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A vindication of the Church  
of Scotland



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A

VINDICATION

OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND:

OCCASIONED BY THE

DUKE OF ARGYLL'S "ESSAY ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL  
HISTORY OF SCOTLAND."

BY THE LATE

PATRICK ✓ M'FARLAN, D.D.,

GREENOCK.

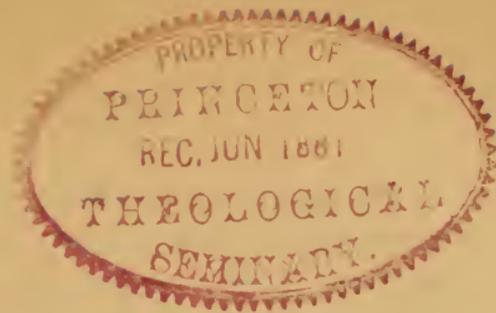
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## PREFACE BY THE EDITOR.

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THE Editor thinks it unnecessary to say anything of the motives which influenced the Author to prepare the present publication, or of the object he had in view in answering the Essay of the Noble Duke, since these are sufficiently stated in the Introductory Chapter of the work itself. The importance of a right understanding of the proper relations between the Church and the State can scarcely be over-estimated. These relations, however indifferent they may seem to those who have not duly considered them, have given rise from the beginning—as under the Roman emperors and Charles V.—to some of the most mournful exhibitions of oppression and cruelty on the part of states, and of ambition, arrogance, and earthliness on the part of so-called churches, which the world has witnessed. The *place* and authority of each, and the right aspect of the one toward the other, need to be well considered and clearly defined, so as to secure the full efficiency and uncurtailed benefit of both; at a time especially when all the power for good belonging to each and to both united is urgently required, first of

all, by the extreme extension and multiplication of all the developments and interests of society which are taking place in the present day, and next, by the prodigious activity which now characterises every principle of action, whether good or evil, whether in the Church or in the State. The Author regarded the one and the other of these great institutions as having an independent existence given to it by the Great Framer of both, and as under the regulation of special laws which he, the only Supreme, enacted to make them move harmoniously towards the highest good. He viewed their *action* as independent, each free from the other's control, each bound to maintain its own rights and liberties, the one recognising and loving the other, and rendering to it the service which its proper province and power enable it to yield. He wished the State to *establish the Church* in its liberty, aiding it with temporal means and protection, and the Church to *establish the State*, by owning and obeying it, and by training the people in religion, virtue, and loyalty. In a word, he maintained that subordination of the one to the other proves injurious to both, while, by their unimpeded movements in their own respective spheres, their harmonious and beneficent co-operation is secured; and he endeavoured to prove, as against the Noble Duke, that this was the doctrine held and contended for by the Church of Scotland from the time of the Reformation.

The whole question of religion, and of its relations to and influence upon civil society, is now undergoing

in all quarters both a practical and theoretical investigation. It is indeed forcing itself on the attention of all thoughtful men, whether belonging to the Church or the State, and is plainly not to be settled or adjusted by prejudice, or worldly interests, or power. It comes to all with something like a sovereign authority, demanding a fair and thorough investigation of its claims. It is surely no slighting of it, and nothing unbefitting either the grandeur of the question itself, or the advantage of that society of men which it addresses, to inquire what lights past history throws on this subject—what were the principles which our forefathers adopted, and what the results to which the working out of these principles, true or false, right or wrong, did actually lead? The Church of Scotland, small in geographical extent indeed, and perhaps on that account sometimes superciliously disregarded by the students of church history, has been all along redolent of this question, and has in no age of its existence been wanting in men of high intellect and heroic temper; while, at the same time, the national intelligence and happiness have borne witness, somewhat unequivocally, to the practical sagacity and patriotic spirit of the founders of this Church. It may, after all, be true, that they very nearly, if not altogether, apprehended the great truth which lies at the foundation of this whole subject. This much, at least, we may affirm, that they set themselves to the task of discovering it with as intense a mind, as free a spirit, and with as much superiority to the fear of the world, as it is

possible for any now to do. The Noble Duke and our Author both look into the principles of these men, and present them to the public according to the views which they entertain of them. Let intelligent readers judge between the honourable opponents.

R. C.

ROTHESAY, *Jan. 7, 1850.*

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## SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR.

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IT may be interesting to the reader of the following pages to be informed, that the highly esteemed author was called away from this world when he had conducted through the press all but the last half-sheet. A perusal of what he has written cannot fail to convince any one that he well understood, held very dear, and could admirably explain and defend, the whole subject of which he here treats. His work is a vivid picture at once of his zeal for divine truth, his critical knowledge of the scriptures, his intimate acquaintance with sound theology, and his lively apprehension of the grand principles and laws of the true church of Christ; while it displays his characteristic clearness of understanding, powers of reasoning, cultivated taste, correct style, and christian and gentleman-like bearing. Though he owned no authority in religion or in the constitution and government of the church but that of Jesus Christ, its Creator and Lord, he yet cherished a high respect for his fellow-men, and habitually rendered to all orders the honour which, according to the law of his Lord, he held to be their due. During his whole public life, to its very close, he was ever

found ready as well as able to vindicate, in the most becoming manner, the often misrepresented, maligned, and injured independence and glory of the kingdom of God. He may truly be said to have died as he had lived, loving and upholding, both by word and deed, the honour of the King of kings, and the order which he would have established in the church and in the world.

Descended from a long line of highly respectable ancestors—some of them distinguished in the ministry—he was blessed with what might be called a hereditary public spirit, and grew up in circumstances well fitted to develop and enlighten it. He was born and wholly educated in the city of Edinburgh, his father being one of its ministers. He thus, from his earliest years, enjoyed the very best means both of a literary and religious training, which the grace of God led him very diligently to improve. The most distinguished divines of his day honoured him with their friendship, and stimulated his ardent mind to successful study of all the branches of knowledge appropriate to his chosen profession. He breathed an atmosphere which gave health and vigour to all his intellectual and moral powers, and remarkably fitted him for the active services to which Providence afterwards called him.

He was born in 1781, ordained to the ministry in his twenty-fifth year, and was successively pastor of Kippen, Polmont, and of St John's, and St Enoch's, in the city of Glasgow, and, last of all, in the town of Greenock, where he died, after a few days' illness, on the 13th of

November, 1849, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. In all those stations he was distinguished among his fellows by ability, fidelity, and high and general excellence in all the parts of personal character, official duty and public service. It was on this account, indeed, that he was so often promoted to more important places during the course of his life. It was this which pointed him out as a fit successor to the celebrated Dr Chalmers in the church of St John's, Glasgow, and to the late Sir Michael Shaw Stewart as most worthy to undertake the important charge of the West Parish, Greenock, and to enjoy there the best living in the Church of Scotland. It was this also which led to his being called to fill the Moderator's chair in the General Assembly, first of the Established Church in 1834, and afterwards of the Free Church in 1845.

His first speech in the General Assembly, shortly after his appointment to Kippen, made a deep impression on all who heard it, and led the church to form those high expectations of him, which were amply realised during his life. He had, on that occasion, spoken, necessarily without preparation, and yet with such promptitude, judgment, clearness, order, fluency, and elegance, as amazed every one, and drew forth many congratulations from his friends, and, among the rest, from the venerable and justly-distinguished Dr Robert Balfour of Glasgow, who coming up to him as he left the Assembly House, said to him, 'My dear young friend, take good care of that gift of speaking so readily and well which God has given you. You will

tempted to trust to it. Be sure always to write your sermons carefully, and take warning by me. I found out too soon that I could get on without writing, and now I cannot write when I would.' He took the warning, and during his whole life was remarkable for his care in the composition of his discourses, though he never lost his early talent for elegant extemporaneous speaking.

His whole life presented a very striking consistency of conduct with principles, of deeds with professions, of steadfastness with ardour, and of undeviating rectitude with many public temptations to swerve. He loved the Church of Scotland, its principles, constitution, and history, with a most intelligent and almost passionate fondness. He contended nobly yet temperately for its rights and liberties, against the encroachments made on them by courts of law, and by the rude hand of mere worldly power; and when these at last prevailed in the outward conflict, he still held calmly and firmly what he had ever held as truth and right, and therefore, with his mother church in his heart, he left the bond church to cherish her in the free; thus at last giving proof that he 'counted all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he suffered the loss of all things, and did count them but dung that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith; that he might know him, and the

power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death ; if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.'

In one so far advanced in life, of so calm and clear a judgment, so free from the tendency of being carried away by passionate or enthusiastic feelings, and so full of courage as not to be afraid to express his difference of opinion even from chief friends and associates, it was very touching to witness, (and all might have witnessed it in his countenance,) the exceeding happiness he enjoyed in his own soul, and in all his work after the Disruption of the church. Before that event he passed days and nights of greatest anxiety, almost overwhelmed with the sense of responsibility which lay on the church and himself. In one day he passed, as it were, from this darkness into light and joy. The happiness of his spirit made everything appear bright to him, and when any one spoke to him of the great sacrifices he had made, he would say, 'I do not feel that I have made any sacrifice ; my wants are all abundantly supplied, and I am so happy in my work.' Thus he realised the promise of 'receiving manifold more now in this present time.'

It is much to be regretted that one so well qualified in every respect for high authorship did not leave behind him more to instruct and edify another generation. The cause of this regret, however, is to be found in the remarkably constant activity of his public life,

and his most exemplary discharge of all his pastoral and official duties. With the exception of a few fugitive sermons and pamphlets, a series of letters on the church controversy, which are of high excellence, and which made a deep impression at the time, a very interesting correspondence with the Duke of Sutherland on the subject of granting sites for churches and schools, alike honourable to both parties, and which engendered a high mutual esteem and confidence on both sides, and more than all, a beautiful sketch of the life of his beloved friend and successor in St John's, Glasgow, the late Dr Thomas Brown, prefixed to a posthumous volume of that holy man's sermons, in which it seems difficult which to admire the most, the described or the describer, we know of nothing more which he gave to the press till this work of his last days.

We have spoken of his deep interest in his native land and church. It is but justice, however, to his memory and labours to record his extraordinary concern for the progress of the kingdom of Christ in other lands, and especially on the continent of Europe, over which he had travelled, and where he made many friends, with whom, till the close of his life, he maintained frequent and profitable correspondence.

In private life he was distinguished by the cordiality, strength, and steadfastness of his friendships, by attention to innumerable instances of kindly remembrances of friends, by remarkable sympathy with, and services rendered to the sick, the poor, the fatherless, the

widow, and orphan—many of whom were observed weeping in the train of his funeral procession—and by the charms of his deportment in his family circle, consisting of two daughters, and a son who but lately left the paternal roof to enter on the ministry elsewhere. His young grandson, by his daughter, widow of the late Mr Melville, minister of Falkirk, was an object of his fondest affection and hopes. The visible happiness that reigned in his house might easily be traced to his pervading mind and wise superintendence, he having been left a widower by his beloved wife, a daughter of the late venerable Mr Clason, minister of Logie, when their offspring were but infants. Her death, which was singularly happy and triumphant, greatly influenced the whole of his after life, being often recalled by him as a means of stirring up his faith and hope to lively exercise. The remembrance of his own trials and consolations at that time, peculiarly fitted him for comforting those who were in any trouble, and made him ever a most acceptable visitor in the dwellings of the dying and bereaved.

‘The memory of the just is blessed.’ ‘Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.’ This was emphatically true of his literal death-bed. During the few days he lay there, his spirit and words were full of the rest and hopes of heavenly glory, on which he spoke of being immediately to enter. He breathed his last, repeating the brightest and most cheering promises of God.

The church and the world suffer grievous loss by

the deaths of men of the author's character, attainments, and labours, as both have been benefited by their having lived such lives. Both need such truly heroic examples of the power of the gospel, raised by Providence to places in which they cannot fail to be seen and admired. The departed author now forms one of that portion of the heavenly galaxy to which his country has been honoured to contribute in the century now passing, so abundant already in dark and bright spots, in omens of evil and of good, in efforts for overthrowing, and in influences for upholding the cause and kingdom of God.

## INTRODUCTION.

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IT must be gratifying to Scotsmen to have a well-written book from the pen of a Scottish Peer. Using the uncomplimentary language which the Duke of Argyll has—we think with less justice—applied to another body of men; the Peers of the realm of the present day ‘are not generally remarkable for extensive learning.’ With the best opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, their youth is spent in the idleness, and, too often, the dissipation of a college life; and their manhood in the frivolous amusements and perpetual whirl of fashionable society. A noble lord, devoted to scientific or literary pursuits, or even moderately well acquainted with the history, and politics, and institutions of his country, is a *rara avis in terris*. There is little to reward the labour necessary to such acquisitions; and the feeling of responsibility is in most cases too feeble to overcome the temptations of the steeple-chase, and the race-course, and the gaming-table.

The Duke of Argyll is an honourable exception to these remarks. In early life he appears to have been

conscious of his mental powers, and to have felt the laudable ambition of improving them for his own gratification and the good of his country. He kept aloof from the frivolous pursuits of too many of his rank and prospects: he stored his mind with useful knowledge; and very soon afforded the pleasing indications of superior talents and a manly independent spirit, worthy of the heir-apparent of the house and titles of Argyll. Before he had completed his twentieth year, he had written and published his 'Letters to the Peers,' in defence of the Church of Scotland, which were not less distinguished by the ease and chasteness of their style, than by the boldness and force of argument with which, on legal and constitutional grounds, he maintained the justice of our claims, in opposition to the courts of law, and ill-informed statesmen, and a no less ill-informed and an unthinking aristocracy. He now appears as an author a second time; and, whatever may be the opinion which the different parties whose history and principles he professes to elucidate may entertain of his peculiar views and sentiments, and of the arguments by which they are enforced, every candid man must admit that he has given new proof of his talents; and, as an author, has not, at least, diminished his well-earned reputation.

We hail the appearance of this work on another ground. Though entitled, 'An Essay on the Ecclesiastical History of Scotland,' it is virtually an essay on the theory of a christian church, and the connection which ought to subsist between it and the civil govern-

ment. Judging from the speeches and actings of our leading statesmen of all parties during the last twenty years, they have been at no pains to arrive at sound principles and conclusions on that most important subject. Naturally unwilling to discuss in parliament questions purely theological, they have repudiated the obligation lying on the civil government to judge which is the only true religious belief, and which the form of church government best fitted to promote the religious education and moral improvement of the people. They do not seem to acknowledge, or have never contemplated, the wide and eternal distinction between truth and error, and the different and opposite effects of these on the moral and social condition of mankind. History and observation, the great teachers of political wisdom, have spoken to them in vain. In three of the provinces of Ireland, they beheld a hideous system of superstition and mental tyranny, degrading, and crushing, and pauperising the greater part of its population; the fourth, under the influence of a purer faith, prosperous and happy: and not contented with putting the Romanists on a footing of perfect equality with their fellow-subjects in respect of civil rights—as justice and sound policy required—they have adopted measures which can have no other effect than that of prolonging the reign of error and turbulence in that unhappy country. In the same island they found an Established Church, which, some time ago, they had it in their power to reform, and render efficient as a missionary church to a benighted and ignorant people,

and they allowed it to remain, with all its imperfections and abuses, and in all its impotence, a reproach to those who hold the lawfulness and utility of the connection between Church and State. On the other hand, in Scotland another Church Establishment, eminent for its purity and efficiency, has been broken up, because a British parliament, under the leading of a so-called conservative government, refused to inquire into the foundation of certain rights and privileges which that church had enjoyed and used for centuries, but which the civil courts, by a novel interpretation of an unconstitutional act of parliament, had taken away.

