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SCS #1460

T. F. Tompkins.

John Wilson
Dunse

STATEMENT

OF THE

CAUSES

WHICH LED TO THE DISSOLUTION

OF THE LATE

Berwickshire Auxiliary Bible Society.

BY A MAJORITY OF THE DIRECTORS.

EDINBURGH :

PRINTED BY A. BALFOUR & CO.

1835.

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STATEMENT, &c.

THE Directors of the late Berwickshire Bible Society, who are friendly to the principle of ecclesiastical establishments, have perused with feelings of surprise and regret, the statement which has been issued by their dissenting brethren, of the causes which led to the dissolution of that institution. To the publication of such a document there could not have been the smallest objection, if it had been drawn up with temper, and had exhibited a full and impartial account of the reasons which were offered in vindication of that measure when it was proposed to the subscribers, and had been distinguished by that moderation and courteousness of language which might have been expected from its authors as Christian ministers. But we are sorry to observe that it is characterized by a want of these important qualities which were absolutely indispensable to entitle it to the confidence of the Christian public. For it misrepresents our opinions, (we hope unintentionally), even on the subject of voluntaryism, imputes to us motives of which we are utterly unconscious, withholds the reasons by which we justified our conduct, and is written with a fierceness and bitterness of expression which savours more of "that wrath of man which bringeth a snare," than of "the fruit of the Spirit which is in all goodness," as well as "righteousness and truth."

A leading object which is contemplated in the statement, and of which it never loses sight either in its details or reasonings, is to inflame and irritate the public mind against the friends of establishments, and it resembles rather one of those keen and fiery ebullitions which issue from the platforms of voluntary associations, than an address from a religious and benevolent institution. Had not this been the case, it would never have repeated the groundless allegation, that “an attempt was made at the formation of the society to fix a stigma on the Dissenters by the introduction of a clause, to the effect, “that a majority of the directors should be churchmen.” For it is known to the president of the Dissenting Society, and to several of the directors, (and we challenge them to deny it), that this regulation existed only for a single year, and was adopted for the time, not with the most distant view of shewing disrespect to the Dissenters, but partly from an impression, which was discovered to be erroneous, that it was an article in the constitution of the parent society, and partly in the hope of conciliating some laymen who might have been of use to the society.* Nor would it have represent-

* At a private meeting of the friends of the society, prior to its formation, the Rev. Dr. Brown endeavoured to prevent the adoption of the clause, but was unsuccessful, as the society had to struggle with a number of difficulties, some of which it was hoped might be obviated by this arrangement. But two days after the public meeting, when he was informed of the dissatisfaction which it had given to the Dissenters, he wrote a letter in his own house, before the Rev. Mr. Thomson of Dunse, and the Rev. Mr. Ralston, (which he read to them, and *which they put into the post office*), and requested the gentlemen who had proposed the clause, to agree to its repeal at the first anniversary, to which they at once consented; and upon communicating this to these clergymen, they declared that they were satisfied. Was it fair then or gentlemanly, knowing, as they must have done, or ought to have done, the whole of these facts, and recollecting the handsome and liberal way in which the abolition of the clause was proposed by Mr. Buchan, and *their refusing to allow him to make any explanation*, to recur to this circumstance? But it is only one out of too many instances in which the authors of the Statement endeavour to exasperate the feelings of the public against their Christian brethren, and imagine, we have no doubt, that they are doing God good service. We should like to be informed, whether the writing of this and

ed those individuals who should venture to question the loyalty of Dissenters, (of which there was not even a whisper in any of our discussions), as “*actuated by a malignity equal if not superior to that of the accuser of the brethren* ;”—a specimen of heterodoxy, or rather of utter absurdity, which we would not have expected from our brethren : for how could an inferior creature like man, with his limited powers, surpass in his malevolence the father of lies ? Nor would it have used such a fearful liberty with the Redeemer, as to say that “*he was mistaken*,” if our conduct was right, “*when he prayed most fervently for the union of his disciples*.” Nor would it have consigned us so recklessly to the vengeance of the Almighty for voting for the dissolution, remarking, page 12, “*Vengeance is mine, I will repay*.” Surely the men who could write under the influence of such extraordinary excitement, and who could employ such language, must have been ill prepared to do justice to our sentiments ; and we owe it to ourselves, and to the cause which we have espoused, and to the Christian public, to correct the misrepresentations of this most offensive publication.

We were completely ignorant, when the society was instituted, of the sentiments of our brethren on the subject of Establishments, for it was never mooted. But we supposed that while they were opposed to coercive measures on the part of the magistrate for the punishment of heresy, (which was all that we understood by their new-light doctrine), they would have acquiesced in the exposition of the principles of their body, which was given by Dr. Peddie, when he said to Dr. Porteous, “*The Associate Synod will admit that legal establishments of religion are lawful and warrantable*,” and denied that they had asserted that “*to establish religion by human law was contrary to the nature*

some other pamphlets which have been published of late by Berwickshire Voluntaries have strengthened in their minds the feelings of devotion and the spirit of prayer, and have assisted them when they were engaged in preparing for the pulpit, and have raised them in the estimation of their pious people, and have enabled them to repair with greater spirituality, and tenderness, and comfort, to the couches of the sick and the beds of the dying.

of the New Testament Church, and an attempt to turn the kingdom of Christ into a worldly kingdom" !!!* It appears however, that we were mistaken in that opinion, for some of them informed us at one of our recent discussions, that they had been voluntary churchmen for twenty years (and if Dr. Peddie was right) in advance of the Secession. But, whatever were their sentiments, they kept them to themselves; and Dissenters neither interfered with churchmen from the pulpit or the press, nor churchmen with dissenters. Our Society accordingly rose above the difficulties with which it had to contend at its outset, and increased both as to its members and its Branch Associations; though a Missionary Society, which had been established by our brethren prior to the former, had to be soon relinquished. And had matters remained on the same friendly footing, it would not only have been conducted with that mutual good feeling which they themselves acknowledge, (p. 3.) distinguished its operations for sixteen years, but it would have continued to

* Reply to Dr. Porteous, p. 29. This was written in 1800, after the adoption of the new light principles, and was considered as expressing the sentiments of the Synod. It is plain, therefore, that at this time they still believed in the scriptural warrant for Ecclesiastical Establishments, whatever may be the sentiments which a majority of their ministers have recently embraced. We know that one of their ministers, not fifty miles from Dunse, declared little more than two years ago, that he had not *then* made up his mind on the question of Establishments. The Rev. Dr. Mitchell, one of their Professors of Divinity, the Rev. Dr. Belfrage, one of their most excellent ministers, with a few other clergymen, forming a small but respectable minority, still approve of Establishments. The Rev. Dr. Edgar, too, and the whole of their brethren in Ireland, though new-light Seceders, must be friendly to endowments, for they accept of a yearly allowance from government, called the *Regium Donum*, in consequence of which, when any of their chapels happen to become vacant it is speedily filled. And if there be any truth in what was mentioned in the Guardian a year and a half ago, (and it has never been contradicted), namely, that some of the leading ministers of the Secession applied to Sir Robert Peel, before he last went out of office, for an annual grant to their body of L.10,000, it proved that at that time they must have been favourable to endowments, though they now represent them as the source of the greatest evils.

prosper, and we would never, for a moment, have consented to its dissolution.

Our brethren, however, having either changed their sentiments within the last three years on the subject of establishments, or having considered the times as more favourable to their cause, brought out views which were previously unknown to us; and not satisfied with being supported on the voluntary system by their own congregations, became anxious that the present ministers of the establishment, or at least their successors, should be supported by it also; and pursued a course which, if they had reflected at all, and had given us any credit for being attached to our principles, they could not have failed to perceive would terminate infallibly in the dissolution of the Society. They might not, indeed, as is mentioned in the Statement, have become actual members of Voluntary Associations, but they will scarcely deny that they acted as their pioneers. For, while some of them attacked the principle of establishments in periodical publications, and in private conversation, and publicly from the pulpit, a number of them were busy in the circulation of tracts, and magazines, and books which celebrated in the most glowing and extravagant terms the orthodoxy and piety of voluntary churchmen, and, as will afterwards appear, held up to the loathing and detestation of the public the system of establishments and its most exemplary ministers. We beheld this with astonishment on the part of men from whom we had expected to receive very different treatment, but bore it with patience for a considerable time, trusting that they would return to a better spirit, and that we might still co-operate with them as Christian brethren. We saw, however, that our hopes were vain; for, instead of relaxing, they persisted in their efforts, circulating new and still more violent publications, in which we were denounced as “state paupers,” and “enemies of civil and religious liberty,” and were represented as “paid by the servants of the devil,” while they themselves were supported by “the gifts of godliness,” and in which it was openly avowed, that “means ought to be taken to press their plans on the attention of the only living man who could turn them to account, the great

Irish Agitator.”* And being convinced, that the period had at last arrived when we could no longer act with them without encouraging them to new and more daring attempts, and betraying our principles, we determined to separate.

