amply sufficient to refute all the Doctor’s charges as to the character and aim of the Article.

“*Belfast, 28th July, 1847.*”

“DEAR SIR,—On reading in the *Northern Whig*, of the 22nd instant, an account of the proceedings of the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, I was astonished at the attempt that was made to subject you to odium and censure, for exercising your undoubted right of freely discussing, in the *Irish Unitarian Magazine*, a matter of great importance to our interests. As my name happened to be mentioned a few lines before, in connection with the discussion on the Marriage Act, I felt that you would naturally be surprised that I should be present and not dissent from such proceedings. I accordingly explained to you on the same day that I was not present, and that if I had been, I should have strongly remonstrated and protested against what I conceive to be an infringement of your rights, a suppression of free inquiry, and a mode of proceeding calculated to bring upon you the odium of the students belonging to our bodies.

“As you have asked for my opinion in writing, I have since read over again the article that was made the ground of this attack, and am still of opinion that you had not transgressed the limits of fair discussion; and that the conduct of Presbyteries in the Education of Students for the Ministry is a matter of deep interest to our religious community; and that it was unjust to divert the attention of the Association from that, and convey, with respect to you, the invidious charge of endeavouring to injure the Students.

“You fixed no imputation on any individual;—you cast no blame on any student: you did state that there was neglect on the part of Presbyteries, and, consequently, imperfect education on the part of the students;—a result for which the Presbyteries, and not they, are responsible. You wished this matter taken up by the Association. You had reason to expect that they would do so; and it was unjust to bear you down by a resolution that evaded the real subject of inquiry, and assumed the very point that was to be proved—that all you had said was unfounded in fact.

“I say that you had reason to expect that the matter would be taken up, and inquired into, by the Association; because the Education of the Students for the Ministry had been a matter for deliberation from the commencement. It was the subject of one of the earliest resolutions in 1835: and, in 1838, a Committee was named on the subject, which brought in, as their Report, a sketch of a Course which was printed with the Minutes and recommended for consideration, with the view of its coming into operation, in 1839. In 1841, this Course was confirmed and ordered to be printed and ‘submitted to the particular attention of Presbyteries.’ In 1844, it was again affirmed, and again printed and ‘submitted to the particular attention of Presbyteries.’ Has this been attended to, or has it been neglected? This was the kind of inquiry you asked for. It ought at once to have been granted, and the inquiry was easy: for the records of every Presbytery ought to furnish a full answer with respect to every student that has since been under its care. Our Association disclaims all right of dictating to Presbyteries; but this was a fair subject for conference;—especially when we consider that this course is the minimum that should be required; and to gloss over this business by a piece of wholesale and fulsome flattery to the students, was not consulting the dignity of the Association, and was treating you with unkindness and injustice.

“I remain, yours faithfully,

“REV. D. MAGINNIS, &c., &c.”

“W. BRUCE.”

their Students.”* A public correspondence ensued, in the course of which I demonstrated from their Minutes that two of the Synod's three Presbyteries (I could not gain access to the Minutes of the third,) had fallen far short in the discharge of their duties to their Students. Mr. W. H. Doherty, then minister of Comber,—for whom Dr. Montgomery's remarkable letter of recommendation afterwards obtained kind attentions in Liverpool, and a congregation in America,—became the ready and suitable champion of the Doctor's cause; and made a “crushing and complete exposure of every accusation preferred by Mr. Maginnis!” “Mr.

* The Resolution was passed at the close of the meeting,—after several members had left. That, in passing it, the majority acted without due consideration, is evident from the fact that, in 1851, the Resolution was *rescinded* by a *unanimous* vote of the Association,—Dr. Montgomery himself being present,—and that without any other explanation from me than what had been offered during the discussion in 1847.—Furthermore, Ministers, who were students or licentiates about the period of the “P.P.” controversy, (some of whom had been worked up into a state of fiery indignation against me,) now that they have had time and means to form an opinion for themselves on the merits of the question, no longer condemn, but approve of the spirit and object of that much-abused article. Within the last few weeks I have written, on this subject, to *eleven* ministers who were students or licentiates about the period referred to, and from one and all I have received replies, acquitting me of all intention to injure the Students. As my limits will not permit the publication of all these letters, I present here a few extracts. The names of the writers may be obtained on application.

“From your invariable kindness to myself as a student, and from the interest which I have known you to take in the welfare of others, I cannot believe that, directly or indirectly, you could do anything, either in 1847 or now, to injure the students, either individually or collectively.”

“It is my firm conviction that such a result [that charged in the Resolution,] was quite unintended by you; that you were indeed actuated solely and entirely by a sincere desire to render more efficient our Church, and promote its interests, in Ireland. And this opinion I rest in with the greater certainty, because, as far as my individual experience and observation go, you have always shewn our young men the greatest attention, courtesy, and kindness.”

“I have received your note, and wish to say in reply, that I recollect reading, at the time of its publication in *The Unitarian Magazine*, the letter signed ‘P.P.’ At that time, I was altogether unable to ascribe its authorship to any one individual more than another, and saw in it only an effort, on the part of the writer, to remedy an evil, viz. :—to cause the several Presbyteries of the Remonstrant Synod to adopt some plan by which a stricter *surveillance* would be exercised over their respective students. This was the only object I thought ‘P.P.’ had in view in writing his letter. I certainly never supposed that his aim was either to create jealousy between the members of the Presbytery of Antrim and those of the Remonstrant Synod, or to injure the students. And when it came to be known who the author of the letter really was, I then felt confirmed in the belief that it was only kindness towards the students, and anxiety for their interests and usefulness, that dictated it.”

“As to any ‘injury’ to the ‘prospects’ of students, either intended or inflicted by your comments on the defects (acknowledged as I should have fancied,) of their academic training—the thing seems to me too absurd to be seriously maintained. Your sole object, I presume, was to call attention to a state of things injurious to the character and usefulness of the Church, with a view to some improvement; and, therefore, did you merit the thanks of the Body rather than its indignation. Whatever might be the offence arising from the *manner* of your strictures, there was nothing even in that to occasion lasting alienation among brethren,—much less to require dis-entombing after the lapse of ten years. In common, I suppose, with most Irish students undertaking the charge of a Congregation in England, I had a painful consciousness of many deficiencies; and I have often wished that my literary and theological advantages in early days had been superior to what I found them.”

“In reply to your inquiry of the 13th inst. [Dec. 1857], I have to say that I most unhesitatingly acquit you of all intention of injuring the students of the Remonstrant Synod, by the publication of your letter, signed ‘P. P.,’ in *The*

Doherty," continues the Doctor, "recited 'the entire course of study recommended by the Code of Discipline,' and irrefutably proved that 'it had never been departed from, in any instance, by the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor',—the Presbytery most fiercely assailed as neglectful of its duties, because I happened to be its oldest member." (P. 18.) And, Dr. Montgomery, you say that Mr. Doherty "*irrefutably proved* that the Code of Discipline had never been departed from, in any instance, by the Presbytery of Bangor!" You know, Doctor, that this statement is not true. You know Mr. Doherty proved nothing of the sort. He, no doubt, *asserted* it. Neither Mr. Doherty nor the Doctor himself *could* prove it. But *I proved*,* and, if necessary, can prove again, that, during the period referred to in the controversy, the Bangor Presbytery, according to its Minutes, *did not, in the case of a single student, observe the requirements of the Code of Discipline!*

I have now to notice a very serious charge which the Doctor, in this connection, prefers against my moral character. After stating that I was guilty of employing the pages of the *Unitarian Magazine*, a second time,† in that controversy, "without authority," he makes this weighty accusation:—"To give some colour to these assaults, he stooped to a gross violation of trust."‡ (P. 17.) "A GROSS VIOLATION OF TRUST!" This,

Unitarian Magazine. Evidently, your intention was to call attention to the carelessness of Presbyteries in testing the qualifications of the students under their charge. I beg, furthermore, to state my conviction that the standard of education adopted by the Bangor Presbytery in reference to its students has not been high; and that in the condemnatory resolution passed by the Non-Subscribing Association against your paper, you were harshly and unjustly treated. Whatever opinion I may have expressed during the continuance of the 'P. P.' controversy, I beg the above to be considered as my settled opinions upon the subject to which they refer, *now*."