While these political blunders—to the last of which the principal actor is reported to have pleaded guilty—are being committed, it is matter of congratulation that one member of parliament, high in rank, and destined, we trust, to exert a beneficial influence in the deliberations of the Upper House, has directed his attention to what must be regarded as the vital and fundamental part of the subject to which we have referred. We are very far from thinking that the Duke of Argyll entertains a sound or well-matured opinion on the main question which he professes to discuss. On the contrary, we deeply regret that he has not observed the Horatian rule\* so far as to suppress the publication of his volume, if not till the ninth year after it was composed, at least till the lapse of the half of that period. But we willingly entertain the hope that the present

\* *Nonum prematur in annum.*

volume is only the commencement of inquiries by the noble Duke, which, with more accurate research, and more profound consideration, may issue in juster conclusions, and be of real and lasting benefit to his country. Meanwhile he has set a good example to others. He has not thought it unworthy of him to study the first principles of ecclesiastical polity; other statesmen may follow in the same field: and the time may come when sound christian principle, instead of a miserable expediency, shall guard the spiritual interests of the British dominions.

The Essay, like the 'Letters to the Peers,' is characterised by perfect independence of thought and opinion. The author not only refuses to call any man master, but, like Dr Arnold, whom he seems to have taken for his model, undervalues the labours, and rejects the conclusions of all who have gone before him, and resolutely determines to elaborate everything for himself. The consequences of this determination are: *first*—that he has fallen into some of the crude and erroneous notions of that great and amiable man; and, *secondly*—that he involves in one indiscriminate condemnation men and things of every class and character. He spares neither friend nor foe. Episcopalian and Presbyterian—the Scottish Establishment and the Free Church of Scotland—the Spottiswood Society and Mr Gray's Catechism—all come, more or less, under the rod of his castigation. Some may be inclined to accuse him of fool-hardiness in thus exposing himself to the assaults of so many adversaries; and it must, we

think, be admitted that there are those whose hostility he has needlessly provoked. Candid and reflecting men, however, will augur favourably from this fearless spirit. They will fondly cherish the belief that they see in the Duke of Argyll one who will not be biassed by the opinions of the dead or the living; by the prejudices of political partisanship, or by ambitious views and the desire of place; but, like another noble lord, one of the brightest living ornaments of the British peerage, will pursue his own course free and unfettered; and, with a judgment matured by years, and reading, and experience, will one day compel the assent of the legislature to wiser maxims, and better rules of state policy than it has been the lot of past generations to witness. Already has the Duke manifested this independence in the discussions which have taken place, and the votes he has given in the House of Lords, and in the exercise of his own rights, and the management of his own affairs. Is it too much to expect that when a careful examination shall have altered or modified the principles which he now holds, and shall have given greater weight to his opinions in the estimation of his fellow-citizens, he will discover the same manly independence, and will exert a growing influence on the deliberations of the senate, and the thinking portion of the community?

Much as we admire the spirit to which we have referred, we have no very sanguine expectation of any favourable change in his Grace's opinions with regard to the Free Church of Scotland. The feeling towards

that body with which the Essay is written, almost entirely precludes the hope of any such change. It is a historical disquisition, in which the author traces the ecclesiastical history of Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution, dividing it into six periods of unequal duration, as follows:—

1st,	from	1560	to	1584.
2d,	“	1584	“	1592.
3d,	“	1592	“	1603.
4th,	“	1603	“	1638.
5th,	“	1638	“	1660.
6th,	“	1660	“	1688.

Its declared object is, ‘to give a comprehensive sketch of the principles and tendencies of the Scottish Reformation; to distinguish those which are primary and essential from those which, being the growth of accidental circumstances, are local in their origin, and as local in their meaning; and especially to point out the value of the former in the existing controversies of the christian church’—‘to redeem the history of Presbytery from the prejudice which some of its traditions have cast upon it, in the eyes of impartial judges,—to extricate the great principles on which its system was deeply founded from the inflated language and provincial dogmas in which they have been too long misrepresented;’ and to give ‘the plain and true reading of a plain and true story.’\* The noble author is avowedly and from conviction a Presbyterian, and, we rejoice to add, a decided enemy to Scottish Prelacy and English

\* Preface *passim*.

Tractarianism. The Essay, as he himself informs us, was originally intended as a review of a book, entitled, 'Presbytery Examined,' by Bishop Sage, of the Scottish Episcopal Church; a book written about 150 years ago, and lately republished by the Spottiswood Society. A portion of the Essay, therefore, is occupied in showing that, since the Reformation, Episcopacy has had no real existence in Scotland, as the form of church government of the people of that country. But it is not, as its title would lead the reader to expect, on the conflicting claims of Presbytery and Episcopacy. Bishop Sage and his book, and the Spottiswood Society are scarcely noticed; and Presbytery in itself is very inadequately explained and vindicated. It is manifestly the chief object of the author to note what he alleges were the different and opposite opinions of the Fathers of the Reformation in Scotland with regard to the connection which ought to subsist between the Church and the State, and to announce his own very peculiar, and, to us, obscure conceptions on this subject. Turning away from Bishop Sage, with whom he had entered the lists on the title-page, he challenges the Established Church, of which he is a member, and proclaims war against one of the leading doctrines of its Confession, and the formula in which it is expressed. All the while, however, his quarrel is with the Free Church; and, with reference to its distinctive opinions, he tells his readers, in the somewhat enigmatical paragraph of the Preface, quoted in the preceding page, that it is his object to distinguish those principles and

tendencies of the Scottish Reformation which are primary and essential, from those which are the growth of accidental circumstances; that is, as we find on perusing the book, to show that the doctrine of the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction was not held by Knox, but only by those who followed him—that it was broached and maintained by them more in consequence of the circumstances and events of the times, than from a conviction of its scriptural authority—and that, in point of fact, it has no foundation in the word of God. Bishop Sage claims John Knox as a favourer of Episcopacy, because he recommended the appointment of superintendents; the Duke of Argyll claims him on equally slender grounds as a favourer of Erastianism.

In a historical disquisition, the accuracy and dispassionateness of the historian are indispensable. We are sorry to say that the Duke has shown himself sadly deficient in both. We do not allude to his observations on the Scotch Episcopal Church; that part of the work we leave entirely to the Spottiswood Society. We refer to inaccuracies in the statement of facts and opinions, of which some proofs have been given by Mr Gray of Perth, in his 'Letter to the Duke of Argyll,' and others will be adduced in the following pages; and to the angry, and sometimes contemptuous, tone in which he speaks of the men, and the principles, and the writings, of the Free Church of Scotland. What would any one think of the historian who, professing to write the history of the Church of Scotland in Co-

venanting times, should speak thus of the noble, and intrepid, and learned, and truly christian men who in 1638 withstood the tyranny of Archbishop Laud and the first Charles? 'We know that the men of those days themselves—especially those connected with Scottish Presbytery—argued with themselves painfully on a subject on which they were led to a decision, however much they may have been deceived, neither by the suggestions of conscience nor by the rules of logic, but by the stern necessities of circumstances and of passion :'\* Or—who should speak in the following terms of upwards of 500 men, who, a few years ago, renounced their *status* in society, and their emoluments as ministers, or expectant ministers, of an Established Church? 'In our times, when a church, or a party in a church, either becomes dissatisfied with its existing constitution, or are offended by changes introduced

\* Essay, p. 138, 1st Ed.; p. 134, 2d Ed.

The author probably refers to Mr Robert Baillie, who, in questions of any difficulty, appears to have been slow in coming to a decided opinion; and on that, and, at least, one other occasion, stood for some time alone among his brethren. There is no evidence, so far as we know, that either he or his brethren, in the judgment to which they ultimately came, were guided by 'the stern necessities of circumstance and of passion.'

The Duke's observations have reference to the conduct of the Scotch in taking arms against Charles I. We think it can be shown that, with one exception, they acted then, as in the preceding century, strictly on the defensive; it was with the utmost reluctance that they appeared in arms against their sovereign. If any one will take the trouble of reading their published apology for the expedition into England in 1640—to which we have alluded as an exception—he will find that it involved a very nice question in casuistry; and of this he will be convinced, that—however erroneous the determination at which they arrived—it was not dictated either by the 'necessities of circumstances' or by 'passion.'

from within, or from without, the ready, and, as we think, the too ready and immediate resource, is separation—the institution of a new religious society or sect.\* What should we say of the historian whose works were interspersed with such passages as these, but that he was warped by prejudices so strong as to disqualify him for the task of forming a calm and sound judgment of the men and the principles whose history he professed to elucidate?

The disqualification to which we have referred has its root in another, which we most earnestly wish and pray may one day be removed.

Hayley was incapable of writing correctly, and with success, a life of the poet Cowper; and Southey, of John Wesley; and Principal Robertson, a history of the Reformation; because these distinguished men did not understand, or, understanding, did not sympathise with, the religious opinions and feelings of the persons whose life and character they sought to delineate. We are compelled to say, that, for a similar reason, the Duke of Argyll is not, in our judgment, qualified to give a just or accurate account of the principles and opinions of the Presbyterians of the Church of Scotland. We do not entertain a doubt of his profound respect for christianity; we are persuaded that he believes it to be divine, and that his profession of christianity is sincere. But we do entertain serious doubts of his having looked into the subject-matter of christianity with the profound and solemn attention necessary to his apprehending

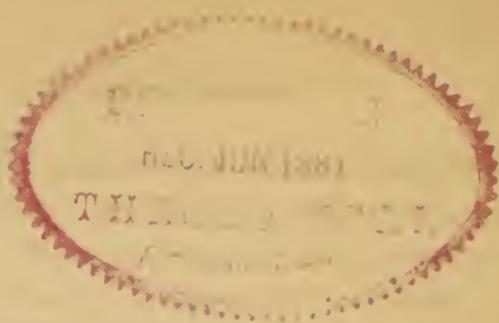
\* Essay, p. 67, 1st Ed.; p. 66, 2d Ed.

the vast importance of a pure faith—a faith founded on a sound interpretation of the word of God.\* He seems to have forgotten that the reformation from Popery originated in the discovery, and cordial belief, of great scripture truths, which the Church of Rome had carefully concealed, and wickedly corrupted; and, that our Reformers held the doctrine of the Headship—in other words, of the supreme authority of *Christ's word* in matters spiritual—not only on its own account, and for the honour of their divine Master, but as a great first principle in christianity, and the only safeguard to the profession of truths which they felt to be the life of their souls. Theirs was not a contest for power, but for truth, or, as they called it, 'the evangel;' and for sound principle in the relation between Church and State, as subservient to truth. It is this which furnishes the only key to the conduct of the Protestant Reformers on the Continent and in Britain, without a perception and due appreciation of which, no historian can do them justice. If it had been rightly apprehended by the author of the Essay, he would have shown more respect to our persecuted forefathers than to describe them, in the first page of his work, as 'the men who sung psalms among the hills with the sword in the one hand and the bible in the other.'

\* Like Southey, who, in all probability, read his prayer book more frequently than his bible, the Duke of Argyll does not always recognise a bible phrase when he meets with it; for, describing the change which took place in the mind of Alexander Henderson, under the preaching of the celebrated Bruce, he says, 'Henderson left the church a changed, or, as he himself termed it, *in the language of his day*, a "converted" man.'

With these introductory remarks, from some of which, if we could, we should have gladly abstained, we proceed to a more minute examination of the work under review, in the confident expectation of being able to vindicate the Church of Scotland from the misrepresentations—unintentional, we firmly believe—which the work contains. In fulfilling this painful, but not very arduous, task, we shall endeavour, in the *first* place, to show that there was no opposition, but, on the contrary, a perfect agreement, between Knox and Melville, respecting the province of the civil magistrate in matters of religion; *secondly*, to ascertain and disprove the peculiar views of the Duke upon this subject; and, *lastly*, to state the scriptural authority for the principles of church government held, and almost unanimously professed, by the Established Church before the Disruption, and still held as the distinctive principles of the Free Church of Scotland.





## CHAPTER I.

STATEMENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND ON THE SUBJECT OF THE SPIRITUAL JURISDICTION—THE FIRST REFORMERS AND THEIR IMMEDIATE SUCCESSORS AGREED ON THIS SUBJECT—PROOFS FROM HISTORY IN OPPOSITION TO THE ASSERTIONS OF THE DUKE OF ARGYLL—ERRONEOUS OPINION OF THE REFORMERS REGARDING THE DUTY OF THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE TOWARDS IDOLATERS, AND OTHERS—REFORMERS NOT PERSECUTORS—VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF BIGOTRY AND FANATICISM.

FROM the vague terms in which the author of the Essay writes of the principles of the Church of Scotland, those who have read the Essay only may be led to suppose that we hold that the separation between the civil government and the church is absolute,\* and that the magistrate has no duty to perform in matters of religion. It is necessary, therefore, before entering on the first part of our vindication, to state distinctly what are the principles which our church has always maintained on this head.

They are declared in the Westminster Confession of Faith in the following words:—

‘ The Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his church,

\* Essay—Ap. p. 316, Note G, 1st Ed. ; p. 356, 2d Ed.

hath therein appointed a government, in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.’ \*

‘The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the church—that the truth of God be kept pure and entire—that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed—all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented, or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call Synods—to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them, be according to the mind of God.’ †

‘For the better government and further edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called Synods or Councils.

‘As magistrates may lawfully call a Synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion; so, if magistrates be open enemies to the church, the ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons, upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies.’ ‡

The circumstances in which the civil magistrate is called to exercise his authority in matters of religion, as thus set forth, are stated in the Act of Assembly,

\* Westminster Confession of Faith, c. xxx. s. 1.

† Ibid, c. xxiii. s. 3.

‡ Ibid., c. xxxi. s. 1, 2.