After we had come to this painful but unavoidable resolution, two plans occurred to different individuals for carrying it into effect. The first was, if we were supported by a majority of the subscribers, (of which we had not the smallest doubt,) to vote them out of the management, and retain it to ourselves. But one or two of the Directors, whom they have distinguished re-

* Voluntary Magazine for October 1834. How will the patrons of the Scottish voluntaries, Messrs. Gillon and Whittle Harvey, after all that they have done for them, like the preference which is expressed in this article for Mr. O’Connell, or rather judging of the cause from the instrument, who is to be selected for endeavouring to accomplish it, what will be said of it by many pious and excellent members of the Secession? Are they prepared to co-operate with the voluntaries, headed by this votary of the man of sin, in their work of demolition, and to join in the cry which is raised by the enemies of our Scottish Zion, like that of the children of Edom of old, “Raze it! raze it?” We cannot believe it. The language, however, which is employed in this passage, does not at all surprise us; for it had been stated formerly by Mr. Marshall, one of their most strenuous advocates, that “the whole Roman catholic population in Great Britain and Ireland, amounting in the aggregate to so many millions, although not dissenters in principle, were prepared to lend to dissenters their cordial assistance in effecting what they have come to regard as a most important object,—the entire separation of religion from the state.” And he adds, “*There is no reason why their assistance should not be accepted as frankly as it is offered, and considering how numerous they are, and with what vehemence they are accustomed to urge their claims, it cannot but prove of the greatest avail.*” This will perhaps be considered as strange language from a Protestant and a Seceder. Is it in the hope of obtaining the assistance of the papists for overturning the establishment that the dissenting voluntaries, while they are incessant in their endeavours to obtain the alienation of the Protestant endowments, have never yet presented a single petition against the annual grant of L.9000 to the college at Maynooth, to educate priests for the Irish catholics? Their zeal against the endowments of the popish church is cold and dead, so far as we can judge from their conduct; but it is ardent and restless against their Protestant brethren.

cently by the most opprobrious epithets, and the most contemptible scurrility, after loading them formerly, in their notes and letters which still remain, with the warmest praises, refused to concur in it, so far as they were concerned, though it was pressed upon them repeatedly by some of the subscribers. They were sensible that their brethren had treated them unkindly, but they had no wish to return them evil for evil. And, accordingly, they proposed to their fellow Directors the plan which was afterwards adopted by the subscribers, namely, that the Society should be dissolved, so as that when the separation took place neither churchmen nor dissenters should have any advantage, but that when the latter walked out, the former, instead of remaining, should walk out along with them. We ask, then, any fair and honourable man, who has attached himself as yet neither to us nor our brethren, whether such is the course which we would have been likely to have pursued, if, as is asserted in the Statement (p. 7) with a petulance and flippancy which does not at all distress us, we had intended “to offer to them a wanton and unprovoked insult;” or whether he can allow himself to believe, *that, after acting with them cordially for sixteen years, as they themselves admit, the reason why we at last resolved to separate from them was, “because we considered dissenters unworthy to be admitted into the society of churchmen?”* And we beg him to contrast with it the very modest proposal which they thought fit to make to us, namely, that, though we were supported by a large majority of the subscribers, and had contributed the largest proportion of the funds, and had written the whole of its annual reports for nineteen years, and had taken considerable trouble in the management of its affairs, we should withdraw from the Society, and leave to the minority the important advantage of its respectable name, and its established reputation.

We announced our intention to them, partly at an ordinary meeting of the Directors on the 15th October last, and more fully at a second meeting on the 27th of that month, when we proposed that, as in the case of the Missionary Society, to which they had themselves consented, we should dissolve the Society

quietly and amicably, for the reasons which we specified, and which will by and by be noticed. They objected, however, to this plan, though it had been followed with their approbation in the former instance; and upon their insisting that it should be submitted to a general meeting, we agreed to their request, restricting, however, the meeting to the Subscribers and Delegates from the Branch Associations, who alone were entitled to vote upon the question, and appointing it to be held in private, and not as they wished in public; and our only motive for preferring the former was our anxiety that every thing connected with so delicate and important a business should be conducted peaceably, and should be as free as possible from all external influence, and that we should act towards each other with as much moderation as the circumstances would admit, and should part as brethren. We at least had no reason to shun the most open and public discussion, though in this instance it would have been improper; and so much do we approve of it on fitting occasions, that we would not only have readily acceded to their proposal, if it had been at all advisable, but we have abstained carefully from imitating their example as to a less honourable privacy, that of publishing in the newspapers anonymous letters, and attacking their friends and Christian brethren while they were covered with a mask.* That meeting, accordingly, took place on the 27th November, and both parties having been heard in support of their views, it was resolved, by a majority of two to one, that the Society should be dissolved, and if letters had been admitted from the female subscribers, we have reason to believe that it would have been carried by three-fourths, or *by a still greater number.*†

* It is not a little surprising that our Voluntary opponents, after complaining of our meeting because it was *private*, and stigmatizing it as “a hole and corner meeting,” should have had recourse to the kind of *privacy* referred to in the text.

† The following were the terms of the motion which was carried:—“While this meeting deeply regret that any circumstances should have occurred to mar the harmony which has so long existed in the Society, yet in consequence of the painful discussion which has taken place on the subject of Church Establishments, and *the manner in which it has*

We can appeal, we think, to the three respectable individuals, who, though present at the meeting, did not think proper to vote, and who are treated in the Statement with very little ceremony, nay, we could appeal by and by to our brethren themselves, when their minds shall have regained a more tranquil temperament, whether our excellent chairman, in his introductory address, and the different clergymen who spoke on that occasion, did not abstain from all severity of language, and did not treat them with courtesy. And when we met for establishing our new Society, we appeal to every one who witnessed our proceedings whether we did not endeavour to observe a similar course, and refrain from every thing like violence or asperity, when we stated the reasons which led to the dissolution. We wish that we had been able to say the same of them. One of them, for whom we were unwilling to cherish any feelings but those of sincere respect, assailed us with a vehemence which nothing that we had said could have warranted him to employ. All of them concurred in presenting for the sanction of their new Bible Society (though only five of its members could judge of the correctness and fidelity of its details) the bitter, though feeble and declamatory pamphlet, which has been the subject of our animadversions, and which we have occasion to know, if a number of its worst and most offensive passages had not been afterwards expunged, and if it had been given to the world as it was read to the meeting, would have been worthy of still more severe and pointed castigation. And others of them have at-

been conducted, and the difficulties which have occurred in the distribution of the funds of the Society, they consider it as advisable that the Berwickshire Bible Society should be dissolved, leaving it to the friends and opponents of Establishments to adopt those measures which appear to them to be best fitted to promote the dissemination of the Holy Scriptures."

The second motion, as delivered to the secretary by the Rev. Mr. Maclaurin, and read a second time immediately before the vote was thus expressed, and not as in the Statement, p. 4, "That it does not appear that there is any sufficient ground for dissolving the Berwickshire Bible Society, and that it be continued according to its present constitution."

tacked us with the meanest, and coarsest, and most vulgar ribaldry, and the lowest personalities, which, though they may find to be easier and more congenial to their taste than manly argument and fair discussion, we fear that they have learned in a very different school than that of their meek and lowly Master, and which we are confident that they will regret in their calmer moments, and on their beds of death. What a pity that after having been employed for so many years as fellow-directors of a Bible Society in the hallowed work of disseminating the Scriptures, any of us should have lost so much of their spirit, and should have profited so little by these labours of love, as to fail in the ordinary courtesies of life, and to have recourse to language towards their Christian brethren, by which honourable combatants would consider themselves as degraded if they should be tempted to stoop to it, though they were only men of the world. Their cause may require support like this, for it is weak in itself, and its advocates may endeavour to supply that defect by the violence of their abuse and the keenness of their vituperation. Ours does not need it, and we trust that while we proceed to detail the reasons which led to the dissolution, we shall be enabled to do it "with meekness and fear."