* I happen to have still remaining a few copies of my Letters, of 1847, which I shall be happy to forward, free, to parties applying for them. These letters *prove*, by the clearest documentary evidence, all that I have affirmed above respecting the *great remissness* of two of the three Presbyteries, in regard to the education of students. It seems to me most strange that any man professing to have any regard for truth, could either make, or endorse, the statement last cited from the Doctor's pamphlet. Why, I find, from the Minutes, that even the Synod took shame to itself on this subject; and, in the year 1840, appointed a Committee, (of which Dr. Montgomery was himself a member,) for the express purpose of devising "some plan for the *stricter and more effectual examination of students* connected with this Church." Surely, if the Doctor and his *alter ego*, Mr. Doherty, be any authority, this was a very unnecessary proceeding on the part of the Synod,—since, at this very time, as these gentlemen would have us to believe, Presbyteries were discharging their duties to their Students most faithfully, and were strict almost to a fault!

† The Doctor is wrong again. Only *one* article of mine, the first one, signed "P. P." appeared in the pages of the *Unitarian Magazine*. The other three, I had to print at my own expense, and have them attached as *Advertisements* to the *Magazine*; and that they reached the public even through that medium was in *spite* of the Doctor. He was so magnanimous as to do his best to prevent their publication even as advertisements, for which I was paying out of my own pocket!

‡ Surely, if Dr. Montgomery believes himself, when preferring this and other charges, he must feel that *the public* is not the tribunal before which he ought to make his accusations. If the Doctor thinks that I am guilty of the offences he charges me with, he is, undoubtedly, guilty of a gross dereliction of duty in not arraigning me before my Presbytery, and doing his best to remove from the sacred office of the Christian ministry one who, if one tithe of those charges is true, degrades his office. But should this charge turn out to be as false as the others noticed, I shall not undertake to say before what tribunal the person who deliberately preferred it should be tried, nor to measure the amount of his guilt. I am content, however, for the present, at least, to leave the matter with the public.

verily, is a grave charge. But let us hear what this breach of trust was. "Using, without permission, in order to calumniate his brethren, the Minutes of the Presbytery which had been confidentially placed in his custody." (P. 17.) Well, I admit the fact of having used the Minutes of Presbytery "without permission," and I deny, as utterly and wilfully false, the allegation that, in doing so, I was guilty of any violation of trust. It was not till after the publication of the Doctor's pamphlet, that I became aware that this calumny had, for some time past, been privately and sedulously whispered about, to the injury of my character. At length, however, in a luckless moment, it came forth from its congenial darkness into the light of day,—and I am now afforded the opportunity of silencing it for ever. Be it known, then, to every reader, that Dr. Montgomery states what is absolutely untrue, when he asserts that, in using the Minutes of the Bangor Presbytery, in that controversy, without permission, I was guilty of stooping to a gross violation of trust. I was but exercising a right secured to every member of our Church by the Code of Discipline. At page 12, the Code contains this provision:—"Clerks may give extracts from the Minutes, on receiving a reasonable compensation for their trouble." And this is the *only* provision on the subject. It was competent for me to give extracts from the Minutes to any extent, and for any purpose, provided only that I was satisfied with the "compensation" offered. I made extracts from our Minutes "without permission!" Whose permission? I needed no permission from any one,—not even from Dr. Montgomery. *My* permission, however,—and only mine,—was sufficient. And, Dr. Montgomery, *no one knew this better than yourself, at the very time you were penning those infamous words—*"HE STOOPED TO A GROSS VIOLATION OF TRUST by using, without permission, . . . the Minutes of Presbytery!" And if you wish to know my reason for saying so, I am prepared to give it;—but I don't expect you'll ask for it. No; I stooped to no violation of trust in the matter; but Dr. Montgomery has "stooped" to the turpitude of deliberately attempting to ruin my character by charging me with a gross immorality, of which he knew I was not guilty.

For the offences alleged, the Doctor states that "some thought" that my "removal" from the Church would have been "the fitting reply." That Dr. Montgomery did think so, I am quite prepared to believe,—friends having informed me at the time of his desire to disannex me from my Congregation. That it was not attempted to "remove" me is to be attributed, according to the Doctor, partly (a wonderful admission!) to some little wholesome fear of public opinion, but mainly to excessive generosity.* I admit that the former motive may have had some influence, but I cannot, for my life, discover any trace of the latter.

I have now closed my examination of the method which Dr. Montgomery felt himself "compelled" to adopt "in order to expose the secret springs which moved the principal actor in our late Synodical discussions." The motive power was "private spleen." As he *will* have it so, I was dissatisfied with the Doctor in 1846; and, in consequence, endeavoured, in 1847, to secure an improved education for our students, and,

* It is with reluctance I notice at all the Doctor's would-be complimentary references to my wife. Yet, I cannot refuse to say that she indignantly spurns, as grossly insulting, a compliment from the wilful defamer of her husband; nor can I refrain from adding an expression of my own conviction, that, had Dr. Montgomery been able to disannex me from my Congregation, no consideration of the services of my wife or her family to the cause of liberal Christianity, would have saved me. My good Doctor, forget that I have a wife, and do your worst.

in 1857, an improved Constitution for our Church! Such was the direction, even according to the Doctor's own shewing, my vengeance took! To the last, however, he declares his "conviction" that "private spleen" was my actuating motive; and professes to believe that he has conducted the Christian public to the same conclusion. "The Christian portion of the world," he says, p. 18, "will conclude, on reading my speech, that I adopt no erroneous conviction when I say, that had David Maginnis been appointed* Clerk of the Remonstrant Synod, in the year 1846, we should have had no mischievous disputes concerning a Code of Discipline in this present year of grace." I feel assured that the really "Christian portion of the world" will be about the last to entertain or sanction any such charge. A truly Christian mind is not disposed to attribute a low motive, while it is possible to attribute a higher one; and all the less so, when the accuser prefers weighty charges with a recklessness and acerbity ill according with a Christian spirit.

Before parting from this strange "note," I have to remind the reader that it formed no part of the Doctor's "speech," but is an addition to it, written after the speech was delivered. The accusations were not made in the heat of angry public discussion; but were deliberately and carefully drawn up and prepared for the press, in the private study. I will not trust myself to characterize the Doctor's motive in preferring these charges; but the reader will bear in mind that I have proved that the note abounds in palpable misstatements, and that its gravest charge is a pure fiction. And I leave the Doctor to account, if he can, to the "Christian portion of the world," for having coolly and deliberately penned an article so false in its facts, so fallacious in its reasoning, and so vindictive and unchristian in its spirit.

In prosecuting the line of *argument* which characterizes the remarkable note I have just reviewed, the Doctor, in his postscript, takes upon him to discuss the private relations subsisting between myself and brethren in the ministry, and evidently rejoices in believing, at least in stating, that they treat me with much coldness, and worse. In proof of the existence of this unhappy relationship, he adduces two circumstances:—the refusal on the part of some ministers to give me letters, introductory or commendatory, when I was going to England, some five years ago, to collect funds towards re-building the Meeting-House of my Congregation; and the alleged fact that I am not on good terms with neighbouring ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim. On each of these, however painful to myself, I must say a few words;—and will then leave it to the reader to form his own estimate of these fresh evidences of the Doctor's generosity and magnanimity.

Touching the former, I have to inform the reader that the appeal of my Congregation was more extensively supported by ministers of our Body than any similar appeal ever made to the Unitarian public of these kingdoms. The Presbytery with which my Congregation is connected, *unanimously* and warmly recommended its claims to the generous support of the Body, generally. The Presbytery of Antrim then contained some

* It is here implied—asserted, in fact,—that for the small consideration of £138 9s. 3d. (being the amount of the Clerk's salary for three years,) I might be *bought!* I do not affect to despise money: but if I know myself, I am not avaricious, and I would despise and loathe myself, if I thought I should ever become so degraded as to be guilty of unmanly or dishonourable conduct for the sake of gain. No, Doctor, *my* conscience never was in the market. Though I am a poor man, I can afford to keep a conscience.

twelve ministers, and the Remonstrant Synod *twenty-eight*: of the former *seven*, and of the latter, *twenty-one*, strongly reconmended our case,—a number, as I have observed, large beyond precedent in the Body. It is true that certain ministers withheld their names, as they had a right to do, and as they had done in other instances I could mention. It is true that Dr. Montgomery was *asked*—he calls it “importuned”—to add his name to the long list; and that he refused. I went to England, however, and received more generous support than had ever before been given to any minister from Ireland on a similar mission. I shall never cease to feel deeply grateful for the kindness and liberality manifested towards me by the Unitarians of England, on that occasion.