1647, approving the Westminster Confession: 'It is declared that the Assembly understandeth some parts of the second article of the thirty-first chapter only of kirks not settled, or constituted in point of government; and that, although in such kirks a synod of ministers and other fit persons may be called by the magistrate's authority and nomination, without any other call, to consult and advise with, about matters of religion; and although likewise the ministers of Christ, without delegation from their churches, may, of themselves, and by virtue of their office, meet together synodically in such kirks not yet constituted; yet neither of these ought to be done in kirks constituted and settled; it being always free to the magistrate to advise with synods of ministers and ruling elders, meeting upon delegation from their churches, either ordinarily, or being indicted by his authority, occasionally, and *pro re nata*; it being also free to assemble together synodically, as well *pro re nata* as at the ordinary times, upon delegation from the churches, by the intrinsical power received from Christ, as often as it is necessary for the good of the church so to assemble, in case the magistrate, to the detriment of the church, withhold or deny his consent, the necessity of occasional assemblies being first remonstrated unto him by humble supplication.' So clearly has the Church of Scotland described the circumstances in the state of religion and of the church, in which the civil magistrate, by his own authority alone, may call Synods to consult and advise about matters of religion; and so

great was her earnestness that, while the distinction between the civil and the spiritual jurisdiction was sacredly observed, there should be a mutual co-operation for the preservation of the truth, the reformation of corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline, and the due administration of the ordinances of God. 'The powers (civil and ecclesiastical) which God hath ordained, and the liberty (spiritual liberty) which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another.'\*

The duty of the civil magistrate in matters of religion, declared in the passages of the Westminster Confession now quoted, has been frequently defined in the single sentence: He has power *circa sacra*, but not *in sacris*. He may, he ought to be occupied *about* things sacred, but not *in* things sacred. He may not prescribe what shall be the faith of his subjects, and command and enforce submission by the strong hand of power: For 'God alone,' saith our Confession, 'is Lord of the conscience, and hath set us free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in anything contrary to his word, or beside it, in matters of faith or worship.'† But he may, and he ought to make provision for the preaching of the word, and 'the godly up-bringing' of the people. He may not authoritatively determine in controversies of faith, and cases of conscience, or set down rules and directions for the public worship of God, and the government of the church; for this belongs to Synods

\* Westminster Confession of Faith, c. xx. s. 4. † Ibid., c. xx. s. 2.

and Councils, who, as they may err, and have erred, are not to be made the rule of faith or practice; but are to be submitted to only for their agreement with the word.\* But he may, and he ought to withdraw his countenance and encouragement from a church which has become notoriously corrupt in principle and practice; and, in his own province, and in the exercise of his office, he may, and ought to provide for the quiet and undisturbed observance of the ordinances of religion, and may fortify the jurisdiction and administration of the church.

Such is the doctrine of the Church of Scotland on this subject—a doctrine practically denied, but not yet professedly abjured by the Established Church; and held in all its integrity by the Free Church of Scotland. It has its basis in one great scripture principle—the supremacy of Christ in his church, ‘over his own house’—the essential and perpetual distinction between the secular and the spiritual, between the ‘power of the sword,’ and ‘the power of the keys.’ The Church of Scotland declares the duty of the civil magistrate, in matters of religion, to consist in what is purely secular—in the *calling* of Synods and Councils for the rectification of existing errors, and in the protection and encouragement of true religion. Acting thus, he is ‘the minister of God for good.’ The church welcomes him as such; does not refuse, but seeks his aid. To give that aid is his duty to God, whose minister he is, and his duty to the people

\* Westminster Confession of Faith, c. xxxi., s. 3, 4.

over whom he rules ; for a greater benefit, even in a temporal point of view, cannot be conferred on any people, than the dissemination and encouragement of pure and undefiled religion. But she repudiates his interference *in* matters spiritual. She believes it to be contrary to the word of God, and injurious to the best interests of the State ; and that the peace and wellbeing of a nation can be successfully promoted, only when the civil and the spiritual powers confine themselves strictly, each to the limits of its own jurisdiction.

The Free Church of Scotland did not become what is improperly termed Voluntary, when she dissolved her connection with the State. She continued to hold the Establishment principle. By no public act has she indicated that she has receded from it a single hair-breadth. And we believe that her ministers and people, perceiving the importance of that principle in the presently-existing struggle against the desecration of the Sabbath, adhere to it more firmly than ever. In opposition to the no-establishment men, we hold that the State has, or ought to have, a conscience,—in other words, that the civil magistrate, as such, is not only entitled, but is bound to judge for himself what is false, and what is true, in matters of religion, that he may discountenance the former, and give to the latter his encouragement and support. When we assert this, we suppose him to be the professedly christian ruler of a professedly christian country, and therefore to believe that christianity is divine, and

that every man may learn from it what is the truth of God—that the bible is a *revelation* from heaven. And we hold that it is as much his duty, in his official capacity, to ascertain this from the word of God, as it is his duty, and the duty of the humblest of the subjects, to make this most important of all discoveries, with a view to the salvation of their immortal souls. As the minister of God unto the people for good, he is bound to make this discovery, and to act accordingly. If he err, the right of the Church to act independently of his opinion and his will remains. She asserts her own liberty, and waits for better times, when Church and State shall harmonise, and both shall work together for the glory of God, and the real good of mankind.

We repeat, therefore, that neither does the Established Church nor the Free Church of Scotland maintain, or profess to maintain, the absolute separation between civil power and church power; and that the latter cheerfully gives obedience to the former '*doing that which appertains to his charge.*' How far the sentiments of the men of the present day differ from those of the first Reformers, will be shown in a subsequent part of this work.

We have said that the author of the Essay affirms that there was an essential difference between the opinions—perhaps we express his Grace's idea more correctly when we say, the policy of Knox and Melville—regarding the power of the civil magistrate in matters of religion. He affirms that the former ad-

mitted, not only that it is the 'right and duty of the civil magistrate to exercise his own judgment on the affairs of the christian church,' but that he possesses a 'spiritual authority' in matters of religion,\* whilst this is expressly denied by Melville and his contemporaries. The Duke asserts this to be a historical fact, and adduces the evidence by which he thinks it is established. With all deference to his Grace, we shall state our reasons for coming to an opposite conclusion.

In the *first* place, he rests his assertion on the following and similar passages in an Address, by Knox, to the Nobility and Estates of Scotland, printed at Geneva in the year 1558: 'The ordering and reformation of religion, with the instruction of subjects, doth especially appertain to the civil magistrate.' He places the chief stress of the argument on the term '*ordering*,' which, he thinks, must imply the exercise of power and authority by the civil magistrate in the determination of matters spiritual. The connection in which the word stands does not, in our opinion, warrant such an interpretation.

The document from which the words are taken is entitled, '*The Appellation (appeal) of John Knox from the cruel and most unjust sentence pronounced against him by the false bishoppes and clergie of Scotland, with his supplication and exhortation to the nobilitie, estates, and commonaltie of the same realme.*' In his absence on the Continent the popish bishops had passed sentence of death against him; and, not

\* Essay, p. 39, 1st Ed.; 38, 39, 2d Ed.

being able to reach himself, they burned him in effigy at the Cross of Edinburgh. He felt a just resentment at this gross iniquity, and appealed for protection for himself and his brethren in Scotland, to the Scottish Parliament. But his chief object in printing and publishing the Appellation was to represent to his countrymen, and especially to the Supreme Council of the State, the necessity of uprooting, by the strong hand of power, a system so thoroughly corrupt, and so unfriendly to the best interests of the country, as the Church of Rome. With this view, in his Letter to the Queen-Regent, republished, with additions, in the same year as the Appellation, he offers himself as the accuser of the bishops and their apostate church, on these two conditions: that the question should be judged by Parliament, the bishops, as parties, being denied the right of voting, and that the standard or rule of judgment should be the word of God. And, confident of success in so bold an enterprise, he invites the Queen-Regent, and the nobility, and the estates of Scotland to judge between him and his adversaries; and, if they found he made good his charges against the Papacy, to proceed, as in duty bound, to 'the ordering and reformation of religion,' by doing what the civil power alone can do, namely, disestablishing Popery, and giving its countenance and encouragement to pure, scriptural christianity.

The whole tenor of the Appellation shows this, and this only, to be the meaning of the Reformer in the words quoted by the Duke. We venture to affirm that

there is not, in that remarkable and well-pondered Address, one sentence to which, by fair interpretation, another and different meaning can be affixed. The paragraph from which the quotation is made, is alone sufficient to determine the sense in which the words are to be understood. It runs as follows:—

‘Of the premises, it is evident that to lawful powers is given the sword for punishment of malefactors, for maintenance of innocents, and for the profit and utility of their subjects. Now, let us consider whether the reformation of religion fallen in decay, and punishment of false teachers, do appertain to the civil magistrate and nobility of any realm. I am not ignorant that Satan of old time, for the maintenance of his darkness, hath obtained of the blind world two chief points: Former (first), he hath persuaded to princes, rulers, and magistrates, that the feeding of Christ’s flock appertaineth nothing to their charge; but that it is rejected upon the bishops, and estate ecclesiastical. And, secondarily, that the reformation of religion, be it never so corrupt, and the punishment of such as be sworn soldiers, in their kingdom, are exempted from all civil power, and are reserved to themselves and their own cognition. But that no offender can justly be exempted from punishment, and that the ordering and reformation of religion, with the instruction of subjects, doth especially appertain to the civil magistrate, shall God’s perfect ordinance, his plain word, and the facts and examples of those that of God are highly praised, most evidently declare.’ He then pro-

ceeds, in proof and illustration of the doctrine thus stated, to refer to the examples of Moses and the kings of Israel and Judah, cases certainly not parallel with those of kings under a merely human government, yet proving nothing more, so far as matters purely spiritual were handled by them, than that, acting ministerially for God, Moses communicated to the priests the will of God concerning the ritual observances of the law; whilst the kings—Jehoshaphat for example—acting in the same capacity, gave instructions to the priests and Levites for the ordering and reformation of religion, when it had fallen into decay and become corrupt; and when, by their authority alone could idolatry be rooted out, and the purity of divine worship restored. Make the supposition that the Queen-Regent and Estates of Scotland had, at the solicitation of Knox, done that, which was actually done two years afterwards—that, without going beyond the province of the civil magistrate, they had repudiated Romanism, and declared the Protestant religion to be the religion of Scotland, in what more appropriate terms could this have been described than that they had effected ‘the ordering and reformation of religion?’ This, at least, we are entitled to assert, that unless it can be proved from other passages of the same document, or from the history of the Reformation in Scotland, that, by ‘ordering,’ Knox meant to concede to the civil magistrate the power of authoritatively deciding in matters of faith, or worship, or church discipline, the mere use of that word does not warrant such a conclusion.

The Duke does refer to history in support of his assertion. This is the *second* of his proofs. He refers first of all to the fact that in the Confession of Faith, approved by Parliament in 1560, it is declared that to civil rulers belongs the 'purgation and maintenance' of religion, words, says his Grace, which 'directly imply that an idea of spiritual responsibility, and *therefore* of spiritual authority, was attached to the civil magistrate,\* and perfectly agree with the words "ordering and reformation" in the Letters (Appellation) from Geneva.' Then, in the same paragraph, he adds, that when the First Book of Discipline was framed, in compliance with a charge from the Council of State, 'it sets forth to that body, and "offers to their wisdoms," the judgment of the Reformers on "the common order and uniformity"—that it "adjured them neither to admit anything which God's word did not approve, nor reject anything which it enjoined;" for they would not bind the Council to their judgments farther than they were able to "prove by God's plain scriptures."'

Passing by the illogical statement that 'spiritual responsibility' implies 'spiritual authority,' we have only to observe, on the first part of this proof from history, in addition to the remarks which have just been made on the corresponding passage in the Appellation, that the meaning in both passages is precisely the same. In the Confession of Faith the power of the magistrate, in the purgation and maintenance of religion, is supported by the same scripture examples by which Knox,

\* Essay, p. 39; p. 38, 2d Ed.

in the Appellation, pleads for the exercise of his authority in the 'ordering and reformation of religion.' 'To kings, princes, rulers, and magistrates,' says the Confession, 'we affirm that chiefly and maist principally the reformation and purgation of religion apperteanes; so that not only they are appointed for civil policey, bot for maintenance of the trew religioun, and for suppressing of idolatry and superstition quhatsomever, as in David, Josaphat,' &c.\* What Knox had expressed two years before as his own opinion, is thus declared to be the religious belief of the Protestant Church of Scotland; but with this remarkable proviso—a proviso which, strange to tell, the Duke has not overlooked—the magistrate 'doing that thing which apperteanes to his charge.' These words his Grace quotes in corroboration of his argument; but he does this on the assumption that he has interpreted correctly the words, 'reformation and purgation of religion;' and that these, in the sense which he affixes to them, are things pertaining to the office of the civil magistrate. If his interpretation be incorrect, the words referred to give no additional strength to his Grace's argument. To us it appears perfectly clear that the clause is expressly intended to qualify the preceding statements regarding the duty of the civil magistrate in the suppression of idolatry and superstition. 'Kings, princes,' &c., says the Confession, 'are appointed for maintenance of the true religion, . . . as in David, Jehoshaphat, and others highly commended for their zeal. And, therefore,

\* Confession of Faith, (1560) Art. xxiv.

we confess and avow, that such as resist the supreme power, *doing that which apperteanes to his charge*, do resist God's ordinance, and therefore cannot be guiltless.' The qualifying clause could not have been omitted but at the risk of conveying the sentiment that the civil magistrate had absolute power in matters spiritual. The first Scottish Reformers knew, and clearly apprehended, the distinction between the civil and spiritual powers. On one side they stretched the power of the civil ruler by much too far; we mean in the execution of what pertained to 'his charge,' by the infliction of capital punishment on idolaters. On the other, where God and conscience stood supreme, and where, therefore, the civil touches on the spiritual, the line of demarcation was clearly defined. The civil ruler had his duty to perform about the church, but no rule or authority in the church. It was his duty to disestablish a church which had become totally corrupt in faith and practice, and oppressive in its administration. It was no less his duty to maintain and fortify a church which, to his judgment, proved itself from scripture to be a section of the true catholic church—'the church of the living God.'

With regard to the second part of the historic proof in support of the Duke's assertion—that part, namely, in which he refers to the language of the Reformers in presenting the First Book of Discipline to the Council of State—it appears to us that, instead of confirming his Grace's opinion, it leads to a conclusion directly opposite.