Now, we beg to state that we separated from our brethren, not because they had become proselytes to the Voluntary principle, as is asserted in the Statement, for if they had held it quietly as a mere speculative opinion, as at the commencement of the Society, we would have continued to act with them, though we disapproved of their sentiments. But instead of doing this, and behaving with moderation, they became loud in their praises of the destructive Voluntaries, whose arguments they supposed were completely unanswerable, and zealous and active in disseminating some of their worst and most mischievous publications. Nay, to aggravate the offence, they began to do this when we were treating them with kindness,* and were refraining

* Eight or nine years ago the Rev. Mr. Thomson of Coldstream mentioned of his own accord to Dr. Brown, that he had told Dr. Darling of London, the medical gentleman who attended Dr. Waugh in his last ill-

from interfering with them either in public or private, and were accustomed to hear from them at the anniversaries of our Society how much they were delighted that "the wall of separation between them and us had become so much lower as that we could shake hands across it, and how ardently they hoped that it would be removed entirely, and that we would live as brethren." We ask then any candid and impartial judge, if, after submitting in silence for nearly three years to a series of such rude and unprovoked attempts to overturn the general principle of Establishments, and to subvert especially the Church of Scotland, it was at all surprising that we should dissolve the Society, where, if we had remained any longer we would have exhibited the strange and anomalous spectacle of being *nominally united* to those who had aggrieved us, and who were continuing to do us wrong, but could have had no cordial co-operation with them in promoting the objects of that benevolent institution.

But deep as was our sense of the want of kindness which they had discovered to ourselves, we felt still more strongly the part which they acted in joining indirectly in that fierce and reckless and unrelenting crusade which has been raised against our church, as well as the cause of establishments, by a number of their bre-

ness, that "he (Dr. B.) and his friend Mr. Hunter had done more to make Dissenters respected by the higher classes in Berwickshire than had ever been done before." And language the same in substance was used when Dr. B. went along with Mr. Buchan of Kelloe, Mr. Swinton, then of Broadmeadows, Mr. Trotter of Cruicksfield, and the Rev. Messrs. Hunter, Lundie, and Cupples, and assisted Mr. T. in establishing a Branch Bible Association in his chapel, and accompanied the same gentleman the following year to attend its first anniversary. "*Sed tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis,*" *i. e.* "*the times are changed, and we are changed with them.*" Our two directors also, who are members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Mr. Macindoe, and Mr. Wilson of Chirside, were present on one if not both these occasions, and the former advocated the cause of the Society in a very impressive speech. What a pity it is that the second Aliquis, who published a letter about the Bible Society in the Berwick Advertiser, and who may perhaps be known to Mr. T., should have spoken as he did of these gentlemen. Was this his kindness to his friends?

thren, and in which they are cheered on by radicals, and papists, and infidels, who view it with delight. Whatever were the objections which they might urge against patronage, and some parts of her administration, we had fondly hoped that they would have sought for her reformation, and not for her destruction, and that, if that reformation were effected, and if the number of her churches were sufficiently increased so as that every inhabitant of our native country, however poor, might enjoy the gospel “without money and without price,” they would have considered her moderate and humble establishment as the most important blessing which a Christian government could bestow on its subjects. Such was the opinion of the great Dr. Owen, who said to the parliament of England, “Some think if you were well settled you ought not as rulers of the nation to put forth your power for the interest of Christ. The good Lord keep your hearts from that apprehension.* If it once come to this, that you shall say that you have nothing to do with religion as the rulers of the nation, God will quickly manifest that he has nothing to do with you as rulers of the nation. Certainly it is incumbent upon you to take care that the faith once delivered to the saints in all the necessary concernments of it may be protected, preserved, propagated to and among the people over which God has set you. If a father, as a father, is bound to do what answers to this in his family unto his children, a master, as a master, to his servants, if you will justify yourselves as fathers or rulers of your country, you will find this in your attempt (government) to be incumbent on you.” Such was the opinion of the pious Baxter, who says, “When serious religion is owned by the magistrate, tolerated (or dissenting) churches are but as hospitals to the sick, and must not be the receptacles of all the healthful.” Such was the opinion of the judicious Matthew Henry, who says, “Let us much more give God thanks *for the national establishment of our religion*, with that of our peace and civil liberty,—that the Reformation was in our land a national act,

* The Voluntaries tell us that the best thing which the magistrate can do for religion is *to let it alone*.

and that Christianity, thus purified, is supported by good and wholesome laws, *and is twisted in with the very constitution of our government.*" Such was the opinion of Mr. Bell of Glasgow, perhaps the most able and profound theologian who ever appeared among the Relief dissenters, and it would be well if his sentiments were adopted by his descendants in the present day. "Though not," said he "within the pale of the Established Church, but sitting under the shadow of toleration, I am far from thinking that all legal establishments are improper or unwarrantable. I cannot yet be persuaded *that because error has no right to such an establishment, neither has truth.* This would be saying, in effect, that as Jeroboam sinned in setting up the calves, (1 Kings xii. 26—33.) so did Jehoshaphat, Cyrus, and Artaxerxes, in supporting the true worship of God ; or that, because kings sin against God in giving their power and strength unto the beast, Rev. xvii. 13, they do the same in being nursing fathers unto Zion."* Nay, such was the opinion of the Fathers of the Secession, and of Mr. Brown of Haddington, the grandfather of the secretary of the Edinburgh Voluntary Association ; for he says in his System of Divinity,

* This plain observation furnishes a complete and admirable reply to an objection against establishments which is regarded by the voluntaries as perfectly unanswerable, and which they bring forward, not only from platforms, but even at political meetings, namely, that if it is right to have a Presbyterian Establishment in Scotland, it must be proper also to have a Catholic establishment in Canada. Now, as Mr. Bell remarks, this will no more follow, than it could be inferred, that, because Jeroboam did wrong in setting up the worship of the golden calves, Jehoshaphat, Cyrus, and Artaxerxes did so in setting up the worship of the true God ; or than, because the British government went wrong last year in giving an annual grant of L.2000 to the Roman Catholic bishop of New South Wales, or because it would go farther wrong if it pensioned the Catholic priests in Ireland, it has done the same in granting an endowment to the ministers of the Secession in that part of the empire. Canada, besides, had a Catholic establishment before it was conquered by the arms of Britain ; and all that has been done by government, has been to suffer it to remain ; just as it has allowed the Hindoo colleges in India, and the different orders of the priests of Brahma to retain their endowments.

“Magistrates ought to preserve for the church her spiritual power allowed her by Christ, and *by providing places of instruction and maintenance for her pastors* and other instructors, and by encouraging laws, and by their own example they ought to promote the administration of and attendance on the ordinances of the gospel.”

And so strongly was he convinced of the scriptural warrant for ecclesiastical establishments, that in the article of his Dictionary of the Bible on the word *rule*, he says that “the whole of the objections to them are rather specious declamation than solid reasoning.”