The state of feeling between neighbouring ministers of the Presbytery of Antrim and myself, the Doctor entirely misstates. That Presbytery I have “fulsomenly eulogized,” “flattered,” “belauded,” “fawned” upon; and, in return, I have been treated with neglect, if not with contempt, by its members. If to entertain respect for, and gratitude to, the Presbytery of Antrim, and to give expression to my feelings, be “flattery,” &c., I confess that I must plead guilty to the charge. On both public and private grounds, I cherish the most respectful and grateful feelings towards that Body; and those feelings I shall cherish and express, even though its members should treat me with all the contempt the Doctor would have his readers believe they do. I beg, however, to assure Dr. Montgomery, that the members of that Body and I are not on such bad terms as he affects to believe. At present, I am sorry to say, there does exist a *misunderstanding*,—and I believe, literally, no more than a misunderstanding, between *one* member of that Presbytery and myself. And some six or seven years ago, the Rev. John Porter and I measured our goose-quill swords, and there was the usual flow of—ink, and high words; but all this has long since passed away; and we now meet as friends. This has been the extent of my quarrelling with brethren of the Presbytery of Antrim. Possibly, the Doctor himself has had quite as many and as serious quarrels with the members of that Body.

It is extremely painful to proceed with this part of my vindication; but, considering the provocation I have received, I am quite sure the intelligent reader will bear with me, while I continue, for a moment, a line of observation, which, under other circumstances, would, I confess, be very unseemly; and, in some quarters, expose me to ungenerous criticism. Then, I take leave to say, that there are some *facts* not quite reconcilable with the Doctor’s *representation* of the relations subsisting between my ministerial brethren and myself. This fact, for example; my supporters in the Synod for the office of Clerk have been steadily increasing,*—being at the last election much more numerous than on any former occasion. And this fact:—in 1852, the Synod *unanimously* elected me to the highest and most honourable office in its power to confer, that of Moderator. And this fact:—in 1856, the Synod unanimously passed a vote of thanks to me for special services. And this fact:—when I was absent from home on one occasion for the space of six months, during all that time, my pastoral duties were discharged, and my pulpit supplied, by my brethren in the ministry, without any expense whatever either to my Congregation or to myself. Will the Doctor be good enough to reconcile facts of this kind with the allegation that my brethren in the ministry

* The next election for the office will take place in July of the current year,—when I intend being again a Candidate. I have some reason to believe the Doctor is already at his acknowledged old work;—with what success time will tell.

treat me with marked neglect and contempt? If their dislike never assumes a less agreeable form, may it long continue. Perhaps, a minister, of whom the Doctor entertains a very favourable opinion, and on whom he seems to think the world ought to wait, would have been very glad of such a manifestation of *dislike*, on a recent occasion, when his pulpit was left vacant for two successive Sundays. If there had been "a will" to oblige that minister, Dr. Montgomery knows there was "a way" by which his pulpit could have been supplied.

I dismiss this disagreeable subject, with one other remark, which the Doctor will understand, viz., that, in no social relation common to us both, from the most private and intimate to the most public, would I at all fear the result of a contrast between Dr. Montgomery's position and my own.

The next point that comes up for notice is the Doctor's representation of my religious opinions. Throughout the pamphlet generally, but particularly in the postscript, the impression the Doctor seeks to leave is that I am an Infidel; and, moreover, not a very honest one. The charge of infidelity he founds, partly on the authority of rumour, and partly on his own inferences from my speech in Synod. As to the unreliableness of rumour as evidence in a matter of this kind, I shall not say a word; nor do I feel any surprise that one who is known to have so ready an ear as the Doctor has, for small gossip on our Church affairs, should have heard a little respecting myself. Perhaps, if we encouraged tattlers, and were known to have a *penchant* for scandals relating to brethren, we could, any of us, hear a great deal by no means to their advantage. Attaching no importance, then, to rumour as evidence on this point, I proceed to the inferences from my speech on which the Doctor professes to rely most. I quote the passage in which he states this part of his case against me:—

"The next effort of Mr. Maginnis was still more disastrous to himself; for, as he allowed us to peep through two little openings in the mask, we were enabled to see, distinctly, what some only suspected and others possibly believed—'I object,' said he, 'to the test affirming that the Scriptures contain a *Divine Revelation*, on its own merits; although he had no doubt they were an invaluable store of spiritual wealth.' Here was an inadvertent but direct attack upon our recognised and boasted Creed—THE BIBLE—to whose teachings we always refer as 'the only infallible rule of faith and practice;' and on whose Revelations, as *Divine*, we rest our present trust in God's paternal government, and our everlasting hopes of his abounding mercy! On this avowal, which dispelled many doubts, it would be a waste of language to enlarge—especially, as it was promptly followed by another, before which it sinks into comparative insignificance—'I have been told,' said Mr. Maginnis, 'that, if I succeed in my motion, it might introduce *Infidels* into the Church. Well, in God's name, even so!' When these astounding words were uttered, there were not only loud cries of 'No! no!!' but honest Christian men looked in amazement, first at the speaker, and then at one another. The work, however was done: he had clinched the nail which I drove: all doubt disappeared. My argument was, that his 'discipleship' test *might* introduce Deists or Atheists into Christian pulpits; and this he not only admits as a *possibility*, but actually assumes it as a *fact* which might be accomplished, 'in God's name!' I suspected as much: I feared that an infidel in any of our pulpits would have no great terrors for him."—Pp. 81, 82.

Here again the Doctor is at his old work—misrepresentation. That the reader may be convinced of this, I beg of him to turn back to that por-

tion of my Speech (pp. 10, 11), in which I treat of the points to which the Doctor here refers.

The first of these is my criticism of Rev. J. Nixon Porter's proposed Amendment, and of the Code's second question to Candidates for "license" and "ordination," requiring an acknowledgment that the "Scriptures of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation." The reader who has referred to my Speech will find that I opposed this requirement on two grounds; 1st, because it is superfluous; and, 2ndly, because it is calculated to mislead. It is superfluous, inasmuch as, if we are disciples of Christ, we *must* go to the Scriptures to learn of Christ; and it is calculated to mislead, by appearing to affirm a great deal more than it actually affirms. A cursory reading of the Code's requirement would leave the impression that the Scriptures are affirmed to be a divine revelation; whereas they are only said to *contain* a divine revelation; and, therefore, the general opinion would be that the Scriptures were recognized throughout as a divine revelation. To the initiated it would mean one thing, to the uninitiated another. This was the purport of my remarks,—which Dr. Montgomery, with his usual accuracy in this discussion, represents as denying that the Scriptures contain a divine revelation. Why, the fact is, that instead of denying that they contain a divine revelation, I affirmed, in these explicit terms, "*No doubt they do contain a divine revelation.*"