The Reformers were sane men: and, whatever his Grace or the world may think of them, they were reasonable men. They had obtained the sanction of Parliament to the Confession of Faith, in which the doctrine of the Protestant Church, now established, was declared. In addition to this, they desired—and here the Council of State coincided with them—to have the sanction of Parliament, in like manner, to a form of ecclesiastical polity or church government. In prosecuting this object, they did not regard the members of the Council as automatons—they did not imagine that they had only to present to them a certain number of propositions, and demand their assent to them. They knew that they had to deal with rational and intelligent beings, whose understanding must be convinced ere they could attain the object which they had in view. They did not think themselves infallible; therefore they would not bind the Council to their judgments, farther than they ‘were able to prove by God’s plain scriptures.’ But they were not sceptics in christianity. They believed the bible to be a revelation, a clear discovery of the will of God to the learned and the unlearned. In the language of Knox to the unhappy Queen Mary, when she said to him, ‘You interpret the scriptures in one way, and they (the Romish priests) in another’—they said to every one, ‘You shall believe God, who plainly speaketh in his word; and farther than the word teacheth you, you shall believe neither the one nor the other. The word of God is plain in itself; and, if there appear

any obscurity in one place, the Holy Ghost, who is never contrary to himself, explains the same more clearly in other places, so that there can remain no doubt, but unto such as are obstinately ignorant. After careful consideration and inquiry, they believed that they had ascertained the mind of the Spirit regarding the government of the church. They offered to prove this ; and, speaking as to wise men, they invited the Council to judge what they said, that, if convinced of its truth, they might recommend to Parliament to give its sanction to the scheme of ecclesiastical polity which they, the Reformers, proposed. Accordingly, after they had declared that they had no desire to bind the Council to their judgments, &c., they add, 'So we most humbly crave of you, even as you will answer in God's presence, before whom both ye and we must appear to render account of all our actions, that ye repudiate nothing for pleasure and affection of men, which ye are not able to improve (disprove) by God's written and revealed word.'\*

In all this there is no mingling of the civil and the spiritual powers, no merging of the one in the other. On the contrary, throughout the whole transaction, they are, of purpose, kept separate and distinct. The right of the Council of State to judge whether the Book of Discipline laid down such a form of church government, as it was their duty, and the duty of Parliament to sanction, is conceded to the fullest extent.

\* Row's *Historie of the Kirk*, p. 16 ; Wodrow Ed.

But the Council is not invited to join with the church as one body; nor do the Reformers express a wish that either the Council or Parliament should assume or exercise any power or jurisdiction not purely secular. We admit that, before presenting the Book of Discipline to the Council, they earnestly strove to obtain the approbation and concurrence of the Protestant nobility, members of the church. But they were alone in preparing the document. Neither the nobility, as a body, nor the Council of State, exercised or craved any portion of spiritual authority. Precisely the same course was followed on occasion of presenting the First Book of Discipline, which had been followed in presenting to Parliament the Confession of Faith. The one was presented to the Council of State, the other to Parliament, in order to their exercising their judgment upon them, and giving to them the sanction of the State, if they should be found agreeable to the word of God, and beneficial to the Church. It is not surprising that the Duke prefaces the reasonings on which we have been commenting, with these words: 'It is probable that Knox and his coadjutors, in framing this sentence'—the sentence where the words 'maintenance' and 'purgation' occur—'had no other idea before them than that of impressing on the legislature of Scotland the duty of giving legal sanction to the doctrines, and legal force to the anathemas which they had pronounced to be indisputably founded on the word of God.' We appeal to the candid reader, whether it be not only probable, but indubitably cer-

tain, that they meant nothing else—that they had no other object in view.\*

The *last* and chief ground on which the author of the Essay rests his assertion that the first Reformers and their immediate successors differed, in some degree, in their opinions respecting the spiritual jurisdiction, is the fact, that the distinction between the civil and spiritual powers is more clearly brought out in the Second Book of Discipline, drawn up by Andrew Melville and his contemporaries in 1578. The author tells us that, 'in the summer and autumn of 1560, the first Scotch Reformers were an enthusiastic and hopeful company. They trusted that Christ's law, as their own ardent dispositions had interpreted it, was to be adopted and engrossed in man's law; and thus, that Scotland was to become, under an opened gospel, as one of the "kingdoms of God, and of his Christ." But before the first year of the established Reformation had expired, they had already, in some degree, discovered their mistake. The Council would not ratify the book. The State thus suggested that it was, indeed, separate from the Church. The latter had no recourse but to

\* We find this remarkable passage in Knox's *Historie*. Referring to Sir James Sandilands' mission to France to obtain from the Queen the ratifications of the Act of Parliament approving of the Confession of Faith, and other Acts regarding the Protestant religion, Knox says, 'How the said Lord St John (Sir James Sandilands) was entreated, we list not to rehearse; but always no ratification brought he to us. But that we little regarded, or yet do regard; for all that we did was rather to show our dutiful obedience, than to beg of them any strength to our religion, which from God has full power, and needeth not the suffrage of man.'—*Historie*, p. 255.

fall back upon her instinctive sense of the difference of her province, and of her independence in it; and that public sanction which the Council refused, the General Assembly gave.' He then proceeds to say, that 'the course of eighteen years still farther taught the Reformers, by many a lesson of hard experience, that the time had not yet come when the ideas of 1560 could be realised. . . . The Second Book of Discipline is, accordingly, in many respects, a very different production from the first. That which is but incidentally mentioned, and not at all pursued, in the one, becomes the dominant pervading idea of the other. . . . We hear of the "Power of the Keys" as distinguished from the "Power of the Sword." We hear of the former being a direct commission from Christ himself to them unto whom the spiritual government of the church, by *lawful calling*, is committed; and we even hear of that power being held by them as the "true successors of the apostles." . . . It was not that in reading the bible, and reconstructing the Christian Society in conformity with its account, these principles had at once struck the first Reformers,—it was not that they had seen them to be enjoined by the word of God, else they would have been as prominent in the First as in the Second Book. It was that they were enjoined by the facts—the melancholy facts—of the world's condition. . . . The framers of the First Book were not impressed with it from the bible; but the framers of the Second Book had been deeply impressed with it from the world.

The corruptions of a bad civil government—its estrangement from, and opposition to, the ecclesiastical opinions of its people; this had taught them the distinction.’ \*

These astounding paragraphs, containing more transgressions against historical accuracy than we have space or leisure to demonstrate, cannot be accounted for on any other supposition than that the author is so enamoured of the fanciful and impracticable theory of Dr Arnold, that he imagines he sees that theory to have been dimly perceived and anticipated by Knox and his own ancestors; and is displeased at finding so hopeful a beginning in 1560 counter-worked and demolished by the men of 1578. It is true that the Second Book of Discipline is a more matured and thoroughly digested composition than the First; † and it is no less true, that the difficulties with which the Reformers of that age had to contend, especially on the subject of discipline—first, with Queen Mary, and, afterwards, with the counsellors of the young King James—did forcibly suggest to them the necessity of declaring more expressly in the Second Book of Discipline than they had done in the First, what they regarded as the only sound principles on the subject of the spiritual jurisdiction. But we do most explicitly dissent from the statement of the author of the Essay

\* Essay, pp. 42, 3, 4, 1st Ed.; pp. 41, 2, 3, 2d Ed.

† Calderwood informs us, that ‘the penners wished the posteritie, if God granted them occasion and libertie, to establish a more perfyte discipline.’—*History*, vol. ii., p. 50; Wodrow Ed.

—that only ‘the elements’ of these principles existed in the minds of Knox and the first Reformers—that it was reserved for Melville and his coadjutors to refer these to ‘some basis of abstract principle;’ and that, for the first time, they sought that basis in the bible. We hold, on the contrary, that, on this important point, the Reformers of 1560 and 1578 were entirely agreed—that both rested their belief on scripture—and that the opinions of the latter did not go, in the least degree, beyond those of the former period.

Our readers do not need to be informed that the supreme authority of scripture—which, as we shall show in a subsequent chapter, is a principle almost identical with the headship or supremacy of Christ—was the ground on which Wyckliffe, and Luther, and other Reformers, overthrew the claims of the Papacy, and the false doctrine and numberless superstitious observances of the Church of Rome. The Continental Reformers, in reconstructing and building up the true apostolical church, applied that great principle with more or less severity. Luther was contented with striving to remove what was corrupt in the so-called christian church. On the other hand, Zuingle, Calvin, and others adopted the higher and purer principle of setting aside the whole anti-christian system, and of allowing nothing but what was expressly warranted and enjoined by the word of God. The one class amended, and, to do them justice, attempted thoroughly to amend, the fabric of the church; the other *re-formed* it on what they conscientiously believed to be the true

scripture model. Neither class, however, was sufficiently careful to draw the line of demarcation between the office of the civil magistrate, and the spiritual jurisdiction. The Reformers of the Continent were, indeed, 'enthusiastic and hopeful' companies. They hailed the Protestant princes and magistrates as 'nursing fathers' of the true church in the face of the most formidable opposition which the world ever saw. From them they apprehended no evil—they hoped for all that was favourable to the maintenance and progress of pure christianity. Therefore, they did not guard so jealously as they ought to have done against the assumption of an authority to which the civil magistrate had no claim, either on the ground of scripture, or sound reason, or expediency. Soon they had reason to repent of their remissness. Its injurious consequences in Germany are well known to the reader of ecclesiastical history. In Geneva the senate absolved certain persons who had been excluded from the Lord's Table by a sentence of the church courts; and Calvin, for refusing to submit to the decree, was sentenced to banishment. In England, Henry VIII. had deposed the Pope from his supremacy in that country; and, sitting down in his room, exercised his usurped authority with a rigour, the mischievous effects of which are felt at the present hour.

It was after these events that Knox returned to his native country, and witnessed the triumph of the Reformation. He returned with more than the 'elements' of the spiritual jurisdiction-principle in his mind.

He returned, as we shall show, with the most clear and decided opinion, grounded on scripture, that Church and State—the civil and the spiritual jurisdictions—were separate and distinct; and that it was as incompetent for the sovereign to interfere with the liberty of the subject in matters of faith and worship, and with the exercise of discipline by the church, as it was for the church courts to intermeddle with the jurisdiction of the civil magistrate.

This fundamental principle appears so frequently influencing and guiding the conduct of Knox during the whole of his remarkable career, that we find it difficult to make a selection of our proofs. We give the following, premising that we concur in the definition of 'the Church,' by the author of the Essay. We understand by that phrase—unless where it is otherwise declared—the ministers and people of Scotland professing the Protestant religion.

We are informed by Dr M'Crie, that, as early as the year 1547, Knox taught in his first sermons in St Andrews, that no mortal man could be the head of the church. . . . That in religion men are bound to regulate themselves by divine laws, and that the sacraments ought to be administered exactly according to the institution and 'example of Christ.'\*

After this, and before going to Geneva, he preached with great acceptance in England, was appointed one of the chaplains of Edward VI., and had the offer of a benefice, which he refused, assigning as one of the

\* M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. i., p. 103, 2d Ed.

chief reasons of his refusal 'that many things at that time were worthy of reformation in the ministers of England, without the reformation whereof no minister did, or could, discharge his conscience before God; for no ministers in England had authority to separate the lepers from the heal—*i.e.*, the whole and sound, says Mr Strype, that is, they had not the full power of excommunication—which was, he said, a chief point of his office.'\* It cannot be doubted that this was one of his chief reasons for refusing the offer of a bishopric in England, which was afterwards made to him; of which the author of the Essay says, in language which we shall not characterise, that his 'scruples, if needless, were at least sincere.' The truth is, that Knox would not have officiated in the Church of England at all, had he not, at the period to which we refer, entertained the expectation—an expectation warranted by the opinions of some of the most eminent men then in that church—that it might be reformed after the scripture model, and delivered from the thralldom to the State,† and that

\* D. Buchanan's Life of Knox, pp. 11, 12, prefixed to fol. ed. of Knox's Historie.

† This we think a sufficient answer to the assertion in p. 146 of the Essay, that 'until Prelacy became the fanatic enemy of Presbytery, the latter bore towards it no hostility, no narrow prejudice—even no strong objection.' That the first Scottish Reformers maintained a friendly intercourse—we may add, intercommunion—with their Protestant brethren in England, is a most gratifying evidence of their freedom from 'hostility' and 'narrow prejudice' towards Episcopalians—a most gratifying proof of their christian charity. But it affords no evidence of their having 'no strong objection' to Episcopacy. Because the great and good Oliver Cromwell, while prosecuting the war against Scotland, wrote in the kindest terms of the Scotch as 'the Lord's people,' are we entitled to infer that Cromwell had no strong objections to Presbytery?

he might be helpful in the accomplishment of so important an object. So clear and decided, even at that time, were his conscientious convictions that the Church, in respect of faith, and worship, and government, must be free from the interference of the State.

In perfect harmony with these facts is his language in the first petition presented by the Protestants of Scotland to the Queen-Regent in 1558, to which he refers in the following terms in 1566, when, wearied almost to exhaustion by his contentions with Queen Mary and her councillors on the question of the spiritual jurisdiction:—‘For all others,’ (other Protestant churches) ‘how sincere that ever the doctrine be, quhilk by some is taucht, retein in their kirks, and in the ministers thereof, sum fotesteppes of Antichryst and dreggis of Papistry. Bot we (all praise to God alone) have nothing within our kirks, that ever flowed from that Man of Sinne. And this we acknowlege to be the strenth given to us of God; becaus we estemed not ourselves wyse in our own eyes, bot understanding our own wisdome to be bot mere foolischnes befor the Lord our God, layed it asyde, and followed onely that which we fand approved by himself. In this point culd never our enemies caus us to faynt. For our First Petition was, *That the revered face of the primitive and Apostoleck Kirk sould be reduced* (brought back) *agene to the eyis and knowlege of men.* And in that poynt we say, our God hath strenthened us till that the work was finished, and *that* the world may sie.’\*

\* Knox’s Historie, p. 282.

If it be alleged that the passage now quoted is irrelevant, because it may be a principle of the primitive church that the church may be merged in, or may be subject in some respects to the civil power, the same objection cannot be made to the following from Knox's Letter to the Queen-Regent in 1558:—

‘As Satan by craft hath corrupted the most holy ordinances of Goddes precepts, I meane, of the first table; in the place of the spirituall honoring of God, introducing mennes' dreams, inventions, and fantasies; so hath he, abusing the weakness of man, corrupted this precept of the second table, touching the honour which is due to parentes, under whom are comprehended princes and teachers. For now the devill hath so blinded the senses of many, that they cannot, or at least will not learne what appertaineth to God, and what to Cesar. But, because the Spirite of God hath said, *honour the king*, therefore, whatsoever they commande, be it right or wrong, must be obeyed. But hevie shall the judgment be which shall apprehend such blasphemers of Goddes majestie, who dare be so bold as to affirme that God hath commanded any creature to be obeyed against himselfe.’\*

The well-known reply of Knox to Secretary Lethingtoun is alone sufficient to show that he understood, and held most decidedly, the church's freedom from the civil jurisdiction. Referring to the meetings of the General Assemblies, Lethingtoun said:—‘The question is, Whether the Quene allowes sick conventiouns? It

\* Knox's Historie, p. 418.

was answered, That if the libertie of the kirke stude, or sould stand upoun the Quene's allowance or disallowance, we are assured, not onely to lack Assemblies, bot also to lack the libertie of the publick preiching of the Evangel: that affirmative was mocked, and the contrary affirmed. *Weill*, said the other, *tyme will try the treuth*: But to my former words this I will add, *Tak from us the fredome of Assemblies, and tak from us the Evangell: for, without Assemblies, how sall gude ordour and unity in doctrine be keapit ?*\*

We might quote many similar passages from the writings of Knox. Again and again he speaks of Christ as the head, the only head of the church. He reasons in favour of the church's exclusive jurisdiction in matters spiritual from the examples of Daniel and his companions in Babylon, and of the apostles; and never fails to kindle into the highest fervour of his bold and manly eloquence when the Queen, or any of her councillors, question the spiritual power and liberty of the church. But, perhaps, we may make a stronger impression on the author of the Essay, and its readers, when we inform them that the sentiments of Knox on this subject were those also of some of the most enlightened and distinguished Protestant leaders of that period.