And omitting other strong and decisive testimonies from Boston and Doddridge in favour of establishments, who were as likely to discover the doctrine of Scripture on the point in question as any of the modern voluntaries; we appeal to the following frank and candid acknowledgment by the late excellent Dr. Waugh, of the disadvantages which are felt by the best and most conscientious ministers of the Secession, who are dependent for their maintenance on the voluntary principle, compared with others who are supported by an endowment, and who are as desirous to be faithful; and it is in these circumstances alone that the comparison is fairly and impartially made. “If you mean,” said that good man to a young person who had consulted him about the church which he ought to join, (and his opinion would at one time have had weight with our brethren, for he was one of their most eminent ministers, and *was well acquainted with their circumstances*,) “If you mean to devote yourself to the ministry, and are satisfied with the creed and government of the Scottish Church, I believe, that by the blessing of God, you may be useful in the Secession, *provided you can submit to the prospect of a small and precarious subsistence, and yield to the humour and caprice of the people. Were the support of her ministers independent of the congregations, and their minds free from all temptations to unmanly silence, or chiming in with the popular follies of the day, I know no church in which a good man might be more agreeably as well as beneficially engaged than in that of the Secession.*” So far

from considering a moderate endowment as fitted to be hurtful, or when furnished by the state as interfering in the least with the rights of conscience, or from regarding it as contrary to the declaration of our Lord,—“ My kingdom is not of this world,” that the payment of it, if refused, should be legally enforced, he seems to have looked upon that provision for the maintenance of a minister as perfectly scriptural, and instead of diminishing, as calculated to increase his fidelity and usefulness. And we have reason to believe that he would no more have refused to have been supported in that way than two dissenting ministers, the Rev. Mr. King of Glasgow, and the Rev. Mr. French of Edinburgh, though they are zealous voluntaries, deem it inconsistent with that passage to receive a stipend composed in part of feu-duties, the payment of which, if resisted by the feu-holders, would be compelled by the civil law.* But though such were the hopes which we entertained of our brethren, we were unfortunately disappointed, and we were obliged at last to dissolve the Society, because they were strengthening the hands and encouraging the attempts of those restless, and mistaken, and misguided men who would alienate the endowments of our national church, and make every thing unsettled and precarious with us as it is among themselves, and would, so far as the system is concerned, place us in a situation, as Dr. Waugh expresses it, where we might be “ tempted to give way to unmanly silence, or to chime in with popular follies.”

We were induced, in short, to dissolve the Society from a firm conviction that while voluntary contributions may in some cases be the only means of support which can be obtained for a minister, they have never been able to provide an adequate and permanent supply of religious instruction for the inhabitants of

* We have no doubt that many others among them would have no objection to be paid from feu-duties, or the interest of money bequeathed to their congregations, and lent on bond, the payment of which, as well as of the principal, if refused, would be enforced by law, and would think the exaction of it in this way in such circumstances as not at all inconsistent with the much-perverted text quoted above, “ My kingdom is not of this world.”

a country; and that if the moderate endowment which has been allotted to our church were unhappily abolished, it would be attended by the most injurious consequences to Scotland. Our brethren, we are aware, are of a different opinion, and refer us in proof of it to the first three centuries, when there were no endowments, and ministers were supported on the voluntary principle, and Christianity attained more splendid triumphs as to the extension of her boundaries than she has ever since achieved; and to the North American States, where they represent her as advancing with more rapid strides than in any of those countries where there are ecclesiastical establishments. Now, we beg to remark on the first of these arguments, which is repeated *usque ad nauseam** in every voluntary publication, that though Christianity flourished in a remarkable degree at that memorable period, they have forgotten to shew that it *arose* from the circumstance that its ministers at that time had no endowment, and not from very different causes, and *in spite of that disadvantage*. This however was essential to its validity, for two things they must be sensible may exist together, and neither of them may be the cause of the other; and they might as consistently maintain that ministers at present ought not to be educated in divinity halls, because they were not so educated at that period, and that it would be best for religion if they or their people were occasionally martyred, and *that the magistrate should do nothing for the gospel at all even in his private capacity*, because such was the case when Christianity was most prosperous, as that they should want endowments at present because they wanted them in that age of suffering and persecution. Our brethren, too, do not act on the voluntary principle when they send forth missionaries to preach to the heathen, but furnish them with salaries on the principle of an endowment: for if they were to allow them to be dependent on the contributions of their converts, there is not a mission on the face of the earth which would not instantly die; and yet if their reasoning be sound, they ought to leave them entirely to be supported by their hearers, for it was in this way that missionaries were uniformly

* Till one is sickened of it.

maintained when they were labouring among the heathen during the first three centuries.

The Sabbath also was desecrated during the whole of that period, for works of every kind were carried on, and the theatres were opened, and there was no suspension of business on that day, either on the only ground on which some of the leading voluntaries think that it can be enforced, viz. the right of the state to regulate the time for labour,* or on any other principle.

And yet, though the sentiments of these writers respecting the extent to which the magistrate ought to protect the Sabbath are sufficiently liberal, and such as would have astonished their pious forefathers, we doubt whether they would acquiesce in the legitimate consequences which follow from their reasoning, and allow him to tolerate the performance of plays and the transaction of business in the neighbourhood of their chapels, during the hours of worship, because these things were done during the first three centuries. And in addition to these proofs of the fallacy of this vaunted but most inconclusive argument, we

* "Our claims," says Mr. Marshall, their principal writer, p. 134 of his reply to Dr. Inglis, "Our claims to Sabbath protection must rest on some more tenable ground, and perhaps the safest we can assume, is the right of the state to make laws respecting labour." Such is the low and feeble ground on which even men of talents and piety, from their zeal against establishments, rest their claims to the protection of the Sabbath from external desecration; and on no considerations connected with their own religious interests, and the spiritual interests of others. But they are not entitled to demand for it that protection, if their argument be conclusive, either on that or any other ground which they can mention; *for it had no such protection when Christianity was most prosperous*, and every thing must be thrown loose, according to the wishes of Mr. Whittle Harvey, and Mr. Daniel O'Connell, and other patrons of voluntarism, as during the first three centuries. Besides, admitting that "the state has a right, if it think proper, to regulate the time of labour," this will not furnish a reason why it should order it to be discontinued on the *seventh*, rather than, as in the time of the French decades, on every *tenth* day; or if it should prefer the former, it will not furnish a reason why it should take the first day of the week, the Sabbath of Christians, rather than the Saturday, the Sabbath of the Jews; or as in the case of a number of our subjects in India, the Friday, the sacred day of the Mahometans.

have only farther to notice, that we are afraid that our brethren would not be greatly overjoyed if they were to be treated on the principle which they are so anxious to recommend, and were to receive the same support from their congregations which was furnished to the ministers of the first three centuries. Though some of the clergy in the opulent districts and the great cities, towards the middle or end of the third century, had large incomes, because the wealthy converts, many of whom seem to have been deeply tinged with superstition, were desirous that they should equal the pagan priests, the greater part of the ministers, according to Milton, who is a favourite authority with Voluntary writers, though he rejected the divinity of the Son and the Spirit, and the moral obligation of the Sabbath, and other important doctrines, were in a very different state. None of them knew, at the commencement of the year, what would be the amount of his income, so as to proportion his outlay to it; for we are informed by that author, that “the hearers gave what they gave, not to them, but to the Church, out of which they got their portions in baskets, and were thence called *Sportularii*, or *Basket-Clerks*.” And he adds, that “it was a very mean allowance, only *for a bare livelihood*, according to those precepts of our Saviour, *Matth. x. 7, &c.*, and the rest was given to the poor.” Now, we have very great doubts, after all that they tell us of the admirable results of the Voluntary principle in the first three centuries, if they would be willing to be placed on a similar footing, and to burn their calls in which their hearers promise them a specified stipend, *because there were no such papers in the primitive church*, nor any exaction of seat-rents, which is a modern practice; nor any alienation of the collection which is taken from the poor in dissenting congregations, from the imperfection of the system, and given exclusively, after a very trifling deduction, for the support of the minister. And though they have done little of late to conciliate our regard, we would be truly sorry to hear that they were obliged to carry their baskets from week to week through the streets of Coldstream, and Dunse, and Lauder, to the doors of their chapels, to receive their scanty and limited allow-

ance, and were distinguished by the name of the Reverend Basket-Clerks. And yet, such is the condition to which *they ought to be willing to stoop*, if their argument be valid; and such is the reasoning which they represent as unanswerable, and by which they hope to establish among men of discernment, and intelligence, and piety, the triumphs of Voluntaryism!!!