The other point in my Speech, on which the Doctor rests his allegation of my infidelity, is that in which he reports me as expressing approval, "in God's name," of the admission of infidel Ministers into our Church. Here, again, there is a complete perversion of my reasoning. In my Discourse, I had shewn that the Creed-system had been productive of great evils in subscribing Churches, and that it had failed, besides, to accomplish the good desiderated. I had also shewn, as I believed, that the Remonstrant Synod, in adopting the Draft Code as it then stood, would be virtually adopting that Creed-system, and, in some respects, in its most objectionable form. In my Speech in March, I did not demonstrate anew these propositions, but in relation to them and some other points, I stated, "All that I have elsewhere said" (referring mainly to my Discourse), "in support of these views, I shall, in order to save the time of the House, consider as if now submitted;" and then I proceeded to offer such supplementary observations as seemed necessary to explain my views more clearly, and to meet objections. One of the objections I endeavoured to meet was, that my scheme might let Infidels into the Church. This, I observed, was the very argument employed by the majority in the old Synod of Ulster against the views of the Remonstrants,—and that the Rev. John Mitchel (characterized by Dr. Montgomery as "the strong-headed and sweet-souled John Mitchel, of Newry, the Melancthon of our Synod,") had replied to it in these terms:—"I declare before God that I would rather see in this Body ten ministers unsound in the faith than one hypocrite." After quoting Mr. Mitchel's words, I added:—"And here, to-day, I adopt the language of our Remonstrant Melancthon, and, in God's name, say Even so." Mr. Mitchel, I need hardly observe, did not concede that his views of Church Government favoured infidelity. On the contrary, he held that his scheme was far more likely than that which he opposed, to secure a pure-minded, thoroughly-honest and truth-loving ministry for the Christian Church. And, even if, in some instances, it should let in, what no system of testing ever invented could keep out, men whose views were not quite orthodox, this, Mr. Mitchel argued, would be a far less evil than to adopt a system which had always

tended to produce hypocrisy and countless other evils in every Church that had ever tried it. And such, exactly, was my argument. In view of the great evils resulting from the imposition of Creeds by Churches, and from investing clerical corporations with authority over the conscience, I argued for the largest freedom for our Synod compatible with the recognition of Christian principle, believing that such freedom would tend most to promote the spiritual interests both of the individual and of the Church, and that any occasional inconvenience resulting from its exercise would be but a small disadvantage in comparison with its inestimable blessings, and not to be thought of in comparison with the great evils that attach to systems that "lord it over God's heritage." And, in this line of argument, Dr. Montgomery finds evidence of my infidelity. Then, Mr. Mitchel was an infidel: the Remonstrants, including the Doctor himself, were infidels: all Non-Subscribers, the world over, are infidels!

The foregoing remarks upon the Doctor's representation of my religious opinions, clearly demonstrate that he has entirely perverted my advocacy in order to be able, with some shew of plausibility, to call me an Infidel. Having shewn this, I have done all that is needful to justify me in flinging back the opprobrious* epithets with which the Doctor has thought fit, for an obvious purpose, to stigmatize my religious opinions. My views I have never concealed. As occasion required, I have stated them with frankness in private; I have fully and freely proclaimed them in public; and the same course I am resolved, with God's blessing, to pursue in the future. But my whole soul revolts at the idea of "confessing" under any compulsion. I do not acknowledge the authority of Dr. Montgomery to demand of me in any form, What thinkest thou? If he would have me bend at his bidding, and for his satisfaction rehearse the articles of my belief, I refuse; and rebuke, with indignation, the would-be lord over God's heritage. I acknowledge only one earthly tribunal, to which I am accountable for my religious opinions—and that tribunal is my Congregation. Time was, by the way, when the Doctor himself entertained the same opinion. In his speech in Synod, at Strabane, in 1827, he declared, "I will account for my views of it [the Bible] to *no human tribunal but my Congregation.*"

Time was, too, when the Doctor held it as no light offence to prefer such charges as he himself now prefers, without compunction, against me. Personally, I care little by what name I am called—infidel or atheist; but, for the sake of mine office, I do complain of the attempt to fix upon me the stigma of an opprobrious name. But,—the attempt is only a continuation of that melancholy chapter in the history of Churches, which exhibits human nature in one of its most unpromising aspects,—the victim of yesterday, victimizing to-day. It is melancholy to think that one who felt so keenly the charge of infidelity, when preferred against himself, should exhibit such desire, and adopt such means as I have described, to fix it upon another. In the Discussion preceding the Separation, it was a charge brought against the Remonstrants, that they were "Infidels,"—that they desired to "undermine the foundations of the everlasting Gospel," &c. Now, how did Dr. Montgomery characterize that charge? In his speech, at the "Presbyterian Meeting," already referred to, and reported in *Whig*, of Oct. 23, 1828, a certain Mr. Montgomery spoke

* I had made a pretty extensive collection of what I deemed rare flowers of oratory, culled from the Doctor's pamphlet, with a view to present it as a nose-gay to the reader,—but, on examination, I feel that it would be oppressive and sickening, and I therefore withhold it. Besides, I find that such flowers could be no curiosities to readers of the Doctor's polemical publications.

of it as “*the most horrible charge, MURDER NOT EXCEPTED, which they could bring against a minister of the Gospel.*” If Dr. Montgomery could discover anywhere the Mr. Montgomery whom I have just quoted, I would venture to recommend him to cultivate his acquaintance, that he might acquire a little of his spirit. *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis!*

Connected with the charge of infidelity is another which the Doctor frequently insinuates, and even asserts, viz:—*dishonesty* in the profession of my real sentiments. I wear a mask, &c., &c. This, certainly, is not very charitable, to say the least of it. Nor is it possible for me to *prove* to others that it is false,—inasmuch as none but the Searcher of hearts can really know whether I am a hypocrite or an honest man. The world, however, can calculate probabilities; and the world, I believe, will not decide that a scheming hypocrite is likely to deliberately adopt and pursue a course of action obviously opposed to his own worldly interests.* No; if I had been a little more calculating and pliant, I know that it would be far otherwise with me to-day. But if I have lost favour and fortune, I complain not,—having, what I prize infinitely more, the testimony of conscience, that, whatever my short-comings in other respects, I have always professed and proclaimed none other than my actual convictions. If I have anything to regret in relation to the publication of my opinions, it is that I have sometimes, perhaps, professed and proclaimed views before they were sufficiently matured in my own mind. But that I have dishonestly concealed my real opinions, or professed opinions that I did not entertain, is a charge which I can meet in no way but by declaring it to be absolutely untrue.

Before closing my examination of the charges affecting my character, there are at least two others which I must notice.

The first is that of *Ingratitude*. The Doctor seems to feel very sore on this point. His beneficiaries, in general, he confesses, have not been grateful, while those whom he has selected for special favour† have been specially unworthy. Contrary to my expectation, he dwelt largely on this subject in his speech; for, though I knew it was a favourite theme, I believed that he had become more cautious in its treatment, in consequence of certain penitential exercises through which he had, once upon a time, been obliged to pass. As far, however, as his charge relates to my-

* Will the reader only think how Dr. Montgomery used to reason on this point. In a speech, before the Unitarian Society, reported in *Bible Christian*, for 1843, p. 391, the Doctor says:—“Our opponents, with their usual regard for decency, are in the habit of denouncing us before the world, as ‘atheists and infidels;’

. . . but were we unbelievers indeed, as they have foully misrepresented us to be, we should like themselves, *be standing in the ranks of popularity and profit.*” And, again, in a Speech at General Meeting of Non-Subscribing Presbyterians, in 1841 (p. 37), he says:—“If, from the spirit of the times, or the interests of the world, unbelief should deem it prudent to assume the garb of religion, it will not put on the simple robe of Arianism. It will go, as I have known it go, to the popular and established Churches of the land. It will nestle on the high and palmy places of ascendancy or cant amongst the ignorant crowds of the conventicle. But, assuredly, *the unbeliever will not incur the odium of professing a creed far more obnoxious to the evangelical than even infidelity itself. No, no. Fools we may be—knaves and hypocrites we are not. If we were, we should be sailing, like others, with the favouring breeze of popularity and interest.*”

† “Most of you are aware that I have been rather unfortunate in my *protégés*, doubtless from want of judgment on my part.” (P. 67.) Then, Doctor, why not take the hint? But if you *must* have *protégés*, remember that pliant obsequiousness, however flattering to a patron, is but a poor material out of which to expect a *Man* to be formed.