Lord James Stuart, afterwards the Regent Murray, was accused, in a threatening letter from the King of France, husband of Mary, of being the head, and one of the principal nourishers of tumults and seditions in

\* Knox's Historie, p. 295.

Scotland, to which accusation Lord James replied in a letter dated 12th Aug., 1559, in the following terms:—  
 ‘My conscience persuadis me in thir procedings to have done nothing against God, nor the dewtiefall obedience towards your Hienesse and the Queine’s Grace, my Souverane, utherwayis it sould have bein to repent, and also amended, according to your Majestie’s expectatioun of me: But your Hienes being trewly informed, and perswaded that the thing quhilk we have done makis for the Advancement of Godis glorie (as it dois indeed) without ony derogatioun to your Majestie’s dew obedience, we doubt not but your Majestie sall be weill contented with our procedings, quhilk being grounded upon the commandment of the Eternall God, we dar not leif the sam unaccomplisht, onlie wisching and desyring your Majestie did know the sam, and Truthe thereof, as it is perswadit to our consciences, and all them that ar trewle instructed in the Eternal word of our God, upoun quhome we cast our cair for all dangeris that may follow the accomplischement of his eternall will, and to quhome we commend your Hienes, beseikand Him to illuminat your hairt with the Evangel of his eternall truthe, to know your Majestie’s dewtie towards us, your poor subjectis, Godis chosen pepell, and quhat ye aucht to crave justlie of thame agane: for then we could have no occasioun to feir your Majestie’s wrathe and indignatioun, nor your Hienes suspicioun in our inobedience. The same God have your Majestie in his eternall saifgaird.’\*

\* Knox’s Historie, p. 157.

A similar sentiment was expressed by the Laird of Londie, when, in the General Assembly, 1564, perhaps with needless jealousy, he complained that some of the Protestant noblemen, depending on the court, had withdrawn with some of the ministers to conclude things which were not previously proposed in the Assembly, and remarked that that appeared to him 'to be a thing very prejudicial to the liberty of the church.'

Still more express is the language of Erskine of Dun to the Regent Morton in 1571 :—'There is a spirituall jurisdiction and power which God hath givin unto his kirk and to those who beare office therein; and there is a temporal power givin of God to kings and civill magistrats. Both the powers are of God, and most agreing to the fortifeing one of another, if they be right used. But when the corruptioun of man entereth in, confounding the offices, usurping to himself what he pleaseth, nothing regarding the good order appointed of God, then confusioun followeth in all estats. . . . A greater offence or contempt of God can no prince doe, than to sett up by his authoritie men in spirituall offices, as to creat bishops and pastors of the kirk; for so to doe is to conclude no kirk of God to be; for the kirk cannot be, without it have the owne proper jurisdiction and libertie, with the ministratioun of such offices as God hath appointed.'\*

In what, then, consisted the difference between the compilers of the First and Second Books of Discipline, on the subject of the spiritual jurisdiction? In the more

\* Calderwood, vol. iii., pp. 158, 159; Wodrow Ed.

frequent mention of the subject by the latter, says the Duke. Surely his Grace does not mean to say, that there is anything like argument in this. If it can be proved that the distinction between the civil and spiritual powers was held by both—and we think that cannot be denied—the more frequent mention of it at a later period does not go to prove, as the author of the Essay has affirmed, that ‘a definite separation between civil and spiritual power had not yet acquired shape or consistence’ in the minds of the first Reformers. But his Grace adds, that, in the Second Book, the distinction is drawn between the ‘Power of the Keys’ and the ‘Power of the Sword;’ and that we hear of the former being a direct commission from Christ himself ‘to them unto whom the spiritual government of the church, by *lawful calling*, is committed.’ And what less than this did Knox’s craving the sanction of the Scottish Parliament to the First Book imply? For he craved that the church should have the power of governing which the book described; and he craved it on this ground, that he and his fellows asked nothing more than ‘they were able to prove by God’s plain scriptures.’ Last and worst of all: his Grace says:—‘We even hear’ (in the Second Book) of ‘the spiritual government of the church being held by them as the true successors of the apostles.’ This he mentions as the very acmé of spiritual and priestly presumption. What will the readers of the Essay think when we have quoted to them the following passage from a letter written by John Knox in 1559 to

certain of the nobility of Scotland, who appeared at that time to be growing lukewarm in the cause of the Reformation?—

‘Ye may perhaps contemne and despyis the excommunication of the kirk (now by God’s michtie power erected among us) as a thing of na force; but yet dout we nothing bot that our kirk, and the trew ministers of the same, have the sam power quhilk our Maister, Christ Jesus, granted to his apostles in these words: *Quhose synes ye sall forgive, sall be forgiven; and quhose synes ye retein sall be retein*: and that becaus they preiche, and we beleve, the sam doctrine quhilk is contained in his most blessit word.’\*

We have extended our observations on this subject to what some of our readers may consider an undue length. As Scottish Protestants, we felt that the author of the Essay has done injustice to the fathers of the Reformation on this head, and that his remarks lead the reader to suppose that the claim of the Free Church to the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction has not always been made to rest on scripture grounds, but has been the result of a gradual rise in the church’s demands, suggested by the circumstances in which she was placed, and the attempts of the civil power to undermine or abridge her authority. As Free Churchmen, we do not rest our belief of the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction—for with us it is a matter of religious belief—on the opinions of men, however eminent.

\* Knox’s Historie, p. 133.

But it is most gratifying to be able to show, as we think we have done, that the views of the first Reformers and their immediate successors were precisely the same. If it were necessary, it might with equal clearness be proved that no change of sentiment had taken place in the 17th century: And we appeal with confidence to the statements and authorities in the commencement of this chapter for the perfect agreement of the belief of the Church of Scotland now with that of our fathers of the first and second Reformation—we mean of 1560 and 1638.

It is necessary, however, before closing this chapter, to advert to one most important particular, in which Scottish Protestants of later times, we rejoice to say, differ from these great and good men. To this we alluded in general terms in some of the preceding remarks. The difference of opinion does not affect the essential distinction between the civil and spiritual jurisdiction, but respects the duty of the civil magistrate. They held that it was the duty of the civil magistrate to punish with death idolatry, and certain other transgressions of the moral law.\*

\* We do not know to whom the author of the Essay refers, when he says at p. 22 that 'Presbyterian writers are not always inclined to mention this fact;' and, among other inaccuracies into which he has fallen—we doubt not from the haste with which he has consulted his authorities—he says: 'Even the learned and judicious biographer of Knox, Dr Thomas M'Crie, omits the distinct mention of this fact, under the phrase "certain penalties." But this is weakness,' &c. We have not before us the first edition of Dr M'Crie's work, but in the second edition, p. 128, his Grace will find the fact expressly mentioned—without any attempt at concealment, or inclination to *reticence*.

The author of the *Essay* ascribes this—which was indeed a part of the religious belief of the Reformers—to the spirit of intolerance engendered by the cruel persecutions of the Church of Rome; and he thinks it a strange passage in the history of the human mind, that the men who so boldly and unequivocally disowned the binding authority of any interpretation of scripture but the scripture itself, should conjure the Parliament to persecute the adherents of the Romish faith, and dare to withhold from others what they claimed so stoutly for themselves—the right of private judgment.

This is far from being a just view of the conduct of the Reformers in this matter. They admitted to the fullest extent the right of private judgment. They declared themselves ready and willing to argue with the Romanists, and all others, on the common ground of scripture—the only ground on which questions touching the doctrines, ordinances, and duties of revealed religion can be argued conclusively. Again and again they proclaimed their willingness to engage in public disputation on these grounds. The Popish bishops declined, unless they were permitted to appeal to the authority of councils and tradition, which Knox and his brethren consistently refused. But, under the Mosaic economy, idolatry (and the mass was justly regarded as idolatry), adultery, and blasphemy, were punished with death. In common with all the men of that age, the Reformers believed these laws to be binding on the rulers of a christian state, and they required

the magistrate to carry them into execution.\* They did not perceive that what was obligatory on the Jews, under a theocracy, was not obligatory under the New Testament dispensation. This was their error. It was an error in their belief; it did not proceed from a wrathful and intolerant spirit. All that they demanded was, that the particular crimes which were capitally punished under the Old Testament dispensation should be punished, in like manner, under the New. As Knox said to the Queen-Regent, they would not compel any one to religion; but they could not 'of conscience . . . suffer that the right administration of Christ's sacraments should give place to manifest idolatry.'† We admit that, when he spoke thus, he

\* That the opinion or belief referred to was not peculiar to the Protestant ministers of that period, is evident from the conference between the Protestant lords and a committee of the General Assembly, 1564, in which we find the following remarkable passage:—'Our question,' said Maitland of Lethingtoun, 'is, Quhiddir, That we may and aucht to suppress the Quenis Mess? Or, quhiddir, That hir idolatry sall be laid to our charge? Quhat ye may, said John Knox, be force I dispute not; but quhat ye may, and aucht to do be God's expresse commandement, that I can tell. Idolatry aucht not onely to be suppressed, bot the idolater aucht to die the deith, unless we will accuse God. I know, said Lethingtoun, the idolater is commanded to die the deith; bot be quhom? Be the pepel of God, said the other. For the commandement was made to Israel, as ye may reid. . . . But there is no commandement gevin to the pepel to punisch their king, said the secretary.'—Knox's Historie, p. 357. Maitland admitted the correctness of Knox's position as a general principle, but makes an exception in favour of the sovereign. He seems, however, to have had some glimpses of the true principle of toleration; for a little onward we find him saying:—'Bot the pepel may not execute God's judgement, bot man leave it unto himself, quho will either punisch it be deith, be weir (war), be imprisonment, or be sum other kynd of his plagues.' He makes this remark, however, only with reference to the sovereign.

† Knox's Historie, p. 150.

contradicted himself: For, if the celebration of the mass were prohibited on pain of death, the Romanists could not make full profession of their faith. Nay, more: we are not so blinded by our admiration of the fathers of the Reformation in Scotland, as to affirm that they were altogether free from an intolerant spirit. They would have been more than men, if they had not felt in some measure an unholy resentment against their persecutors. But the acknowledged fact, that no one suffered death from the Reformers on account of his profession of religion, with this in addition, that in words, and by their conduct, they declared the preaching of the gospel to be in their opinion the only effectual means of eradicating and opposing Popery, demonstrates that they did not look to persecution as a mean of disseminating their faith; and that the spirit of christian love prevailed, as Dr M'Crie remarks, over their erroneous belief. 'God,' says Knox, addressing the Popish princes who persecuted the Protestants, 'will not use his saintes and chosen children to punish you. For with them is alwaies mercie, yea, even although God have pronounced a curse and malediction; as in the history of Josua is plaine. But as ye have pronounced wrong and cruel judgment without mercie, so will he punish you by such as in whom there is no mercie.'\*

We regret exceedingly that, in writing professedly for the information of Englishmen, the author of the Essay has occasionally made remarks calculated to strengthen

\* M'Crie's Life of Knox, vol. ii., p. 129; 2d Ed. Note.

their groundless prejudices against the Scottish Reformers. In one passage he speaks of 'a bigoted Popery, and a hardly less bigoted Protestantism:' in another he charges them with 'fanaticism.'

Johnson defines 'bigotry' to be 'blind zeal—prejudice.' If the Duke meant to apply this term to those whom Knox used to call 'the rascal multitude,' we are ready to admit the justice of the charge, and that of fanaticism also. But, if he meant it to be applicable to the Protestants as a body, and to their leaders, we affirm that it is altogether destitute of proof. The Protestants, whether of the 16th or 17th centuries, were not bigots. Their leaders were the most learned men of their age and country. With the exception which has been mentioned above, they held no opinion—they pursued no line of conduct, which they were not able to justify by an appeal to reason or scripture. No men less deserve to be called bigots than they.

The charge of fanaticism deserves a somewhat larger notice, involving, as it does, a principle which we deem of the last importance in the religious profession of churches and individuals. It occurs at p. 139 of the Essay. 'The most prominent characteristic,' says the author, 'of the time of the civil wars, and of that which immediately preceded them, was its fanaticism. Yet how difficult it is to define, or even to illustrate the meaning of this word! That which would appear an extreme instance of it to some, seems an example only of devotion, or of noble witnessing in the cause of truth, to others. The Episcopalian "Churchman" will see

fanaticism in the conduct of the Covenanters; whilst the Presbyterian will see it with equal readiness in the daring pretensions of Prelatic priesthood; but neither the one nor the other will probably be willing to admit the charge against the party with which his own sympathies are connected. In the sense in which we understand fanaticism, we see it in the conduct and in the language of BOTH. It may be well, therefore, to define, as nearly as we can, what that sense is. When we say, then, that fanaticism is a prominent characteristic of the time of the civil wars, we mean that in almost all the parties of that time,—in the prince, in the priest, and in the people,—there was fatal intoxicated indulgence in that passion which leads men to claim presumptuously the direct sanction of God to their own cause, principles, and conduct. This is an attempt which frequently begins in a keen perception and defence of something really good and true. Not unfrequently also, it arises from bad passions seeking to hide by sanctifying themselves. Between these two extremes there is every degree in which truth may be mixed with error and passion. The fanaticism of some parties rests on high and noble truths—laws of natural justice, or some deep spiritual verity, which covers and embraces a multitude of these. That of other parties may have no better foundation than some mere semblance, or partial truth, wrested from its proper place, and covered with a monstrous superstructure of ambition, arrogance, and pride.\* The author then

\* Essay, pp. 139, 140, 1st Ed. ; pp. 134, 135, 2d Ed.

proceeds to illustrate these general observations, by referring to the Presbyterian Church of those times, not omitting its successor, the Free Church of Scotland—to its maintaining the distinction between spiritual and civil power—to its opposition to Episcopacy—to the Solemn League and Covenant, and to its resting its various doctrines and actings in these matters on the authority of the sacred scripture.