We have expatiated so long in the refutation of this argument, that we can notice only briefly their other famous argument from the effects of Voluntaryism in the North American States. We know that there was an establishment in three of the States, from the time when they were settled till a very few years ago, when it was abolished in two of them, from the restless and levelling spirit of republicanism. Now, we cannot conceive a more impartial way in which a conscientious inquirer, who was desirous to ascertain from the case of America whether the Establishment or Voluntary scheme was best, could make up his mind, than to compare the effects which they had severally produced in the older States, where they had long existed, both as to the number of ministers whom they had supplied for the people, and the progress of the inhabitants in religion and morality. And if he try them by this standard, and judge of the facts from the statements, neither of churchmen nor of dissenters in Britain who have engaged in this controversy, but of the Americans themselves before it began to be agitated, he will perceive that the preference ought to be given to establishments. It would be easy to refer, in confirmation of this assertion, to many other witnesses, but we appeal only to the testimony of the Rev. Dr. Dwight. "In the year 1800," said he, "there were in Connecticut (one of the States where there was an Establishment) 251,002 inhabitants, with 194 ministers;" or one, with a parish school, for every 1293 inhabitants. "On the other hand, in the States south of New England, (where the Voluntary system was adopted,) there were 4,033,775 inhabitants, with 275 ministers," or one to every 14,668 persons; in place of 3024, who would have been necessary, along with as many parish schools, if they had been supplied in the same proportion in which the Establishment had provided for the in-

habitants of Connecticut. "In this estimate," he adds, "we have a fair specimen of the natural consequences of establishing, or neglecting to establish, the worship of God by the law of the land. In Connecticut every inhabitant who is not prevented by disease or inclination, may hear the gospel and celebrate the worship of God every Sabbath day. In the States specified, it is not improbable that a number of people, several times as great as the census of Connecticut, have scarcely heard a sermon or a public prayer in their lives.—A sober man, who knows these States, (Rhode Island and Connecticut,) which are separated only by a meridional line, and which were peopled by colonies from the same country, and who sees the peace, the good order, the general distribution of justice, the universal existence of schools, and the existence of superior education in the latter, can hardly hesitate, whatever may have been his original opinion concerning this subject, to believe that a legislature is bound to establish the worship of God." And as such was the testimony of this distinguished man, and as such was the conclusion which he thought that every enlightened and candid individual would draw from the effects of these different systems at the period at which he wrote, so there is reason to believe, that if he had been living at present, he would have been of the very same opinion; for the scenes of spiritual and moral destitution which are witnessed in America under its Voluntary system are heart-rending and appalling. It possesses, indeed, a number of able and pious clergymen, and many zealous Christians; but a considerable proportion of its country ministers are imperfectly educated,* and many who are educated are poorly paid; for it is mentioned by the biographer of Dr. Payson, that "his father, like most ministers of country parishes, derived the means of supporting his family from a farm, which his sons assisted him in cultivating." And in opposition to the tumid and extravagant accounts of its unexampled prosperity, which are published by the Voluntaries, we would farther remark, that it

* It was mentioned some time ago, by a respectable individual in Dunse, to one of the Directors, that two tobacco-spinners who had worked to his father, upon going to America, had become preachers.

is stated in one of the last of its Tract Reports, that, “about five millions of the inhabitants are without the means of grace;” by the Home Missionary Report for 1827, that “not much less than half the population were to an alarming degree destitute of the regular administration of gospel ordinances,”—“many ministers,” according to Mr. Colton, a Voluntary, “serving two or three,” and according to Professor Howe of Columbia, “from two to six churches ! !” * and by the Rev. Mr. Lorimer, in the two last Numbers of the Church of Scotland Magazine, (and he produces his authorities,) that there are 6000 of their churches without ministers. † And it is mentioned by the New York Observer for July 1833, that “there are a million of children and youth between the years of five and fifteen who are without the means of a common school education; and in the State of New York alone, eighty thousand young men who are electors, and who cannot read;” by the Temperance Society, (though a partial improvement has been effected,) that the

* Colton’s Review of the Bishop of London’s Reply.—Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America, May 25, 1834.

† The Rev. Dr. Miller, in a sermon which he preached before the Assembly’s Board of Education, May 19, 1834, says, “We now urgently need a large additional number of gospel labourers; there are more than 600 vacant congregations in this presbyterian church, and 400 or 500 populous districts to the north, south, and west, ready to receive preachers, were they sent, so that 1100 or 1200 additional ministers are wanted for our own country, and yet we are not now able to send *a tenth part of this number.*” It is stated also by the Rev. Mr. Davies, an English baptist, that among the 2000 baptist congregations which are vacant, “there are very few, if there are any, *who are able to afford even half a support to a minister.*” And in the Report of the Congregational Churches in New Hampshire, which was made to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in May last year, it is said, that “in 70 out of 223 towns there are no congregational or Presbyterian churches. In about 40, destitute and feeble churches exist, which have only an occasional or temporary supply. And one of them at least has not had more than three or four Sabbaths preaching in six years, and in all that time has not even once enjoyed the privilege of commemorating the Saviour’s death.”

annual consumpt of ardent spirits is 72 millions of gallons, or in the proportion of nearly six gallons to every individual, man, woman, and child; and by the first Report on the Pauperism of America, that the annual cost of crime is 8,700,000 dollars. We leave it to these facts to speak for themselves as to the effects which will arise even in the most favourable circumstances, where taxation is light and provisions are cheap, from permitting the religious instruction of a people to depend for its support on the principle of voluntaryism. And we trust that we shall be justified to the Christian public for separating from our brethren, when we state that we did so because they were strengthening and encouraging those restless agitators who, whatever they may intend, would ultimately spread those scenes of spiritual and moral destitution through the hamlets, and villages, and parishes of Scotland.

We have only farther to add, for completing our argument, that voluntaryism has been no less feeble and inefficient at home than it has been impotent abroad to provide for the religious instruction of the people. And in support of this position, we might appeal to the many thousands of the poor and desolate in our large cities who could not be accommodated in the Established Churches from the high seat-rents demanded by the magistrates,* nor superintended by the ministers, from the size of their parishes, and whom it has totally neglected from the very nature of the system, because they could not pay for its ministrations. We might appeal to the little which it has done for the Highlands, where not one out of a hundred is to be found in its communion,† and of which it is acknowledged, in one of

* In the College Church of Edinburgh, for instance, about the unlet seats, of which so much ado is made by the Voluntaries, the seat-rents were *doubled* last year by the Magistrates, in opposition to a petition on behalf of the poor presented by the Session. Dr. Heugh, in an address to the Christian Institution, which he published last year, admits that there are 50,000 individuals in Glasgow alone who have no seats in any place of worship, Established or Dissenting; and it would be easy to shew that there is a very great want of church accomodation in many other parts of Scotland.

† That of the Secession and Relief in eight northern counties.

the Reports of the Congregational Union, that "such is the real poverty of the population as entirely to exclude the hope of the gospel being supported among them, in our day at least, but by the instrumentality of others." Nay, we might appeal to what is admitted by the Secession themselves respecting their own congregations; for, after mentioning in one of their own synodical reports, the small allowance of ten pounds a-year, which they had given to a few of their superannuated ministers, (we should rejoice that it had been more,) and the grants which they had made to a number of their chapels, they add, "the congregations relieved *are only those deemed the most necessitous, out of a large number* whose applications, though urgent and deserving attention, must, from the poverty of the fund, be refused; and *when aid is granted it is too frequently inadequate.*" And if such be their state when they are united and harmonious, what must it be when they are rent by divisions, as during the New Light Controversy, when we know that some of their best and most excellent ministers got little more than the half of their stipends. It was mentioned last year, at a public meeting in Aberdeen, that a number of their ministers resigned their congregations lately in the course of a single year, because they could not obtain even a very moderate maintenance from their people. We have not observed any contradiction of this statement. Would it not have been better for them and their people, that they had been able to remain with them, in consequence of their having been furnished with an adequate and permanent income? Some of the reports of the Congregational Union, too, give an affecting account of the state of a number of their ministers who have stipends of forty or fifty pounds to support themselves and their families, and who live even in great uncertainty as to the payment of these small sums. But without enlarging on these and other convincing proofs of the danger which would arise to the cause of religion if the erection of churches and the support of ministers were to depend on the precarious efforts of voluntarism, we shall conclude these remarks, by submitting to the public a few of those extracts which we read to the meeting

from the books and pamphlets which were circulated by our brethren, and shall leave them to judge, after they see the language in which they speak of Establishments, and their most pious ministers, and their most exemplary members, in common with others, whether we had any other alternative than to dissolve the Society.

It was stated by Dr. Peddie, in the name of his brethren, after the Synod had adopted the New Light Scheme, that he had no fault to find with the two following propositions. "1st, That all lawgivers have thought it necessary to the well-being of a state, to have an established religion. And 2d, That God himself having been pleased to give an establishment, proves that *there is no moral evil in legal establishments of religion.*"* But the following are the terms in which establishments are now spoken of in these Voluntary publications.

"Civil government, when it establishes a church, scatters through society the missiles of the madman, firebrands, arrows, and death"!!—Ecclesiastical Establishments farther Considered, p. 122.