self, the whole thing is simply ridiculous. The only favour, as far as I can remember, for which I am indebted to Dr. Montgomery, is a little hospitality. In my College days, it was the practice with several of the Professors to invite the students of their respective classes, once a year, to their houses; and, in common with the other students, I enjoyed the Doctor's hospitality, in this way, a few times while attending College, and also once, possibly twice, after I became a minister. This has been the extent of the personal favours he has conferred upon me. He claims credit for another favour, however. Nearly thirty years ago, a fund was raised for the "Protection of the Rights of Conscience;" and the Doctor, it seems, rendered some assistance* in collecting subscriptions towards it. The capital was invested, and the interest is applied mainly in assisting weak Congregations to secure the Regium Donum. My Congregation receives from that fund an annual grant of £10; and, therefore, I am under deep personal obligations to Dr. Montgomery. In reality I am not the beneficiary, but my Congregation; for, if the grant were withdrawn, the Congregation would have to contribute £10 per annum, additional, in order to retain the Regium Donum. This, then, being the extent of the services the Doctor has rendered me, it will not be considered, I believe, that I am under such a weight of obligation to him that I should be his to command—body and soul—for life; and that, for acting upon my own convictions, when they happen to differ from his, I should be held up to the scorn of the world, as an ungrateful wretch. It seems, in fact, that when Dr. Montgomery confers a favour, he expects his beneficiary to be ever after a pliant slave. After the exhibition he has made of his motives and expectations in rendering services, no man of independent feeling could now accept of a favour from him. I was loath to believe, what I now find so many believed all along, that, in Dr. Montgomery's motives, self-interest, in one form or another, has always constituted an important ingredient. He may talk, in reply, of his sacrifices for the Church. Dr. Montgomery's sacrifices! What were they? There are ministers who have made sacrifices for their principles; but the Doctor has always managed to make his sacrifices pay!†

* The Doctor says it was *he* who raised this fund. From the *Bible Christian*, for 1830, p. 251, it appears that it was first proposed by John Alexander, Esq., of Newtownlimavady, and Leonard Dobbin, Esq., of Armagh. And Dr. Montgomery stated in Synod, in 1831, (*Bible Christian*, vol. II., p. 430), that "of the £1,800 that had been early subscribed, he believed that at least £1,500 had been contributed by the Presbytery of Antrim;"—and that an additional £1,000 had been collected in England by a deputation of which the Doctor was but *one*,—the other members of it being Revs. F. Blakely and John Mitchel. So that, after all, but an infinitesimal share of our obligations for the £10 a-year may be due to the Doctor,—if any gratitude could really be morally due, or rather any merit attach, to the man who, in conferring favours, seeks to enslave his beneficiaries, and blows so fearfully loud and long the trumpet of his beneficence.

† At present, his "sacrifices" bring him an income of £600 a-year. But he boasts that, not long since, he abandoned a full £100 a-year for the good of the body. Yes, he certainly did seem to relinquish Sir R. Peel's pension for "good services" of £100 a-year; but it was to receive, in exchange, £150 a-year as Professor of Pastoral Theology, Moral Philosophy, &c.; and rumour tells its own tale about that said £100 a-year; and, if it tells truth, the Doctor did not *lose* the reward of his "good services." Without doubt, the votes of the House of Commons shew an *increase* of £100 a-year to his salary, as distributor of Regium Donum,—the Doctor now receiving £230 a-year for filling some three dozen cheques once a quarter. "Sacrifices" of this kind are not so very terrible things. Do I grudge Dr. Montgomery his success? By no means. But I detest this cant about sacrifices, where, if the balance were accurately struck, the canter would be found the gainer at every turn.

The only remaining charge is, that I have represented the Doctor as "a traitor" to the principles of his early life. In fact, he applies to himself, personally, what I said in my Speeches and Discourse, respecting the objectionable provisions of the new Code. And this, assuredly, is very unfair. My advocacy related to measures, not men. But if he will have it otherwise, so be it. And, in reference to this subject, I have to observe, at the outset, that his extreme sensitiveness on this point is very suspicious; and that the forcing *himself* into the place of a principle, is, furthermore, a matter of very questionable taste. However, as he will have us see *himself* rather than the Constitution of our Synod in this discussion, let *himself* be the theme. Within the last thirty years has the Doctor changed? If we ask the citizens of Belfast, or the landlords of Down and Antrim, we shall be told that, whether his political principles are changed or not, his relations to political parties are very much changed. If we ask really liberal Roman Catholics, they will tell us that, in his principles of toleration, the Dr. Montgomery of 1850 is not the Mr. Montgomery of 1828-9. If we ask the representatives of Presbyterian Orthodoxy, the reply will be that, the Mr. Montgomery of 1827-30 was the friend of unbelief, and that the Dr. Montgomery of 1857 is on the straight way to orthodoxy.* If we ask the Unitarian Body, they will tell us that, though they admire his talents, and respect him for past services, they have not the confidence in him they once had,—that, in fact, they could wish, both for his own sake and theirs, that the history of his public life had closed with the passing of the Dissenters' Chapels Bill. And if we ask himself, we shall find the utterances of Dr. Montgomery in the Remonstrant Synod of 1857 very different from those of Mr. Montgomery in the Synod of Ulster in 1827, and later years.† It may be distasteful to the Doctor to hear these things, and it may seem ungracious to repeat them, but I am compelled to afford him a glimpse of himself as others see him. In relation, particularly, to the question that occasioned this controversy, viz. :—the imposition of restrictions upon our guaranteed rights, I can assure Dr. Montgomery that, for years, the opinion has been becoming more and more general in our Body, that, with age, his views have been contracting. He has told us, no doubt, that they are, in all essential points, what they were thirty years ago. Well, we are bound to believe him; but I must add, that if his views in 1827-30 were what he now says they were, we have been led, by reading his speeches of that period, to form a very erroneous opinion of them. The fact is, however, that Dr. Montgomery appears in the Remonstrant Synod in 1857, very much in the same position that Dr. Cooke occupied in the Synod of Ulster in 1827. The very charges that Dr. Cooke preferred against the Remonstrants, Dr. Montgomery now prefers against me!

* *The Banner of Ulster* (Nov. 6., 1856), reviewing our proceedings in Synod, rejoiced to see that Dr. Montgomery had "proposed to impose a test of orthodoxy;" and hoped that he would "not be deterred, by the charge of *inconsistency*, to which he is open, from following the new and better light which has begun to dawn upon him." Members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church are boasting that the Doctor is returning to them. Statements like the following, taken in connection with manifest tendencies, afford some justification of the boasting:—"If believing, then, in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as co-operating in the work of human salvation, be Trinitarianism, I am, and always have been, a Trinitarian."—P. 60.

† That the reader may see what the Doctor used to say on matters that have been often noticed in this controversy, I present, in an Appendix, some extracts from his old Speeches, &c.

In his postscript the Doctor parades the names* of the ministers and elders who supported my Amendment; and evidently exults in the fact that the minority was so small. † In a cause that I feel to be so just, however I may regret the want of support, I have no reason to be ashamed of being one of a small minority. And Dr. Montgomery, one would think, ought to be among the last to make such a position a matter of reproach. From the Minutes of the General Synod, of 1827, I find that on the division on the great debate at Strabane, which led to the formation of the Remonstrant Synod, the numbers were 135 against 2,—8 ministers having declined to vote, and 4 having withdrawn before the roll was called. And the protest against the vote of the majority was signed only by 10 ministers and 5 elders. At that time, the Synod of Ulster contained 211 ministers; and but 2 voted, and 10 protested with Dr. Montgomery. The Remonstrant Synod contains some 30 ministers, and, of these, 4 voted, and 6 protested. ‡ Relatively, then, our minority was very much larger

* Why does Dr. Montgomery not give the list correctly? He represents the Rev. John M'Caw as voting *for* the Amendment, whereas he voted *against* it. And the Rev. Wm. Hall voted *for* the Amendment, and yet his name is entirely omitted from the Doctor's list. One of the elders is described as "the elder of Mr. Maginnis." There was no such person in the Synod.