Now, in the *first* place, we demur to his Grace's definition of 'fanaticism.' It is new; it is unauthorised; it is incorrect; it is inapplicable. One of the definitions of it by our great lexicographer is, 'religious frenzy.' If the author use the word at all in that sense, we shall quote the Duke of Argyll against himself: For at p. 26, we find him speaking thus:—'In the leaders by whom the Covenant was prepared, it is certain there was united with a state of mind which must appear to us due only to a fevered state of religious sentiment, a most remarkable amount of calmness, of discernment, and of knowledge of mankind. We must not suffer ourselves to be blinded to what was sound and true, deserving our fullest sympathy, in the men or in their measures, by the extravagance of language which characterised the time, and much of which is still, unfortunately, retained in many Presbyterian histories of the Covenant. . . . And in respect to Henderson—whom we select as the representative of the many who supported him in his measures, and who probably sympathised with him in his language—we find in his whole course at this time, as

well as afterwards, in the practical conduct of affairs, evidence of the coolest judgment, of an accurate knowledge of the constitution which he was the chief instrument of restoring to his country—of the most intelligent apprehension of the principles of settled liberty—of the most logical accuracy and distinctness in the defence and statement of his principles—and . . . of a willingness to express them with courtesy and moderation.’ This language does honour to the Duke, especially when conjoined with what he candidly says in defence of the Covenant itself. Coming from such a quarter, it forms a very strong vindication of our Covenanting forefathers from the charge of fanaticism. What his Grace calls a ‘fevered state of religious sentiment,’ was neither more nor less than ardent, but enlightened christian zeal for the Protestant faith, which, with good reason, they believed to be in danger from the insidious approaches of Popery in the guise of English Episcopacy. A fevered state of mind, in the proper acceptation of these words, could not exist along with ‘calmness and discernment,’ ‘the coolest judgment,’ ‘logical accuracy and distinctness,’ and ‘courtesy and moderation.’ If farther vindication be thought necessary, the reader will find it in the unvarnished statement of the facts belonging to the history of that period by honest Stevenson. We do not think it possible for any man, unless strongly prejudiced against Scottish Presbytery, to rise from the reading of Stevenson’s history without the highest admiration of the calmness the intelligence, the christian

forbearance, and the fortitude and magnanimity of the men who were the chief actors in the memorable struggle of that remarkable period.

A fanatic, in the common acceptation of the word—we do not refer to its use as a nickname for persons in earnest about religion—is a man who believes himself to be inspired, and acts under the influence of that belief. Such were Storch and Munzer in the 16th century, and the Mormonites of America, and others in our own country at the present hour. The author of the Essay accounts it fanaticism, when men ‘claim presumptuously the direct sanction of God to their own cause, principles, and conduct.’ To this definition we should not object, did he not explain it by including under it those who do not claim the *direct sanction of God to their cause*, but refer to scripture in justification of their religious belief, and their conduct with reference to religion. In this sense, he thinks that the Covenanters were chargeable with fanaticism.

Without stronger evidence than the volume before us affords, we will not believe that the Duke of Argyll has embraced the semi-infidel sentiment, that we cannot, with any degree of certainty, discover the will of God in the Bible. We will not believe that he regards that precious gift of God as uttering ‘an uncertain sound’ on the essential doctrines and precepts of christianity—that he does not reverence it as a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path, and as setting before us a way *in which* ‘*the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err.*’ If, however, he will consider

attentively what he has written, he can scarcely fail to perceive that he has afforded some ground for so serious a charge. Christ is 'the light of the world;' and himself has told us,\* that 'if any man will do his will'—that is, if a man sit down with the docility of a little child at the feet of Jesus, really desirous of knowing and doing his will—'he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.' There is a clear revelation of everything which it is essential for us to know; and nothing but the prejudices of men prevent them from seeing it in all its brightness. When, therefore, a body of men, are fully persuaded in their own mind that certain doctrines are revealed, and ordinances enjoined, and worship and discipline prescribed in the word of God, it is their solemn, bounden duty, to believe and embrace them. They believe, therefore they speak and act.† There is no frenzy, no fanaticism in this, but plain manifest obedience to plainly commanded duty. It is in this way that men come to the 'assurance of the understanding' in the all-important concern of their own salvation. It is by the same process that the Protestant churches have arrived at so remarkable a harmony in the great and essential articles of their belief. In publishing their confessions, they did not lay claim to infallibility as interpreters of scripture, but gave what, after mature consideration and fervent prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they believed to be the obvious meaning of a clear and infallible revelation. The Protestant Reformers—

\* John vii. 17.

† Psalm cxvi. 10.

those of Scotland especially—may have claimed divine authority for more than was warranted by scripture, and were dogmatical and intolerant in pressing such things (subscription to the covenant, for example) on their fellow-christians. But neither was this fanaticism. It was nothing more than obedience to what they regarded—unwarrantably it may be—as the revealed will of God declared to them in his word. No body of men can with less justice be accused of claiming the *direct* sanction of God to their cause, principles, and conduct.

If fanaticism could with justice be imputed to the Scottish Reformers, there were no occasions on which that spirit was more likely to be called forth than when they were compelled, in self-defence, to arm against their sovereign ; yet in no part of their history are they less chargeable with fanaticism. Never was loyalty more severely tried, and never did it more honourably stand the test. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Scotland had to deal with the most perfidious race of sovereigns who ever occupied a throne. Promises were made by them to their Protestant subjects, and were broken almost as soon and as often as they were made. Yet we find the latter always reluctant to arm, always ready to listen to terms of accommodation with the same parties, who, by their past unfaithfulness, had forfeited all claim to their respect and confidence.

Fanatics would not have acted thus. They would have yielded to a just indignation against the rulers by whom they had been so frequently deluded and

betrayed, and would have used the power, which occasionally the Reformers possessed, of ridding themselves of their oppressors. So did not our enlightened, our truly christian forefathers. 'We will keep our ministers, the preachers of the word, from being murdered,' said the Protestant nobility of Scotland; and the people with one voice responded to the declaration; but they were equally ready to lay down their arms, when the threatened aggression had ceased. They had 'the Bible in one hand.' It taught them loyalty, even to faithless and tyrannical princes. They had 'the sword in the other,' when they were hunted into the glens and mountains by the ruthless soldiers of bigoted and despotic monarchs. We trust that the Duke of Argyll does not think that there was any inconsistency in this. He has said truly, referring, we cannot doubt, to the principles held and professed by the Free Church of Scotland, 'There are at this moment very near us, and in no dormant state, opinions which, under a slight change of outward circumstance, might seek expression in another Covenant.\*' The signs of the times indicate that that change is rapidly approaching, and that the hour is not far distant when Popery, cherished and warmed into new life by the British Government, and, uniting with infidelity, may compel us and our children to bind ourselves to one another by a solemn mutual engagement, and to stand for our life against the common enemy. When that day shall arrive, the Cove-

\* Essay, p. 133, 1st Ed.; p. 133, 2d Ed.

nanters of the nineteenth century may want the aid of those whose ancestors perilled, yea, lost their life in the same glorious cause ; but, without the help of the noble and the mighty of the earth, let us hope and pray that, faithful to their heavenly King, they may share with their distinguished forefathers the honour of preserving, it may be, of restoring, the lost liberties of their country.

## CHAPTER II.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL'S OPINIONS RESPECTING THE TRUE THEORY OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH THE SAME WITH DR ARNOLD'S—BRIEF STATEMENT OF DR ARNOLD'S OPINIONS ON THIS SUBJECT—THE CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH THEORY IMPRACTICABLE—DR A.'S LATER IMPRESSIONS REGARDING IT—THE PLAN PROPOSED ADMITTED BY THE ESSAYIST TO BE IMPRACTICABLE IN THE PRESENT STATE OF RELIGIOUS OPINIONS—A PARTIAL COINCIDENCE OF CHURCH AND STATE INADMISSIBLE ON DR A.'S PRINCIPLE—VIRTUAL ASSUMPTION BY THE DUKE OF ANOTHER PRINCIPLE ESSENTIALLY DIFFERENT—HIS GRACE'S VIEWS OF THE RIGHT OF SELF-GOVERNMENT—HE CONCEDES AN UNDEFINED POWER OF LIMITATION TO THE CIVIL MAGISTRATE—DENIES THAT THE CHURCH'S RIGHT IS FOUNDED IN SCRIPTURE—VINDICATION OF THE FIRST SCOTTISH REFORMERS ON THIS HEAD.

IN vindicating the constitution of the Church of Scotland, and repelling the attacks of the author of the Essay on what, from the Reformation downwards, has been its fundamental and distinguishing principle, it is not essentially necessary to ascertain and disprove the views which he holds of the theory of a christian church. Affirming as we do, that the government of the church is by appointment of the Lord Jesus Christ, 'in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate,' and that this is the doctrine of scripture—

it might be necessary for us to reclaim against a different and opposite opinion, if it also professed to have the same divine authority: For both cannot be true; and the one, if true, necessarily destroys the other. But the Duke of Argyll does not allege that his views have the sanction of divine, that is, of scriptural authority. It is one of his chief complaints against the Church of Scotland, that she rests her belief on the subject of the spiritual jurisdiction, on the scripture; and with perfect consistency, he does not claim that highest of all warrants for his own. He may, therefore, entertain a very different opinion from us on that important subject, without touching one of the arguments on which we rest our belief. If we are able to prove that our doctrine on the spiritual jurisdiction is founded on scripture, our position is unassailable by any theory which his Grace or any other person may devise and promulgate. Before that authority, every invention, every theory of man must bow.

There are considerations, however, which render it, if not necessary, at least desirable, that his Grace's views on this subject should be shown to be untenable, before we proceed to the statement of the scripture argument. In the *first* place, in every case the truth stands forth more impregnable when the principles opposed to it are shown to be incapable of being defended by solid argument; we may add, with regard to the present, when they cannot be applied without an entire surrender of the church to the command of the

civil magistrate. And, *secondly*, he claims in support of his views the opinions of our first Reformers: and it would not be to the honour of the Church of Scotland, if those who believe his views to be erroneous were to allow the memory of Knox and his colleagues to lie under the imputation of holding opinions which they regard as at variance with the word of God. For these reasons, and for these only, we shall devote a portion of our space to the consideration of his Grace's views on the constitution of a christian church.

These are not stated with the clearness which is one of the strongest recommendations of the other parts of the Essay. If we have succeeded in our endeavours to comprehend them, they are the following:—

The author holds the doctrine propounded by Hooker, and more recently by Dr Arnold, that, in a right constitution of a christian church, the State is the church; in other words, that if Church and State were rightly constituted, the Church would be so merged in the State, that together they would form a 'christian church, and a christian commonwealth'—that the church, like every other society formed for lawful purposes, has the right of self-government, though not to the exclusion of the civil magistrate, who is entitled to interfere, even in its purely spiritual administration—that this right of self-government is not derived from Jesus Christ as its Head, and is not founded on scripture, but is natural and inherent, and is delegated by the christian people, the members of the church, to ministers and

elders, their representatives. He thinks that the views of Knox and his colleagues on this subject were different from those of their successors—that the former realised the idea of a christian commonwealth, and that the opinions of Melville, Henderson, and others, and of the Free Church of Scotland, imply the assumption of a clerical and priestly authority, resembling, though perhaps imperfectly, the arrogant claims of the Romish hierarchy and the tractarians of the Church of England.

One great objection—and it is a fatal objection—to the theory of Dr Arnold, is, that it is impracticable, even on the supposition that the rulers and other inhabitants of a country may be actuated by a pure faith, and imbued with the spirit of vital christianity—a supposition which will not be realised till millennial times. The things with which the Church and the State have to deal are so dissimilar that they cannot, without injury to both, become the subjects of one and the same administration. The Church is occupied with the conscience of men; its business is to inculcate a pure religious belief, and to promote and maintain pure morality. The State legislates and administers with reference to person and property, and the external conduct of men. The former has reference to eternity—the latter to time. The province of the one is essentially distinct from that of the other: they cannot be united without confusion and injury to both. But if impracticable in millennial times, how much more now, when the diversity of religious opinions is

so great, and when it will not be affirmed by any one that enlightened piety generally prevails in any class of society—certainly not in that class whence those are drawn who take the management of public affairs!

We do not know whether any one has attempted to point out the practical application of Dr Arnold's principle. Chevalier Bunsen, in his *Church of the Future*, cannot be said to have done this—differing, as we think he does essentially, though not professedly, from Dr Arnold. To us it appears inconceivable, that under the idea of a christian commonwealth, the Church can exist in any other form than as a department of the State. It is assumed that there must be ministers of one or more grades, whose office it shall be to teach the people, to dispense the ordinances of religion, and to maintain order and discipline—all who profess christianity being united with them as members, and constituent parts of the church, of which these are the ministers or office-bearers. Either this body so constituted, must be in the position of a distinct and separate department of the State, under the charge of a secretary or minister of state, expressly appointed for that purpose; or it must be in the nobler position in which the Church of Scotland stood before 1843, a position as incompatible with the idea of a christian commonwealth, as that of the priesthood of a prelatial church. On the other hand, standing in the first of these positions, armed with all the power and authority of the State, it may, like the government of the Canton de Vaud at the present moment, exercise the most

intolerable spiritual tyranny over the conscience of individuals; or, like the Church of Rome, when in the plenitude of its power, it usurped both the civil and ecclesiastical authority, it may crush, with overwhelming force, the dearest rights and liberties of the people.

It is to the honour of Dr Arnold, whose candour and openness to conviction were as remarkable as the other qualities of his great and amiable nature, that, along with other opinions, which, in his sturdy independence, he had hastily embraced, he saw reason before he died to question the soundness of his views on the subject of the Church. 'I am, myself,' he said, 'so much inclined to the idea of a strong social bond, that I ought not to be suspected of any tendency to anarchy; *yet I am beginning to think that the idea may be overstrained, and that the attempt to merge the soul and will of the individual man in the general body is, when fully developed, contrary to the very essence of christianity.*' Again, a few months before his death, he writes thus:—'As it is, I feel so deeply the danger and evil of the false church system, that despairing of seeing the true church restored, I am disposed to cling, not from choice but from necessity, to the Protestant tendency of laying the whole stress on christian religion, and adjourning the notion of Church *sine die.*'\* This is the language of a truly christian man, seeking the truth; willing to embrace it—even when opposed to his strongest prepossessions—and attaching, as

\* Dr Arnold —quoted in 'North British Review,' No. IV. p. 442.

every real christian does, the chief importance to christian doctrine, putting therefore in the second place only, the form of church-government under which it is preserved. One can scarcely entertain a doubt that, had Dr Arnold lived, he would have seen the impossibility of applying his favourite theory to any circumstances in which the church may be placed; and would have sought in that book which he revered so profoundly, for some scheme of church-government better adapted to the present condition of the church, and less likely to endanger the highest interests of mankind.

The Duke of Argyll is not so far committed to Dr Arnold's opinions on the subject of the Church, as to preclude the hope of his pursuing a similar course: For it is evident, that he too questions the possibility of applying the Christian-Commonwealth principle to the existing state of things. 'If,' he says, 'the boundaries of a nation coincided exactly with the boundaries of any one religious system—that is to say, if all the citizens of a state were members of the same religious body, one and the same Assembly might rightfully and naturally legislate on both these subjects. It is merely the necessities of outward circumstance—the fact of religious divisions, and other facts of a similar kind—which prevent both these subjects being cognisable by one and the same authority. No divine law would be infringed by an entire coincidence of the two authorities, *were it practicable*; still less is any such law infringed by a partial coincidence, where it very often

is both possible and wise.’\* His Grace suspends the application of the Arnoldian theory on a condition which has not been realised, and, in all probability, never will be realised in the history of the world—on the perfect unanimity of a whole nation on the subject of religion. Where, we ask respectfully, is the wisdom of contending for an impossibility? He admits that the proposal of Dr Arnold is impracticable: why then does he contend for it? Why not deal with things as they are; and, if he be not satisfied with the Church as at present constituted, apply himself to the devising of some scheme capable of application to the actual condition of the world and of the Church of Christ?