"Establishments are *popish* in their principles, and *popish* in all their ramifications; *the very bane of society*, the most efficient instrument of misgovernment, the surest recipe for *disturbing a country's peace*, and consequently destroying its prosperity." Pp. 146, 147.

They must never have existed, certainly, according to this statement, *before popery was introduced*, or where Christianity was not professed. Those ministers, too, in the Secession, who are favourable to establishments, including one of their professors of divinity, must be considered by their brethren as holding one of the leading principles of *popery*, and as doing more, according to some of the subsequent quotations, than all other causes put together, to promote the interests of infidelity.

"An established church, *with an appetite insatiable as the grave*, notwithstanding the millions she possesses, is perpetually crying, Give, give; and from year to year, in order to still her

* *i. e.* It can neither, as Voluntaries maintain, be unjust nor cruel.

clamours, liberal donations are thrown to her; but *of him who should expect any thing from her in return*, we might say, in the language of Virgil, "*Jungat vulpes, mulgeat hircos,*" *i. e.* he may as soon expect to *yoke the foxes for the labours of the field*, or obtain milk from the he-goats!!! P. 157.

"The method of supporting religion by an establishment is a method which gives birth to as much turbulence, as much sedition, as much of the worst and most malignant passions, *as might be sufficient to ruin a world,—a method which seems the very recipe for discord—discord throughout the length and breadth of a land, which turns every hamlet, every parish, every county into a scene of strife*, and which, if not checked in its operation, may bring on more appalling calamities; a method too *which does more to swell the ranks of infidelity than all other causes put together*, which turns the holy religion of Jesus, the religion of peace and love, *into an object of execration—which opens the lips of the blasphemer to curse it as a main cause of his miseries.*" Pp. 182, 183.

"The oppressiveness of the church is indeed an objection to it, an objection of insuperable magnitude; yet it is far from being the only objection even connected with the subject of revenue. *A den of thieves*, if I may be allowed the illustration, may be deprived of a third, or a half, or any given proportion of its inmates, yet will it for that reason lose either its character or its name? *It may be a smaller den than before, and less injurious to the neighbourhood, yet still it will be a den of thieves*"!!! Pp. 186, 187.

And in his Reply to Dr. Inglis, p. 236, the same author declares that "*the established church is the very tarantula that goads society to madness—the very caldron where the demons of mischief brew their most pernicious spells.*"

"When the Marshal Tavannes, whose hands had been so deeply stained in the Parisian massacre, was brought to his death-bed," says a leading article in the Voluntary Church Magazine, vol. i. p. 99, "*his Confessor, who had been familiar with his life, after hearing all he had to say, asked with much eagerness, Why speak you not a word of the night of St. Bar-*

tholomew? Because, replied the dying fanatic, I look upon that as the most meritorious action of my life,* an action which ought to atone for all the sins I ever committed. The poor wretch had brought himself to believe that *to kill men was to do God service; and who does not see,*" adds the writer, "*that the advocates for establishments, although perhaps they may spurn at the charge, are pretty nearly of the same mind?*"

Now, we would briefly observe, that if our brethren were convinced that we were guilty of all, or of any of these evils, (and they must certainly have been so, or they would not have circulated these publications,) so far from being indignant at our dissolving the Society, they ought to have considered it as a happy and desirable consummation; or rather, *they ought themselves to have proposed it.* How could those who were men of unspotted and unimpeachable integrity associate with others whom they had denounced as "the inmates of a den of thieves?" How could men who were "zealous for the cause of truth and piety co-operate in the labours of a Bible Society with those whom they represented as "doing more," at other times, "than all other causes put together, to swell the ranks of infidelity, and to turn the religion of Jesus into an object of execration, and to open the lips of the blasphemer to curse it as the main cause of his miseries?" How could those who are distinguished by their liberal and peaceable dispositions, unite with others, "who are animated by the spirit of the monster TAVANNES, and who think that to kill men is to do God good service?" And how could those who were so jealous of their reputation for the most devoted loyalty, be connected with others "who were spreading as much sedition through every village, and hamlet, and parish in the country, as was sufficient to ruin a world?" What we had done to merit the last of these foul accusations, we are at a loss to discover, and we are persuaded that our neighbours will feel some difficulty to ascertain.† But whatever were the

* Ten thousand protestants were butchered on that night.

† If we had been disposed to retaliate, we might have referred to a number of instances in which Berwickshire Voluntaries, who profess to

reasons which induced our brethren to circulate the charges which are contained in these writings, it must be evident, we apprehend, to every impartial judge, that we had no other choice, if we had the smallest regard for our character and usefulness, but to dissolve the Society.*

Our brethren, we are aware, are of a different opinion; for they told us at the meeting, that, as offensive allegations had been advanced against themselves by the advocates of establishments, and yet that they were willing to act with us. But, in the first place, we deny this; for the worst that had been said of them was merely this, that their attempts to pull down our ecclesiastical establishments *had given peculiar satisfaction* to papists and infidels, the last of whom consider them as doing their work, by removing a secure and adequate provision for the religious instruction of the inhabitants of the country; while the former have published the articles of their societies, with expressions of their approbation, in the Roman Catholic Magazine, and have spread them over Scotland. And if the saying of the ancient has been justly applauded, who, when he was told that some bad men had commended him highly for some parts of his conduct, instantly exclaimed, “Why, what evil have I done that they have praised me?” it has been stated that Voluntaries, if they are men of piety, ought to pause, and consider whether they are really in the right, when the patrons of infidelity, and the ministers of antichrist, and the followers of the beast, are so delighted with their doings. And it has been affirmed, that their principles have a radical tendency; and if it

believe that the ministers of the gospel ought not to interfere in civil politics, have done so on public occasions, in a way which subjected them to very cutting animadversions even from their own friends. But we forbear, as we have no wish to add to the injury which we know that they did to themselves on these occasions; and we should rejoice to hear that their zeal was directed to more appropriate objects connected with their high and holy vocation.

* It is very strange that no notice should be taken, in the Statement published by the other Society, of our having referred to these charges as a part of our reasons for proposing the dissolution of the old Society.

be one of the leading characteristics of that system to destroy our institutions, *root and branch*, and if our religious establishments be one of the chief of them, we are at a loss to perceive how they can rebut the charge. They tell us, indeed, that they would leave our congregations, which would be as numerous as ever, though they abolished the endowments, and that these form the church; just as the Radicals inform us, that they would spare our king, and princes, and nobles, though they stript them of their honours, and reduced them to the condition of private citizens, and that they would form a part of the community. But, judging from what we see in the North American States, where there are no tithes or tithes to diminish the Voluntary contributions of the rich, if you take away the funds which were provided by our fathers for the erection of churches and the maintenance of ministers, the number of clergymen in twenty, or thirty, or forty years will be reduced nearly a half, and many of them who remain will be of an inferior order, and the scenes of destitution which will be witnessed in the Highlands, and in our Lammermuir districts, and in many of our thinly-peopled parishes, and even in our large and populous cities, where the churches at present are insufficient for the inhabitants, will exhibit some of the most fearful effects of radicalism; for of all our destructives there are none whose doings would be so pernicious to the country as our religious destructives. The Conservatives, they are sensible, are opposed to their principles. The constitutional Whigs would reject them with scorn, for there never were more zealous friends of Establishments, (though they would reform their abuses) than the great Lord Somers, and the other enlightened patriots who effected the Revolution. And they will receive the support only of the nominal Whigs and of the Levellers and Radicals.* And, 2dly, if their statement be correct, and if the things which have

* We have occasion to know that some of the hearers of Voluntary clergymen, whom they have succeeded in proselyting to their opinions, are carrying their principles to their legitimate consequences, and are proposing to engage ministers by the year, or at the utmost for three years. Will these gentlemen like this?

been advanced against Voluntary churchmen by the friends of Establishments be as revolting and offensive as those which the former have urged against the latter, it only furnishes an additional argument for the dissolution of the Society, for it makes the difference greater ; and the Scripture teaches us, that “ two cannot walk together except they be agreed.”