† And he would have the reader believe, that some, who voted in the minority, now regret having done so. He believes that his "excellent old friend Robert Rowan," for example, would not vote against him to-day. Mr. Rowan writes to me, expressing his surprise that the Doctor should make any such statement. Mr. Miller,—"my thoroughly honest friend, John Miller, of Comber,"—the Doctor would fain reckon among his supporters. But, to the Doctor's "own" provisions in the Draft Code—those relating to the Holy Ghost, and the written creed of candidates for ordination—Mr. Miller was, and is still, as strenuously opposed as myself. The Doctor also tries to turn to his own advantage the fact of the Rev. F. Blakely's not voting with the minority,—Mr. Blakely's ill-health having prevented him from remaining to the close of a very protracted debate. "My worthy old friend Fletcher Blakely, who had been assailed, on his weak point, by dexterous flatteries, in the hope of securing an honourable leader for the malcontents, was too conscientious to stand up in opposition to his own former acts and friends, when he saw the true bearings of the question." (P. 79.) No, Doctor,—your great effort failed to carry the consistent old man along with you. He will not give up his first love. Mr. Blakely was anxious to join in the protest; but it was believed that his doing so would be informal, because he was not present at the division; and, therefore, his name was not received. He has addressed the following note to me for publication:—

"Moneyrea, Dec. 3, 1857.

"DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter, I have simply to say that I was unable, from ill-health, to remain to vote on the Test Question, discussed at the March meeting of Synod. Had I, however, remained, *I would not have voted with the majority.*

"I think it right to add that *I was never asked, by any individual, to vote either in one way or another.*—Yours sincerely,

"Rev. D. Maginnis."

"F. BLAKELY.

‡ The following is a copy of the Protest:—

"We, the undersigned Ministers and Elders, protest against the resolution adopted, this day, by a majority of Synod, prescribing certain questions to be put to Candidates for License, for the following and other reasons:—

"I. Because we consider the *principle* of testing, involved in the catechetical examination, opposed to the best interests of religious truth and freedom of conscience.

"II. Because, judging from the history of other Churches, we regard this testing as but the beginning of a system which will lead to greater encroachments.

"III. Because we consider the plan adopted opposed to the spirit of the Fundamental Principles of this Synod, and savouring of the spirit of the old ecclesiastical tyranny, against which the Synod itself is a protest.

than Dr. Montgomery's in 1827. To protest with him, he had not one-twentieth of the Synod; we had one-fifth. All the circumstances considered, our minority was enormously large. If the reader could only form any adequate conception of the Doctor's performance on the occasion, he would really be greatly surprised that so many had the courage to vote with me. Throughout, his speech was a series of appeals to almost every passion of human nature. The question in debate he narrowed down from a great principle into a petty personality. My advocacy and even my Amendment he absolutely perverted. I myself was everything that is bad,—mean, revengeful, hypocritical,—a knave, an infidel. The Amendment was not what it professed: it was full of mischief and malignity, and levelled, really, at the Doctor himself. And then the remarkably skilful appeal to the prejudices and sympathies of the House. Some he flattered by direct appeals; some he tried to win through old memories which he sought to awaken; some he magnanimously reminded of what he had done for them. He frowned and he smiled, he denounced and he eulogized, he threatened and he flattered. Would the Synod allow him to be put down! If they did, it would be to their shame and disgrace! If they passed my Amendment, he would never enter their assembly again! He commenced in tears, which had a most desirable effect, and he ended with a piteous lament. To see the old man * crying, like a big baby, and to hear him begging a favour for pity's sake, was enough to melt the hardest heart, and draw down universal indignation upon the object of the Doctor's disapprobation. Why, I wonder that even six were found to vote for my Amendment; and am almost surprised at myself that, forgetting entirely the question really at issue, I was not carried away by the torrent. But the reader will ask, what had all this exhibition to do with the question? Nothing under the sun. It was well managed, however; and it accomplished its object,—it got the Doctor a majority.

But, let it not be inferred that, though the Doctor managed, by the means described, to secure the rejection of my Amendment, he was able

“ IV. Because nothing in the experience of the Synod justifies the adoption of such testing.

Ministers.

“ D. MAGINNIS.
JOHN M'CAW.
JOHN JELLIE.
ROBERT HALL.
WILLIAM HALL.

Elders.

“ ROBERT ROWAN,
Elder for Ballymoney.
ROBT. M'MILLAN,
Elder for Belfast.

“ In addition to the foregoing reasons, we protest, because, the second question alone being retained, all the others are superfluous; and, being superfluous, they can do no good, but may be made a precedent for much future evil.

“ J. N. PORTER.

“ WM. GORDON, Elder for Ravara.

“ Dated at Belfast, this 3d day of March, 1857.”

* The Doctor complains that at his great age he should be compelled to undertake a defence of himself. Age is venerable, no doubt; but if it be found on the side of illiberality and wrong the more culpable is it, and the severer should be its punishment. I quite agree with the Doctor, when he said, in vindication of himself for having handled rather severely the late Dr. Hanna, then (1841) a very old man—“ There is but one age, *i.e.*, *dotage*, which ought to screen a man from responsibility for his acts. All age short of this only *aggravates his offences*,—for age, which brings experience, ought also to cool the passions, to temper the judgment, and to increase the forbearance of man to man. Those, therefore, who speak of Dr. Hanna's ‘age and venerableness’ only *add to his reproach; for what would be venial at seventeen is unpardonable at seventy.*”—*Speech in Institution*—Appendix, p. 44.

to prevail upon the Synod to sanction *his* measures. His proposal to exclude from "sitting" in the Synod, the members of the Presbytery of Antrim and of the Synod of Munster, was rejected, on my motion, by an overwhelming majority,—the Doctor and one other constituting the minority. In his proposal to make his declaration of belief in the Holy Ghost a condition of obtaining "license" and "ordination," he was all alone in his glory—unsupported by even a single person, minister or elder! Feeling his position, he deemed it expedient to offer no opposition to the substitution of "affirmative" for "satisfactory" in relation to the answers of Candidates respecting their belief in certain doctrines. And on that which, after all, was his main point,—and but for which I have reason to believe we should never have heard of a new Code,—the requiring from young ministers, prior to ordination, a written statement of religious opinions, to be carefully preserved, with a view of its being brought up against them if they should ever change an opinion it contained,—he was in a minority still smaller than mine. Though, I should say, nearly every member of the House expressed his views on the subject, but one young minister and two elders supported the Doctor. The fact is, the Doctor was regularly defeated on each and all of his favourite points,—save and except the single one of the Amendment;—and of his victory in that instance, considering the means by which it was achieved, I wish him much joy.

I have now done. The writing of this pamphlet has been to me extremely painful, on both personal and public grounds. The present controversy cannot fail to be injurious to our Church. It is a sad sight to see so small a Church engaged in internecine warfare. The intelligent reader will perceive that the blame rests not with me, but with Dr. Montgomery, who,* instead of discussing the important question really at issue, like a gentleman and a Christian, assailed me with every species of controversial weapon, save fair argument. Necessity was laid upon me to reply. In doing so, I could wish that I had been always able to preserve that thorough self-command and calmness, which I had from the first determined to maintain. But, reader, if, either from experience or from an exercise of imagination, you can in any degree realize the feelings of one in the position I occupy,—my words and acts misconstrued, my motives misrepresented, my honesty denied, my character unscrupulously assailed, all personal to me that I hold most dear wantonly and savagely attacked, I am quite sure you will judge leniently of any little severities which I may have used in self-defence. If, in warding off the blow that was evidently meant to destroy my character, I have turned the weapons of my assailant against himself, I feel assured you will deem it a very pardonable offence, in consideration of the provocation I received.

* What finally determined the Doctor to publish his pamphlet, he says, was the appearance of *The Non-Subscriber*. That our harmless little sheet should alarm the Doctor, is somewhat significant. It is said there are those who "flee when no man pursueth." I can assure Dr. Montgomery that, in projecting the little journal, I never once thought of him.‡

A P P E N D I X,

CONTAINING BRIEF EXTRACTS FROM FORMER SPEECHES, &c.
OF DR. MONTGOMERY.

“TESTS” UNPROTESTANT, UNCHRISTIAN.