But he informs us that, though an entire coincidence of the two authorities is impracticable, a ‘partial coincidence’ is very often both possible and wise. With all deference, we affirm that the Christian-Commonwealth principle must be accepted as a whole, and in its integrity, or not at all. It is of its very essence that Church and State be merged in one body, and that things civil and spiritual be, as the Duke has expressed it, under ‘one and the same authority.’ The moment they are placed, partly under the one, and partly under the other, that moment the principle is deserted, and a new and altogether different principle assumed. There is no longer one body, and one jurisdiction, but two. Accordingly we do not find in the Essay any examples of a partial coincidence of the two authorities. It requires more than even his Grace’s ingenuity to

\* Essay, p. 294, 1st Ed.; p. 282, 2d Ed.

imagine a case of that description which would not involve a rejection of the principle.\*

In the Appendix to the second edition of the Essay, the author complains loudly of what he calls the *misrepresentations* of the 'Quarterly,' in charging him with all the opinions consequent, or supposed to be consequent, on Dr Arnold's principle, and in stating that his views of 'the true principles of Scottish Presbytery on the nature of the Church, INCLUDING ITS ESSENTIAL RELATION TO THE STATE, were in fact those of Dr Arnold.' His Grace affirms that all that he has asserted is, that the views of the first Reformers, and of Dr A., on *the Nature of the Church*, were substantially the same. He repels, with a warmth becoming the representative of the house of Argyll, the charge advanced by the reviewer, of holding what the reviewer calls 'the hyper-Erastian theories' of Dr Arnold; and refers to various passages of the Essay in vindication of himself, still, however, avowing his attachment to the Christian-Commonwealth principle, notwithstanding his having acknowledged it to be—in its integrity—impracticable.

It is here that we find the author impenetrably obscure. Holding the principle that Church and State

\* If his Grace regards the admission of ruling elders into the Courts of the Church of Scotland as an example of a partial coincidence of the two authorities, we would remind him, that these so-called laymen do not constitute the State or the representatives of the State; and, in the practice to which he refers, there is no merging of the *two authorities*. The Courts continue Spiritual Courts, with a jurisdiction—before the Disruption at least—altogether separate and distinct from that of the Courts of Law.

ought to be one, and under the same authority, he pleads at the same time with great earnestness for the church's 'right of self-government'—for the independence of its General Assemblies—expresses his gratitude to Knox and his coadjutors, (Christian-Commonwealth men, if we may believe his Grace,) for apprehending and asserting the right of self-government, and declares his conviction of its great importance to civil society, as well as to the church, in the present times. Now to us it appears self-evident, that the principle of Dr Arnold, and the right of self-government by the church, are irreconcilable. Dr Arnold is perfectly consistent when he says, that his idea 'was *not* Erastianism;' and that 'the subjection of the Church to the State . . . would be a most miserable and most unchristian condition:' and this he could say consistently, because he held his favourite principle in all its integrity: and his theory was one to which neither Erastianism nor its opposite could be applied: For, were Church and State one, and their affairs under one and the same authority, there could be no Erastian interference on the one hand, and no ecclesiastical domination on the other. But his young disciple is not equally consistent; for he holds the principle—or, rather, he thinks that he holds it—and he holds with equal earnestness and tenacity, the church's right of self-government, affirming of it, that it is 'a principle on which all sound ecclesiastical politics must rest.' The two things cannot be reconciled. His Grace has not attempted to reconcile them. If

he make the attempt, he will certainly fail in the execution.

The truth is, we believe that, in clinging to the idea of a partial coincidence, he has, without perceiving it, deserted the Arnoldian principle, and has begun to discourse on one essentially different. He has come down to the region of sober and tangible realities. Despairing, like Dr Arnold, of seeing things as he wishes them to be, he admits that there is, and must be a distinction of one kind or another between civil and spiritual; and, finding that they are separate in point of fact, he would make the system as it now exists as perfect as possible. Assuming, therefore, that his Grace, in treating of the Church's right of self-government, proceeds on the ground of the Church being distinct from the State, let us inquire what his views of that right are; and whether they be such as to justify the glowing language in which he has expressed his opinion of its importance to society and to the Church.

'The right of self-government,' says his Grace, 'which, as founded on true ideas of the nature of "The Church," is a principle on which all sound ecclesiastical politics must rest, is one which is nevertheless not susceptible of just expression as a religious dogma, or as an abstract truth. It is a right of too indefinite meaning to be capable of assertion in such a shape. It may exist in a thousand different forms, and is compatible with a thousand different modifications and restrictions.' This is liberal enough: His Grace pro-

ceeds—‘A church would be self-governed in one sense and in one degree, which elected a single representative, and agreed to abide by his decisions. A church would be self-governed in another sense, and in another degree, whose legislative and executive powers were vested in an Episcopate originally appointed by election.’ We looked for bread: His Grace gives us a stone: He proceeds—‘A church might be self-governed in another degree, which had grown up under conditions of civil society, limiting to a certain extent its powers of government, and beyond this limit leaving it free.’ We asked for a fish: He gives us a serpent. He concludes in the following most accommodating terms:—‘A church might be self-governed in other degrees, under the infinite varieties of circumstance and arrangement, which it is easy to conceive.’\*

Truly this is to concede a power of limitation to the civil government, with which the most zealous Erastian must be perfectly satisfied, and for which the ministers and elders of the Duke’s own church, writhing under the fetters of Lord Aberdeen’s Act, ought to be, and, we believe, are truly grateful; whilst it leaves blind and misguided Free Churchmen altogether without excuse for dissolving their connection with the State. A right of self-government so limited, and so incapable of application to practical purposes, cannot be founded on ‘true ideas of the nature of the Church.’ ‘It is not susceptible,’ says his Grace, ‘of just expression as a religious dogma, or as an abstract truth.’ It may be

\* Essay, p. 169, 1st Ed.; p. 163, 2d Ed.

so; but most assuredly the phrase (it is the Duke's) has not an indefinite meaning. We do not know one whose meaning is more perfectly definite. The 'self-government' of the church is just the government of the church by itself; and 'the right' of self-government means, that it does not govern itself by permission, or at the arbitrary will of another, but that it is invested with a right and title to do so—whence derived we shall afterwards inquire. The phrase is more than definite. It gives full and just expression to the idea which it is intended to convey; it expresses the Church's right and title, within its own province—which is purely spiritual—to declare the laws, and exercise the discipline prescribed and ordained by the word of God. If the State in any particular usurp the power of the Church by legislating or administering in matters spiritual, it does so far infringe its right and title; if it have an indefinite power of encroachment, the Church's *right* of self-government is a nullity: she rules entirely at the pleasure of the State.

But, though the Duke of Argyll pleads for an undefined limitation by the State of the Church's right of self-government, we rejoice to add that he does not argue in favour of its greatest possible modification or restriction. On the contrary, we may infer, from the strong terms of approbation in which he speaks of the struggles of the first Scottish Reformers in defence of that great principle, that, like the Chevalier Bunsen, he would have the civil government to interfere as

little as possible with the spiritual administration. Somewhere in the Essay he informs his readers, that the 'husks' of Presbytery covered the kernel of sound principle. We do not think 'husks' a very polite word; and we believe that it is not so used. But husks or shells, so long as they cover the kernel, are more than useful: they are necessary for its protection. So were 'the husks of Presbytery.' For centuries they protected the church's autonomy from the corroding worm of the civil power. Alas! they have been rudely torn off—the work of destruction has commenced—and the kernel, which his Grace prizes so highly, must soon have its place among things that were.

Entertaining the views to which we have referred, regarding the power of limitation by the civil magistrate, it is not at all surprising that the author of the Essay denies that the right of self-government has any foundation in scripture. With a vehemence and intolerance, contrasting most painfully with other portions of the work, he combats this opinion. He declaims against the 'Formulæ' in which the Church of Scotland has expressed itself on the subject of the spiritual jurisdiction—asserts that the right of self-government is a natural, not a divine right—a right inherent in the christian people, and delegated by them to certain persons, their representatives—and that to affirm that the distinction between the civil and the spiritual is absolute, and one implying a separation admitting of no compromise and no exception, is to

affirm what 'is utterly groundless and untenable, unsupported by the shadow of proof from any relevant part of scripture—unnatural, and at variance with the spirit of the christian scheme.'\*

This is strong language; but strong language is not solid argument. The proof from scripture has been given, and is not invalidated by the mere assertions of the Essayist. It shall be presented once more in a subsequent chapter of this Vindication. Meanwhile, we are entitled to demand from his Grace, what he has not yet given us, some proof of the assertion, that the doctrine of the church's exclusive jurisdiction, in matters spiritual, is 'unnatural, and at variance with the spirit of the christian scheme.'

We do not presume to account for the vehemence of his Grace's language on this subject. If, however, he feels that, by admitting the right of the civil government to interfere with matters spiritual, he has placed himself in a false position, and imagines that he has rendered that position more tenable by affirming, that the church's right of self-government is natural, and not derived from scripture, he has not come nearer his object by the course which he has pursued. Mr Gray of Perth has justly observed (and in one passage the Duke nearly coincides with him) that there are natural rights—the right of self-preservation, for example—as sacred and as strong as the rights which we derive from the Bible.† The church's

\* Essay, p. 317, 1st Ed.; p. 358, 2d Ed.

† Correspondence between the Duke of Argyll and the Rev. A. Gray; p. 38.

right of self-government is one of those. It is, in truth, the right of spiritual self-preservation—the sacred right of liberty of conscience, with which no earthly authority, whether civil or ecclesiastical, is entitled to interfere. If so, his Grace would not be relieved from the difficulty of his position, though he were able to show that the Church's right of self-government is a natural, and not a bible right. He has still the arduous task of proving that this right—the most valuable which human beings can enjoy—may be limited, modified, and restricted by the civil power. Though the Westminster Confession had never existed, there is, by his Grace's acknowledgment, a spiritual jurisdiction—whether founded on natural or derived right we do not at present inquire—a jurisdiction, we affirm, excluding absolutely and entirely the interference of the civil magistrate. If it have any limitation, except that which its name indicates—namely, limitation to its own peculiar province—it is for the Duke of Argyll to show where that limitation exists—on what particular point it is lawful for the civil power to lord it over the conscience of men—when and in what circumstances it is entitled to command, and, by necessary consequence, to enforce on individuals, or on the church collectively, anything which they believe to be contrary to, or unauthorised by the word of God.

It is unnecessary, therefore, to dwell on this part of the Essay. It has been proved, by those who have written on the constitution of the Church of Scotland, that the Church's right of self-government is founded

on scripture: the author of the Essay is at liberty to prove that it is also a natural right. If it be at once natural and founded on scripture, as we firmly believe, it rests on a doubly solid foundation; and, on that account, and because of its intrinsic importance, ought to be held peculiarly sacred and inviolable, and be guarded with the utmost jealousy by every friend of truth and of religious liberty.

If we have succeeded in analysing what appear to us the contradictory opinions of the Essayist on the theory of a christian church, they are briefly these: He holds what we have called the Christian-Commonwealth principle; but, believing it to be incapable of application in all its extent, he holds, or believes that he holds it partially. Notwithstanding, he argues as if Church and State were distinct—pleads for the right of self-government—asserts that it is a natural, and not a bible-derived right, and, in the most unqualified terms, affirms that it may be modified and restricted by the civil power.

We have seen with what eagerness and with how little success the author has attempted to prove that there was a diversity of opinion between the first Scottish Reformers and their successors, on the subject of the spiritual jurisdiction. With equal anxiety, and, we think, with equal want of success, he endeavours to show that there was a similar diversity of opinion on the cognate subject of '*the nature of the church.*' The diversity on these two points being proved, and the views of the former being shown to be

those of Dr Arnold, he flatters himself that, in writing an Essay on the Ecclesiastical History of Scotland, he is entitled to claim for his countrymen at the commencement of the Reformation, the honour of coinciding in sentiment with one of the most distinguished men of modern times; and that the right theory of a christian church was, in point of fact, that of the fathers of the Reformation in Scotland.

The attempt is a bold one; but there is no such diversity as his Grace imagines; and Knox and his contemporaries were as far as possible from holding the principle of Dr Arnold.

We assent to the author's statement, when he says that they held that 'the church'—understanding by that term, the church of any country, as distinguished from the Church universal—consists 'of the whole body of professing believers in the truth' in that country—that they repudiated the notion of a priesthood or clergy, and the application of the term 'church' to a distinct body of men so called—that they maintained the right of electing ministers and other office-bearers in the church, to be in 'the christian people'—that, from the beginning, ruling-elders had a place along with ministers in the spiritual oversight and government of the church; and, finally, that ministers and elders had no church-power singly and as individuals, but only as the members of church courts. But we entirely dissent from his Grace, when he asserts that they regarded ministers and elders, in their governing capacity, as having no authority, ex-

cept as the representatives of 'the mass of the believing people.' We dissent no less strongly, when he assumes that the elders of 1560-78, were nothing more than laymen associated with the ministers in the spiritual government, to prevent 'the priestly elevation of the clergy.' These are novel assertions. The author of the Essay has not adduced one tittle of evidence in support of them. We are not required to prove a negative, though we might refer with confidence to some of the quotations in the preceding chapter, and to the recollection of every one who has read without bias the annals of our church—to show that, while the fathers of the Reformation claimed no such reverence to the persons of ministers and elders, as other churches claim for their bishops and priests, they regarded the ministry and eldership as ordinances of divine appointment. Both ministers and elders were in their estimation spiritual men. Their office was spiritual; its end was spiritual; its duties were spiritual; and they were solemnly set apart to their office respectively. In appointing them, and in conjoining them in the spiritual oversight and government of the church, the Reformers did not act on the dictate of mere worldly wisdom, and, least of all, with the intention of mingling laity with clergy, and thus forming a Christian-Commonwealth—but, because they would have everything connected with the external framework of the church to be according to the scripture-model, and 'the reverend face of the primitive and Apostolick Kirk reduced agane to the eyis and knowledge of men.'

The leading principles of the first Scottish Reformers, was to have everything so ordered respecting the government of the church, that the Church of Scotland should, as nearly as possible, resemble the primitive and apostolical church. The author of the Essay denies this. He affirms that this principle was first laid hold of by their successors. The reviewer in the 'Quarterly,' in addition to the other alleged misrepresentations to which we have referred, says of him, that he ascribes to Knox the obliterating of the distinction between spiritual and civil government, while he (the Duke) affirms that he had only asserted that Knox's idea of the nature of the church and Dr Arnold's were the same, and that the fundamental principle of both left 'no ground for any MYSTIC distinction' between them. He acknowledges that there must be a distinction—a distinction arising from the different nature of the subjects of which they treat; but he denies that there is any 'mystic' distinction.