But our brethren inform us that “ we were guilty of violating this plain and positive precept of Scripture, that whereto we have already attained we ought to walk by the same rule, and to mind the same thing, and that we ought not to push our practical separations beyond our speculative differences.” Now, we beg to remark, that our speculative differences in the instance referred to had a bearing on the character of at least one of the parties, and how we were chargeable with transgressing this precept when we dissolved the Society they have forgotten to tell us, and we are unable to discover. It is one of the speculative opinions of our brethren, so far as we can judge from the books which they have been circulating, that the ministers of the Establishment “ do more than all other causes put together to swell the ranks of infidelity, and to hold up the religion of their master to execration.” Now, we differ from them in that opinion, as they may naturally suppose, and yet we would be glad if they would shew us that we have pushed our practical separation beyond it, or farther than we ought to do, if we value our reputation, when we refused to act with them in a Bible Society for disseminating that Book, the authority of which they say that we are destroying. It is another, too, of their opinions, that we are “ the inmates of a den of thieves ;” and since we happen to disagree with them, and to think that we are as honest and conscientious as themselves, we imagine that we do not carry our practical separation beyond our speculative difference when we cease to act with them, because they have done what they could to rob us of our good name. And it is another of our opinions, in which we are equally opposed to them, that “ we are spreading as much sedition and discord around us as might ruin a world.” And we do not consider that we carried our practical separation beyond

that speculative difference when we dissolved the Society, as on the one hand they had cast on us a most unworthy imputation, and on the other, we were only withdrawing the unclean from the clean, or the factious and turbulent friends of the Establishment from the loyal and peaceable defenders of Voluntaryism. We trust that the exposition which they have offered of this precept is not to be considered as a specimen of those expositions of Scripture which they are in the habit of stately delivering to their people, or we would be disposed to adopt a much lower opinion than we were accustomed to entertain of their ordinary ministrations.

They tell us again, that our conduct in dissolving the Bible Society was “a gross violation of the principle on which the Parent Society, and all the Branch Associations were formed, namely, the union and co-operation of all who were agreed upon the propriety of circulating the pure word of God, without respect to any difference of sentiment which may exist among them on other subjects.” And they refer to the late Mr. Hall of Bristol, and Mr. Graham of Newcastle, who never could have been admitted upon any other principle into Bible Societies. But it deserves to be noticed, that the course pursued by many dissenting ministers in the present day towards the ministers of the Establishment differs materially from what was followed by their predecessors when these Societies were formed, for there is reason to believe that if any of the latter had made use of the language and had recourse to the agitation which are now employed, these religious institutions would never have been established, or they would have been otherwise constituted. At that time they were peaceable, and if they had Voluntary principles they held them with moderation, and made no attempt to injure the respectability, or to destroy the usefulness of the ministers of the Establishment. But now they are fierce and restless and unsparing, representing “their church as from heaven, and the Church of Scotland (from which by the way they sprang) as from hell,”* and its ministers as persecutors and

* Dr. Ritchie of the Potterrow, Edinburgh, who was present at a meeting in defence of the Establishment in one of the churches in Ar-

inmates of a den of thieves, and propagators of infidelity, and instigators of sedition. And it is a most extraordinary interpretation of the fundamental principle of the Bible Society, to allege that if we are agreed in a *mere general conviction* of the propriety of circulating the word of God, we are to merge, not only all difference of sentiment on the doctrines of religion, but all regard to character, and to ministerial usefulness, and to submit to the grossest abuse from Voluntaries, and to the most revolting calumnies against our respectability as men, and citizens, and Christians. This indeed would be forbearance with a witness, so far as churchmen were concerned, and what Dissenters neither would nor ought to have exercised if we had ventured to cast on them the same foul aspersions, and the same insulting abuse. We hold then that their interpretation of the fundamental principle of the Bible Society is equally inconsistent as their exposition of the precept, and that as our brethren had completely overstepped the limits within which forbearance was required, we were neither "bigots nor sectarians," as they think proper to represent us, when we dissolved the Society.

broath, 16th April 1834, was charged by the Rev. Mr. Guthrie of Arbriot with having said this a few days before at a Voluntary meeting in a Secession chapel, and he never attempted to contradict it, though he frequently interrupted the speakers at other times; and though the speeches have been published for many months, he has never yet ventured to deny it. Mr. Davidson, too, a dissenting minister in Arbroath, who was present on that occasion, says, in a Sermon which he published, that the principle of "the connexion of Church and State is of the synagogue of Satan." If we had affirmed the same things of dissent, or had circulated books containing such statements, we are greatly mistaken if they would not soon have ceased to act with us. And yet our Berwickshire Voluntaries represented their Bible Society in one of the advertisements which announced its formation, as a Society, which was to be instituted on *liberal principles*, and intimated their willingness to receive all those members of the Church of Scotland who would be disposed to join them, and permit them to disseminate books in which the Establishment was held up to the execration of the public, and they themselves and their ministers were distinguished by the names which are mentioned in the text. If such be its constitution, it is indeed a *liberal Society*.

We regret sincerely that they have indulged in such ungenerous and illiberal remarks on the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church for voting with churchmen for the dissolution of the old, and for consenting to unite with them in the new Society. Surely, if they were convinced that the principles of these modest and excellent individuals, as is asserted in the statement, "were the most radical and revolutionary on the face of the earth," or as a seceding clergyman once gravely maintained, that "the only sense which they assigned to that passage, Render unto Cesar the things that are Cesar's, would be to render to him a halter and a gallows," they would never have preached on so many occasions for the Chirnside Association, nor would they have acted with them so long in the old Society, (for they might have done so as consistently with as many United Irishmen,) nor would they have felt so much dissatisfied because they attached themselves to us, who must have been their proper associates in the opinion of our brethren, as we were more corrupt than the Voluntaries, and did not connect themselves with them. We trust, however, that it was only an expression of momentary chagrin because they did not unite with them in their attempts against Establishments, and that in their calmer moments they will hasten to do justice to their Christian brethren. But whatever may be their sentiments respecting the principles of our friends, it is impossible for any one who has read the able vindication of their tenets which was published a few years ago, in the Christian Instructor, by the Rev. Mr. M'Indoe, to question their loyalty; and among all the parts of this offensive pamphlet, there is none which we have perused with stronger dissatisfaction, than that which contains this bitter and unprovoked attack, on two of our most discreet and unobtrusive office-bearers, who had never uttered a word in any of our discussions which could have excited a painful or an angry feeling in the minds of our opponents.*

* We are happy to mention that a second Defence of the principles of his Church against the misrepresentations of this and other Voluntary productions, has been published by that gentleman.

As to the last allegation, that we bear with ministers in the church of Scotland “who teach the most erroneous and damnable doctrines,” and will not bear with Voluntaries in the Bible Society, we would briefly remark, that we have no such ministers in the Bible Society, which is the point in debate, and we are not to be decoyed from it by any of those popular excursive observations which are so common with our brethren on certain subjects, and which are easier than close and conclusive argumentation. Let them shew us that we have such clergymen in our Bible Society, which is a voluntary institution, and that we treat them with forbearance, while we did not exercise it towards Voluntaries, and it will be a case in point, but every thing else is wide of the mark. Besides, we call upon them to *name* any such clergyman in the church of Scotland who preaches these doctrines, and not to take refuge, for obvious reasons, in vague generalities. The moment that they do so, means will be taken to inquire into the case, and to call him to an account, as was done of late in a variety of instances; and means may be taken, if it be found to be groundless, to call them to account for such injurious imputations, or for other base insinuations. Till they produce, then, instances in which Established ministers, who, whatever may be their sentiments on doctrinal points, and whether connected with our Society or not, have accused us of “doing more to swell the ranks of infidelity” than all the deists and sceptics around us,—and of having “spread as much sedition” through the parishes of Berwickshire “as would be sufficient to ruin a world,” and we have allowed it to pass, though we would not submit to these charges when they were advanced by the Voluntaries, the objection which they have urged to the consistency of our conduct is utterly groundless, and we trust that we shall be justified to the Christian public when they are acquainted with the real circumstances of the case, for imitating the example of the friends of establishments in Dundee and Fifeshire, and dissolving the Society.

We might have adverted to their gross and flagrant perversion of a benevolent sentiment which was expressed by our chairman, not certainly as a reason for dissolving the Society, as is

alleged in the Statement, but for soothing our feelings when we saw that it was unavoidable, namely, that "God was able to bring good out of evil, and that good might result from the division that was to take place." And we might have enlarged on another strong expression of their feelings in assuming the very name of our new Bible Society, though it had been established some weeks prior to theirs, and though, if they had reflected for a moment, they could not have failed to perceive that it was fitted only to embarrass themselves and us in conducting the correspondence of our several institutions. We refrain, however, from remarking on either of these circumstances any farther than to say, that when taken along with the tone of the pamphlet, they furnish very plain and decisive evidence of the necessity for the separation.