“It is vain to tell me, that ‘this is only a *declaration* of opinion, not a *test* of belief.’ It is a distinction without a difference; for whatever a man declares at the bidding of his fellow-man, he virtually subscribes. Now, I do say, without fear of rational or scriptural contradiction, that any body of fallible men, who demand assent or subscription to any declaration or test of faith, in human language, under the fear of any penalty, or the hope of any reward, are trenching, not merely upon the fundamental principle of Protestantism, the right of private judgment, but also upon the sacred prerogative of the Great Head of the Church.”—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*

“Until some one had procured a patent of infallibility, he had as good a right to maintain his opinions as others had to state theirs. . . . These measures now proposed were calculated to lead to absolute Popery in the Presbyterian Church.”—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*

“I do aver that your whole overture is directly opposed to the first principles of the Reformation—the right of free inquiry, without penalty or privation. Should it be passed into a law not a single student can be educated, or licensed to preach, without risk of injury, and submission to human authority in matters of faith.”—*Speech in Synod at Cookstown, in 1828.*

“I put it to you, ‘fathers and brethren,’ is it honest, is it seemly, is it Christian in you, to prescribe stricter terms of communion than those appointed by the Spirit of God, or to put men to inconvenience for maintaining opinions which would have gained them free admission into the Churches of the Apostles.”—*Speech in Synod at Cookstown, in 1828.*

DETESTS INTERFERENCE WITH CONSCIENCE.

“When I witness such an attempt, I blush for the weakness or the wickedness of man; but I will neither be a partaker in the shame nor in the crime. So truly do I DETEST *all human interference in matters of conscience*, and so awful have been its effects in the world, that were you this moment to lay before me a human creed, *every word of which I believed, I would not subscribe it*, lest I should thereby sanction the interference of man with the sole prerogative of the Redeemer. Indeed, what are all such attempts but a manifestation of the impious vanity of man,” &c.—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*

EVILS OF THE TESTING SYSTEM.

“Why are Christians of the same communion arrayed against each other? Why? Because men presumptuously interfere with the conscientious belief of their brethren, and spend that time in forming plans of annoyance which ought to be dedicated to offices of peace! I do appeal to my brethren whether these be times in which any Church, and especially any Presbyterian Church, should occupy itself in devising schemes for the curtailment of Christian liberty? . . . Is it at such a time, that we should retrograde, and surrender the fundamental principles of our Church? If we do, a death-wound will be inflicted upon Presbyterianism; division will follow usurpation; weakness will succeed division; and though individuals may chiefly suffer in the beginning, the Church must suffer in the end.”—*Speech in Synod at Cookstown, in 1828.*

“How is real uniformity to be produced? Not, sir, by loading the mind with trammels, or teaching it to writhe under the weight of the shackle, but by giving full play to its powers, by leaving it fair and free discussion. . . . If either penalty or reward be attached to the holding of a particular creed, then must truth and pure religion be injured. Such a mode of coercion may alter our profession,—does it alter our belief? Why seek to constrain the opinions of men? It but adds one crime to another, and aggravates moral guilt by creating religious hypocrisy.”—*Speech in London, Whig, Jan. 15, 1829.*

“You may make hypocrites of the weak, and the crafty, and the worldly; you may make martyrs of the firm, the upright, and the sincere, but every child who hears me must know that you cannot change the conviction of a single mind, or alter the feeling of a single heart.”—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*

“Another of the external obstacles to the advancement of our opinions is found in the *creeds*, the authority, and the emoluments of Churches. . . . Human wickedness never devised a more ingenious plan for the subversion of truth, and the ensnaring of souls. . . . It is a melancholy sight to see the slave of man in the pulpit of Christ—that place, which, above all other places upon earth, ought to have its dignity sustained by men of high minds and elevated purposes—with no fear in their breasts but the filial fear of offending God by failing in duty towards his children. . . . It is humbling and distressing to reflect how systematically and perseveringly the power of Churches has been exerted to prevent religious inquiry, to undermine Christian integrity, and by the unhallowed influence of earthly powers, emoluments, and penalties, to alienate men from the direct service of their God.”—*Sermon,—“We Persuade Men.”*

CREEDS DO NOT SECURE UNIFORMITY OF FAITH.

“We do differ, and we know that we shall continue to differ, but we will hold out false colours to the world, we will cast dust into the eyes of the multitude, and try to make them believe that ‘there is peace when there is no peace.’ This may seem very fair in the eyes of some, but to me it appears to be rank Jesuitism and hypocrisy. . . . Uniformity of faith! Oh, that such a phrase had never been heard by the ears of man,—that such a vain idea had never flitted across his imagination! What dungeons has it crowded! What tortures has it inflicted,” &c. “Were uniformity of faith, however, desirable, (which, to me, seems exceedingly doubtful,) I am persuaded that *creeds, and confessions*, and other ‘devices of men,’ are NOT the means adapted to produce it!”—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*

CHURCH AUTHORITY AND HONESTY.

“There may be persons who admire this mode [subscription to a creed] of producing a uniform and Orthodox faith; but to me, it seems awful to think that a man should be excluded from the ministry, or any other office, for avowing the truth, who would be considered duly qualified for admission, by putting his solemn signature to a lie.”—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*

“We are not charging him [the Rev. W. Porter, whose re-election as clerk had been opposed on the ground of his being a Unitarian] with any dereliction of duty as our clerk, but we are about to punish him for having, when on his oath before a Parliamentary commission, honestly confessed what he believed to be the truth. We are about to injure a man for his *honesty*. Oh, fathers and brethren, is this the conduct of the followers of Christ? Pause before you so commit yourselves as preachers of Christian mercy and peace among men.”—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*

“Mr. Cooke, and others, have been pleased to denominate those who differ from them, ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing.’ This implies, that we have assumed a false character. So far as I am concerned, I treat the insinuation with contempt.”—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*

PRESBYTERIES HAVE NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE WITH MINISTERS’ OPINIONS.

“—The propriety of ministers of the Gospel avowing, openly, their real sentiments on religious subjects. In this principle he [the Rev. Wm. Porter] heartily concurred, provided the avowal was required by the parties who had a right

to demand it,—and such parties, he irresistibly contended, were the Congregations of ministers alone, and not Presbyteries or Synod, to whom they owed no allegiance. He then shewed that submission to such unauthorized claims upon the part of Churches, had produced all the corruptions that have dishonoured the Christian name, and all the havoc of conscience which is still going on in creed-bound Churches.”—*Outlines, &c., Unitarian Magazine*, vol. II., p. 387.

THE RIGHTS OF PRESBYTERIANS.

At the first meeting of the Remonstrant Presbytery of Bangor, the Rev. H. Montgomery moved the following resolution, which was adopted:—“That the people under our care shall have their *inalienable privileges amply secured to them in the free choice of their Ministers according to THEIR OWN VIEWS OF CHRISTIAN TRUTH.*”—*Bible Christian*, for 1830, p. 39.

“Every man has a right to maintain and support whatever opinions he may conscientiously hold. We will not bind any man down to this or that creed, if he acts in accordance to the Divine Word of Truth.”—*Speech at Newry, October 14, 1829.*

“The proposed measures are eminently calculated to violate the rights of the people. You tell them that the privilege of choosing their own pastors is one of the greatest that men can enjoy; but should your overture pass into a law, this privilege will be only a name. Whatever may be their views of Gospel truth, you will permit them to elect no pastor but one that has been measured by the standard of faith erected by your committee.”—*Speech in Synod at Cookstown, in 1828.*

IS CHARGED WITH UNDERMINING THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE GOSPEL.

“We have made a wily attempt to undermine the fundamental truths of the everlasting Gospel under colour of a regard for the true principles of Protestantism! Yes, sir, all these atrocious accusations, which are as foul as they are false, have been preferred by men called ministers of the Gospel against their brother ministers of the same Church, &c. . . I tell those who audaciously and falsely accuse us of a wily attempt to undermine the foundations of the everlasting Gospel (*the most horrible charge, MURDER NOT EXCEPTED, which they could bring against a minister of the Gospel*), that they are themselves much more justly chargeable with that offence, inasmuch as they would abrogate the authority of the Head of the Church, and place themselves in his room. I shall conclude my remarks on this point by reminding our accusers of a homely proverb and a scripture text, ‘As you lead your lives, you judge your neighbours,’ and ‘Charity thinketh no evil.’ Oh, but they say, ‘they are sincere friends of Christian liberty!’ I should much prefer deeds to words. They are just as much friends to liberty as a driver of a gang of galley-slaves, who might say to the wretched beings under his tyranny—‘I impose no restrictions upon you; I exercise no control over your liberty; you may freely go to the full length of your chain.’ So it is with our would-be clerical masters. They are graciously pleased to permit us to think with them, to take their meaning out of the Bible; but if we dare to think for ourselves, or judge of what the Scriptures teach for ourselves,—then comes calumny, penalty, the deprivation of our inalienable rights, and every species of insult and annoyance. Yet the forgers of these vile fetters have the hardihood to say that they are the sincere friends of Christian liberty.”—*Speech at “Presbyterian Meeting,” Whig, October 23, 1828.*

IS CHARGED WITH UNBELIEF IN CHRISTIANITY.

“Dr. Edgar’s allegation that Mr. Porter and myself are teachers of a system confessedly twin-sister to Deism, is a calumny as reckless as any which even he has ever uttered. . . I confess, sir, that in reading this atrocious libel, I should be ashamed of myself if I did not feel deeply indignant. . . I, therefore, hurl back this foul calumny upon its hardened author, telling him, that, in every point, it is not merely without foundation, but directly opposed to truth. . . This wretched man continues his libellous denunciations with a perseverance of malice altogether unparalleled, and farther avers that Mr.

Porter and I are working sedulously to promote unbelief in all that distinguishes Christianity, &c. . . The heart really sickens in contemplating a malignity so deadly, and a violation of decency so enormous, cloaked under the guise of zeal for religion. Talk of imputations upon character! What imputations could be more atrocious than charging two ministers of the Gospel, before their own Congregations and the world, with sedulously working to promote unbelief in all that distinguishes Christianity? Is there a man, of any party, in this Assembly, having a human heart in his bosom, who does not, inwardly, cry 'Shame!' upon the unprovoked traducer?"—*Speech in Academical Institution, in 1841, pp. 29, 30.*

"It has been said that 'Arians hold that there is nothing essential in Christianity.' If this assertion has been made in ignorance, I pity the persons that have used it; if in wickedness, and with a deliberate purpose of misrepresentation, I hope that I can forgive them."—*Speech in Synod at Cookstown, in 1828.*

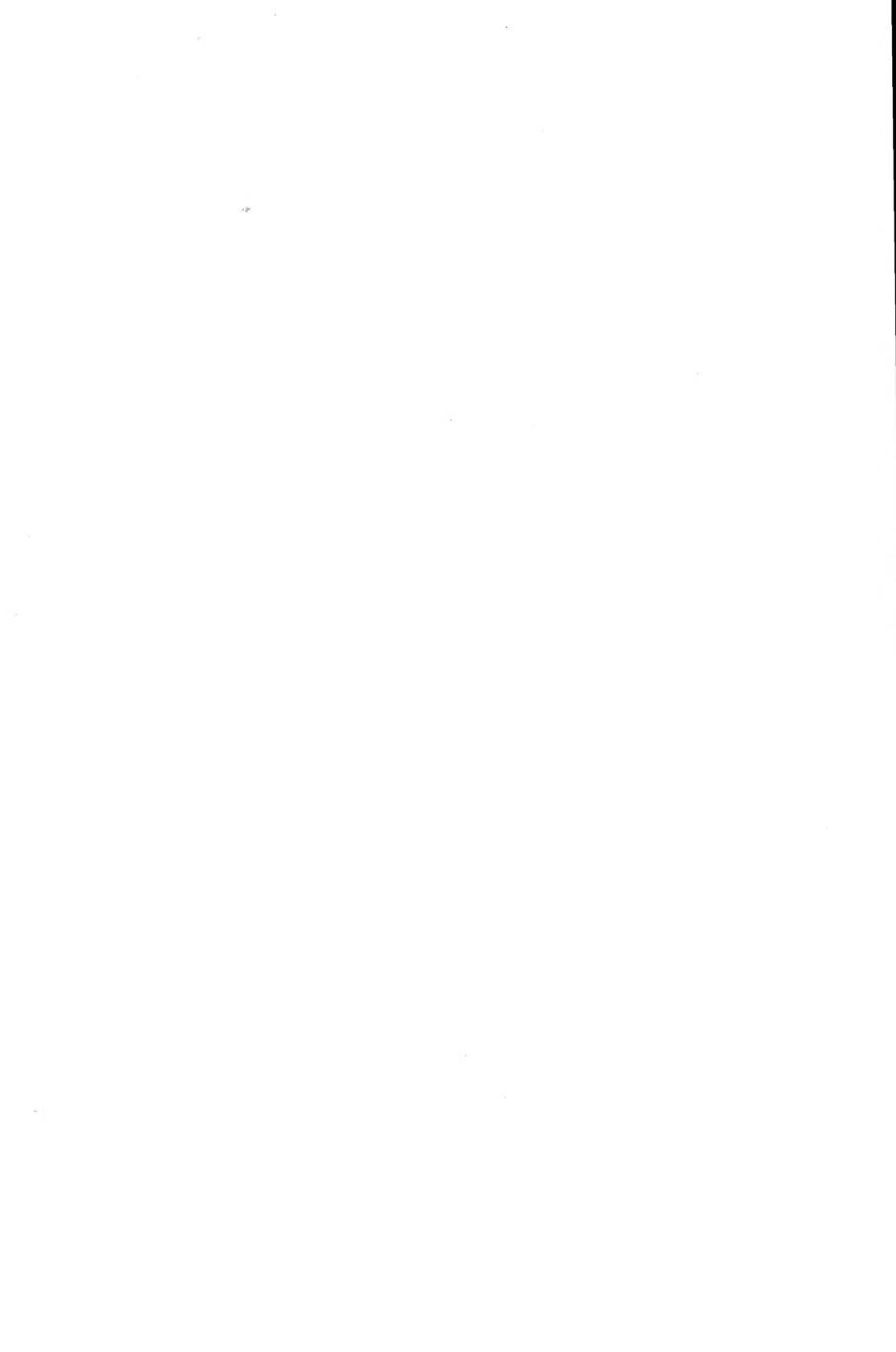
"In direct opposition to God's Word, and to their own knowledge, some of our brethren have had the hardihood to brand us in a public journal with the appellation of 'Anti-Christians, and men of sin.' I now call upon those ministers and that journal to retract the groundless calumny which they have circulated against men, to say the least, as respectable and as Christian as themselves!"—*Speech in Synod at Cookstown, in 1828.*

IS CHARGED WITH DEISM AND ATHEISM.

"I come now to a very painful, but necessary part of my duty, namely, to refute the calumnies uttered against our opinions by Mr. Elder and others in this house, and which had been most industriously circulated in the world. We have been directly charged with being 'no Christians.' We shall not fling back the uncharitable denunciation upon our accusers, though we might remind them that 'if any man have not the spirit of Christ' (the spirit of charity, of love) 'he is none of his.' . . . The inconsistency and absurdity of another charge preferred against us, namely, that we are both Atheists and Deists, at the same time, has been powerfully exposed by my friend, Mr. Blakely. No man acquainted with the meaning of words, could seriously bring forward such an accusation; but the object being to inflame the multitude, Atheists and Deists will produce as much mysterious horror as any other terms which they don't understand. It is melancholy, however, to think that Christian ministers should submit to such acts; for surely the cause of truth cannot be promoted by deliberate misrepresentation; neither is it lawful to do evil that good may come. . . . Such a shocking and unfounded imputation only reflects disgrace upon its author."—*Speech in Synod at Cookstown, in 1828.*

THE OBJECT OF CALLING HARD NAMES.

"The gentlest epithet applied to us has been that of *heretics*. I never expected to hear the word used in a Protestant assembly; but its reiterated application, on the present occasion, has taught me, that no mode of faith can change the evil propensities of human nature, and that the hateful passions of men are never so malignant as when they put on the sacred garb of religion. Those, however, who have adopted this vulgar system of abuse, which only reflects discredit upon themselves, and the cause which they espouse, have not the merit of originality in the course which they pursue. The attaching of odious names to opinions and persons marked out for persecution has always been the favourite plan of the exclusively righteous."—*Speech in Synod at Strabane, in 1827.*



Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01219 4116