We shall be extremely sorry if in any part of this statement there shall be reason to complain of our having had recourse to unnecessary severity of language in repelling these attacks; for we would recollect that the individuals whom we have been obliged to oppose, though they were not only the aggressors, but have proceeded to extremes which we could not have anticipated, are Christian brethren. Much of that language has been used towards ourselves, but we hope that we shall not be permitted to lower our cause in the estimation of the public, or to offend our Master by being tempted to render to them railing for railing, though we might find plenty of materials for it, and have got abundant provocation. We know not how soon we may be called to lie down on our beds of death, and whatever may be the course pursued by our opponents, we are afraid to add to the darkness and anxiety of that affecting scene by the painful remembrance of our having wounded the cause of the blessed Redeemer in the house of his friends, or of wounding the hearts of any of his servants with whom we may be willing, after all that has passed between us, to dwell for ever in his heavenly kingdom. We would regret to think that in any part of the remarks which we have thought it our duty to make in vindication of our conduct, we had lessened the influence of any private Christian, though a disciple of Voluntaryism, for doing good to his

neighbour, or of any Christian minister, though a Dissenter and a Voluntary, for doing good to his flock. What a pity that this great and hallowed object should have been so much overlooked on both sides of the question; and that if it was necessary that we should differ on the subject of Establishments, we could not differ as brethren, and should give occasion to the world to remark respecting us, in melancholy contrast to what was said by the pagans respecting the primitive believers, "See how these Christians hate one another." We shall never forget what was said frequently during the last months of his life, by one of our friends who had an uncommon propensity for telling ludicrous and amusing anecdotes, and who had misimproved many valuable opportunities of usefulness, "O that foolish tongue of mine, what it has cost me, that foolish tongue." And if such were his feelings when he thought only of his having exceeded in those evils of the tongue to which he was addicted, though they were comparatively harmless, what will be the feelings of the dying professor who has been permitted, either in speech or writing, to weaken the hands of the humblest of God's sincere though mistaken children, or of any of his sincere though erring ministers, for that part of their work about which there will be no serious difference, the conversion of sinners and the edification of saints? May God grant that the present unnatural and hurtful controversy between the friends of religion may speedily pass away, and Ephraim may no longer vex Judah, nor Judah Ephraim, and when the leaders of the tribes of God's spiritual Israel, instead of quarrelling about their several distinctions, and honours, and privileges, shall fix their eyes more steadily and intently on the pillar and cloud, and instead of wasting their zeal and strength in angry discussion and unseemly recrimination, shall be seen conducting their several companies of holy pilgrims, in the spirit of peace, by the track which is pointed out to them by the ark of the covenant to the celestial Canaan.

APPENDIX.

WE beg to call the attention of Seceders to the following summary of some of the principal arguments for Ecclesiastical Establishments, not by a minister of the Church of Scotland, but by the Rev. Mr. Brown of Haddington, and to the answers which he published many years ago to the objections which are urged against them by the Dissenting Voluntaries of the present day.

“Some have pretended,” says he, in his Dictionary of the Bible on the word *Rule*, vol. ii. page 395, “that magistrates have no concern with religion at all, and especially with revealed religion, in the execution of their office, but ought to leave every man to profess, teach, or worship, what, and in what manner he pleaseth, providing he do not disturb the commonwealth by any civil crimes, and ought to protect them in their full liberty to propagate their blasphemous tenets, or idolatrous worship. Some have even pretended, that civil establishments of the true religion are calculated to render men irreligious, or at best hypocritical dissemblers. But when we consider, that all things ought to be done to the glory of God, 1 Cor. x. 31; 1 Pet. iv. 11; Prov. xvi. 4:—that magistracy is an *ordinance* of God, and magistrates, *ministers*, or deputies of God, *for good* to men, appointed to be a *terror to evil-doers*, and a *praise of them that do well*, Rom. xiii. 1—5; 1 Pet. ii. 14; Gal. v. 19—21; Phil. iii. 2; Tit. i. 10, 11.—that every head of a family

hath power to exclude superstition and idolatry from it, and to establish in it the true worship of God, and refuse lodging to heretical seducers, Gen. xviii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 15;—that magistrates ought to exercise their power as is most conducive to make all their subjects live *quietly in all godliness*, as well as honesty, 1 Tim. ii. 1—3;—that magistrates are often expressly commanded to punish obstinate idolaters, false prophets, blasphemers, profaners of the Sabbath, &c., as well as thieves, robbers, murderers, Deut. xiii. 5—7; xvii. 2—5; Lev. xxiv. 15, 16; Exod. xxii. 18, 20; Numb. xv. 35.—that magistrates, not only Jewish, but *heathen*, have, with God's approbation, required their subjects to worship the true God, and have suppressed and punished obstinate idolaters or blasphemers, Gen. xviii. 19; xxxv. 2—4; Exod. xxxii. 20, 27; Josh. xxiv. 14; 2 Chron. xiv. 2—5; xv. 13; xviii. xix. xx. xxix—xxx. xxxiii. 15, 16; xxxiv. 31—33; 2 Kings x. 30; Ezra vii. 13—27; vi. 1—14; Dan. iii. 29; vi. 26;—that the fourth commandment, of which the obligation is perpetual and universal, binds magistrates to provide that the Sabbath be sanctified in all their gates, which cannot be done by the teaching of blasphemy, or practising idolatrous worship;—that the exercise of the magistrate's power in favour of the true religion, and opposition to false religion, is promised as a blessing to the New Testament church; Isa. xlix. 23; lx. 10, 16; Psal. lxxii. 10; ii. 12; Zech. xiii. 2; Rev. xvii. 14, 16.—that magistrates have power to appoint Christians to observe public fasts or thanksgivings when the state of the nation requires it. 1 Sam. vii. 5, 6; 2 Chron. xx. 3; Ezra viii. 21; Neh. ix. 1; Jer. xxxvi. 6; Jon. iii. 7.—and that the very law of nature requires that magistrates chiefly care for the honour of God, who is the *sovereign head* of civil societies, as *King over all the earth*, and the source and bestower of all their happiness; and that men should be governed, as having immortal souls, not as mere animals; that as righteousness exalteth nations, sin, even idolatry and blasphemy, is the reproach and ruin of any people; that sins are especially hurtful to nations, as they tend to debauch men's manners and provoke God to wrath against the nation; that, if God grant men the benefit of any duly attested revelation, it should be readily received as the rule of our conduct, be our station what it will.—It is plain, that magistrates can never lawfully exercise their power, which they, as his deputies received from God, for his honour and the true welfare of mankind, in giving equal establish-

ment and protection to the religion of the devil, as they may to the religion of Jesus Christ, by whom kings reign and princes decree justice, Prov. viii. 15, 16.

“The whole of the objections against what we have just asserted, are rather specious declamation than solid reasoning. To pretend, that civil laws can bind but in so far as dependent on and regulated by the authority and the law of God; to pretend, that magistrates ought or may punish crimes *only* as injurious to men, without any way regarding their offensiveness or injuriousness to God; to pretend, that conscience, which derives all its authority from God, can warrant men either to do or establish what is sinful, or protect them in it; to pretend that men’s civil liberty, which is all derived to them from God as his free gift, can protect them in blasphemy or idolatry, any more than in theft or murder, *proceeds plainly upon atheistical principles*. To pretend, that such as enjoy the benefit of revelation, should not make use of it for regulating the laws of their nation, or the administration of civil offices, is plainly a contempt of revelation, and obstinate drawing back to heathenism. To pretend that the Jewish church and state were not distinct, is false, and hath been repeatedly refuted by Leusden, Gillespy, Apoloni, and others. To pretend, that the Jewish magistrates being typical, renders the laws enjoined them, or their example, useless to us, is absurd, and infers, that we ought to account almost all the Old Testament useless to us as a rule, because it primarily respected persons who were typical. Upon an accurate comparison, it will be found, that after the Jews’ rejection of the theocracy under Samuel, 1 Sam. viii., their magistrates were in almost all things similar to our own. No difficulties that I know of attend magistrates’ civil power about religious matters, but the like, if not greater, attend church-rulers’ ecclesiastical power about them.”