Again we protest against the liberty assumed by the noble Duke of using English words in a sense totally different from that which they ordinarily bear—especially when such terms are fitted to convey impressions of great and good men, altogether erroneous, and tending to lower them in the estimation of posterity. When we look for the meaning attached to the word 'mystic,' by his Grace, we find it called 'false and superstitious.' When we proceed farther, we find that 'mystic distinction' means a distinction founded, not

on natural right only, but on scripture. A 'fanatic,' according to his Grace, is one who believes that he is acting in obedience to the revealed will of God, recorded in the bible: A 'mystic distinction,' is a distinction which professes to be founded on the same divine authority. We deny the right of the Duke of Argyll, or any other person, to put such an interpretation on either of these phrases; and we affirm that, in the sense in which they are commonly understood, they are not applicable to the fathers of the Scottish Reformation, whether of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries. None of them believed in a certain mysterious influence imparted by the hands of a bishop of apostolical descent—in an *indelebile officium*, or in the emanation of any similar influence from the hands of a presbytery. Then indeed might they be justly accused of mysticism. They did not believe that ordained ministers constituted *the church*, as distinct from the rest of the christian people; nor did they demand for them any false or superstitious reverence on that account. But they did believe and own, that the christian ministry and eldership were ordinances of God; and that, as ambassadors of Christ, and rulers of his church, ministers and elders are entitled to the respect and enlightened submission of the people of their charge. They believed and averred this; and, in so doing, they did not lay themselves open to the charge of mysticism. Is there mysticism in believing that civil government is an institution of God—that in the words of inspiration, civil rulers 'are God's ministers, attending continually

upon this very thing;’ \* and that ‘whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God?’ Civil rulers, in their official capacity, are distinct from their subjects; and the distinction is sanctioned by the word of God. Is it therefore a mystic distinction? Assuredly not.

There is no evidence, we repeat, of the alleged difference of opinion between the early Scottish Reformers and their successors on this head. The Duke of Argyll affirms that, in the Second Book of Discipline, the distinction between the rulers of the church and its other members is more strongly marked than it was in the First. Surely he does not mean to say, that this proves that Knox and his contemporaries did not hold the distinction at all. His Grace refers also to the great preponderance of ruling-elders in the first General Assemblies, when the preponderance in the church of elders over ministers was naturally great, and the principle of representation was not yet laid down. We appeal to his Grace’s candour whether all this, taken together, and what he calls the ‘mere democratic spiritual tyranny’ of the General Assemblies of a later period, amount to anything like evidence that Melville and Henderson differed in principle with the first Reformers. If it could be shown that, as the form of church government was matured, the principle and rule of representation was changed, and there ceased to be a fair proportion of ruling-elders in the judicatories of the church, there might be some ground

\* Rom. xiii. 6.

for asserting that different views on this subject were entertained by the Church of Scotland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. But no one knows better than the Duke that this cannot be proved. On behalf of Henderson, and the leading men of his time, it is sufficient to state, that when Charles I. made it a condition of his consenting to the meeting of the General Assembly, 1638—that it should be an assembly of ministers, without mixture of ruling-elders—no persons resisted this more strenuously than the ministers themselves. And coming down to the present times, and referring to a church which his Grace more than suspects of aiming at the exercise of a spiritual tyranny—if he will look into the regulations laid down by the Free Church of Scotland, since the Disruption, for the election of members to its General Assembly, he will find that we have anxiously and unanimously assigned to the eldership the full share which they have had in the government of the Church from the time of the Reformation to the present day.

## CHAPTER III.

STATEMENT OF THE QUESTION REGARDING THE EXCLUSIVE SPIRITUAL JURISDICTION—THE STATE HAS NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE WITH THE RELIGIOUS CONVICTIONS OF INDIVIDUALS—CHURCHES OUGHT TO BE EQUALLY FREE—SCRIPTURE ARGUMENT—NATURE AND END OF CHRISTIANITY—INEVITABLE INFERENCE—PROOFS FROM SCRIPTURE OF THE EXCLUSIVE SPIRITUAL JURISDICTION—OLD TESTAMENT—PSAL. ii. AND lxii. NEW TESTAMENT—MATT. xxii. 17, AND JOHN xviii. 36, 37—MATT. xxviii. 18-20—EPH. iv. 8, ETC.—MATT. xvi. 13-19—MATT. xviii. 15, ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN XX. 23—SUM OF THE ARGUMENT.

IN proceeding to state the argument for what the Duke of Argyll calls 'the right of self-government,' but what we prefer calling by the name of *the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction*, it is no small relief to the writer of these pages to be able to announce at the commencement, that he does not intend to treat this part of the subject controversially. The author of the Essay has scarcely touched on the theology of the question. In so far as he has done this, he has been so satisfactorily answered by Mr Gray, and by several of the reviewers, that it were altogether superfluous to add anything farther in reply. Our aim shall be, with little or no reference to the Essay, to present, in the most simple and luminous point of view, the

grounds on which the Church of Scotland, from the time of the Reformation downwards, has rested its claim to the exercise of the spiritual jurisdiction over the people of its own communion, and has, until the year 1843, with one voice, repudiated the interference of the civil power with its spiritual administration.

Before entering on this part of our work, it may be proper to state what the question at issue really is. It is not whether the government of a church should be Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Congregational, nor whether it can be proved from scripture that Christ has committed the spiritual administration to Presbyteries and General Assemblies. On these points every well-informed member of the Church of Scotland has a clear and decided opinion; but they are not the questions at issue on the present occasion. Nor is the question respecting the lawfulness of Church Establishments, or whether, a Church being established by law, the State is entitled to judge and determine respecting the measure of support which it shall give, or regarding anything connected with the secular affairs of the Church. To the fullest extent, we admit the right of interference in such matters. But the question is, whether a church of Christ—be its form of government what it may—exercising discipline over its ministers and other members of the flock, and, in general, regulating and directing its spiritual affairs—is warranted in doing all this by the express command and authority of the Lord Jesus Christ—the question is, whether it be lawful for the

civil government to interfere with its spiritual jurisdiction, and whether, in the event of its interference, it be right or lawful for the Church to submit. The Church of Scotland holds, as its grand, distinguishing principle, that the spiritual jurisdiction is exclusive of the civil power—that to submit to such interference is sin, and cannot fail to be followed by consequences most injurious to the interests of religion and the cause of Christ in the world.

In addition to this, let it be borne in mind, that what the State decrees it may and must enforce. Its enactments are laws, not mere recommendations, which may or may not be observed, according to the will and pleasure of the subject. However unjust these laws, however contrary to the declared will of God, every secular government, which would maintain its authority, must, by fine or imprisonment, or capital punishment, or otherwise, carry its laws into effect at its own instance, or that of parties interested, or claiming to be interested, in their execution.

These things being premised, let us, first of all, inquire, in illustration of the principle involved in this discussion, whether the State is at liberty to interfere with the religious convictions and profession of individuals.

A man believes the scriptures to be the word of God—he accepts them as the only rule of his faith and manners—embraces the doctrines which they reveal—willingly submits to the precepts and ordinances which they enjoin—and, in obedience to the

command of Christ, openly confesses Him before men, and endeavours to persuade others to become the disciples and followers of the same divine Master. With his belief and his practice other men are not entitled to interfere. God, and God alone, is the lord of his conscience. To Him, and not to man, he is accountable. His fellow-men cannot, if they would, compel him to believe what he knows to be false. No ruler, whether civil or ecclesiastical, has any right to compel him to do what he believes to be morally wrong.

On these plain and self-evident propositions rests the great principle or law of toleration—a principle only recently understood, and far from being universally recognised, even in our own enlightened and free country. Nevertheless, under the broad shield of its protection, even error is permitted to present its claims to the notice and reception of men, save when its manifest tendency is to subvert the first principles of morality, or to stir up the worst passions, and to disturb domestic peace and public tranquillity. Truth is left to achieve its conquests, not by the might and power of the civil ruler—by the sword, the halter, or the fagot—but by its own intrinsic force, and the mighty influence of the Spirit of God; and, using its own weapons, we are assured that it will ultimately prevail.

We cannot comprehend how those who, like the Duke of Argyll, concede, nay, contend for this liberty on behalf of individuals, would deny it to churches, or, at least, plead for its limitation with respect to

them. The principle is obviously the same, whether men, or associations of men, are concerned. If men be agreed, not only in having and professing the same religious belief, but in being united under a particular form of church government, which they believe to be founded on the word of God—if they conscientiously regard it as a part of their duty to maintain, as far as in them lies, purity of doctrine and life in their ministers, and in the private members of their communion—with what show of reason can the liberty which is conceded to individuals of professing their religious belief, be denied to churches in the conducting of their spiritual government? We assume that the union or association is a lawful association—an association for lawful purposes, and that its laws and regulations affect those only who are voluntarily united with it; and we ask again, with what consistency can those who concede the principle of perfect toleration in the one case propose to limit the operation of that principle in the other?

We can understand how, in the case of the Church of England, and most other established churches, where the right of interference by the civil government has been formally conceded, or where that right, existing previously, is tacitly acquiesced in—the strong hand of the civil power may with some plausibility be put forth, in opposition to the wishes and conscientious feelings of the church, and, we may add, as recent occurrences have shown, in opposition to the common sense and feelings of mankind. But we can-

not comprehend on what ground the Duke of Argyll, or any one else, can assert the right of interference as an abstract principle, and affirm that the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction is 'unnatural, and at variance with the spirit of the christian scheme, and repugnant to the true interests of all men.' Applied to the principle of Erastus, this language is intelligible; applied to the principle for which the Free Church and other churches contend, it is not.

If it be said that private rights must occasionally yield to public convenience, we think it will be found difficult to imagine a case where public expediency demands the sacrifice of the rights of any association for lawful purposes without adequate compensation; and it is more than difficult to show what advantages of a temporal kind can compensate the sacrifice of our spiritual independence, our religious liberty, our conscientious convictions. If it be essential to a Church Establishment—which we do most distinctly deny—that the Church should declare its willingness to submit to the authoritative interference of the State with its spiritual administration, it were better far to reject the countenance and encouragement of the civil government than to purchase them at such a price.

On grounds, therefore, which even infidels admit, we hold that a jurisdiction in matters spiritual, exclusive of the civil power, is the sacred privilege of every church of Christ—that for the civil power to claim the liberty of interfering with that jurisdiction, and of coercing the consciences of men, is the sacrilegious in-

vasion of a province belonging to God only ; and that, as no unestablished church would willingly submit to such interference, so no established church can be regarded as rightly constituted which, in matters spiritual, is not entirely free from the jurisdiction of the State.

If these conclusions be just, the doctrine of the Church of Scotland, with regard to the spiritual jurisdiction, is incontrovertible. But let us hear the word of God. It speaks precisely the same language ; it confirms the deductions of reason ; it makes that a solemnly commanded duty, which, without its express authority, might be regarded as optional—a duty to God, a duty to ourselves and our fellow-men, which we cannot oppose or neglect without infringing the great first principle of all religion, and incurring the displeasure of the Almighty.

We shall, first of all, inquire what is the view which the scriptures give of Christianity and the Church.

Christianity is represented to us as the last of the religious economies or dispensations of God to man—the clearest and brightest revelation of his will—the divinely-inspired interpretation of Old Testament scriptures—the narrative of events which prophets foretold—the history of a Saviour, whom it was the province of types and ceremonies less clearly to reveal—the unfolding of consolations and hopes necessary to the peace and joy of the guilty sinner—and the authoritative declaration of the path of duty and acceptable obedience.

In perfect harmony with this view of christianity, the church is represented as consisting of those 'who believe'—of the 'called and faithful' disciples of Christ—of 'all in every place who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours'\*—of those who are separated from the world, and distinguished from it by their faith and practice, and whose duty and privilege it is to profess their faith in Christ, and their adherence to him. The Church is a city set on a hill. Individually and collectively, its members are the lights of the world, and are required to cause their light so to shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven. They are 'the salt of the earth'—the 'leaven' which shall leaven the whole lump—'the grain of mustard-seed,' which is to become a great tree—the chosen and sanctified ones, in whom it is the will of God that christianity should be manifested in its blissful, renovating and purifying influence. The true spiritual church consists of all of every denomination and of every tribe who sincerely believe in Christ, and bring forth the fruits of a living faith, and are recognised by the Discerner of hearts as the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus. The church, as recognised by men, consists of all who make profession of their faith in Christ, and are acknowledged as members of the particular section of the church to which they belong.

So far all intelligent christians agree with Dr Arnold.

\* 1 Cor. i. 2.

They do not regard a priesthood as constituting the Church; for in the ritual and sacrificial sense of that term, they believe with Archbishop Whately, and with all sound theologians, the priesthood to be abolished. Even under the Old Testament, the priests and Levites did not constitute the church. The visible church consisted then of all, whether Jews or proselytes, who professed adherence to the institutions and the laws of Moses. In like manner, it consists now of all who profess adherence to the law of Christ. And intelligent christians agree with Dr Arnold, also, in the firm expectation of the predicted era when the influence and profession of christianity shall be universal—when, in all nations, and in men of all ranks and conditions, it shall be felt in its power and exhibited in its effects—when rulers and subjects shall be one in faith and practice, and pure christianity shall have the ascendancy over error and wickedness—and when, in the language of the prophet, ‘the Lord shall be King over all the earth,’ and there ‘shall be one Lord, and his name one.’\*

Meanwhile, and until that blissful era, the condition of the true church is represented as that of a ‘little flock’ in the midst of wolves—the object of the world’s hatred and the world’s persecution. Christians are forewarned of these; they are foretold again and again by our Saviour, that when they should arise, his followers should not be ‘offended’ or made to stumble. ‘And now I come to thee,’ says Jesus in his inter-

\* Zech. xiv. 9.

cessory prayer, 'and these things I speak in the world, that they (his disciples) might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.\* 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also.† And, that we may know that these and similar annunciations or predictions were not given with reference to the primitive church only, the apostle Paul has declared, in the most comprehensive and unlimited terms, that 'all who will (to) live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution.'‡

Looking, then, to the nature and end of christianity, and to the militant condition of the church, as thus described in the word of God, it seems to us an inevitable inference, that the church cannot acknowledge any other head, as the head of authority, than the

\* John xvii. 13, 14. † John xv. 16-20. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 12.

Lord Jesus Christ, or, to express the same idea in different words, cannot acknowledge any rule of faith and duty but that which He has presented to them, and laid upon them in the sacred scriptures. It is the end of christianity to convert, to console, to purify, and to elevate mankind—to promote the happiness of individuals, of families, of society. The church, in its collective capacity, has the same objects in view. Confining itself to these, on what ground, we are well entitled to ask, does the civil power claim the right of interference with its spiritual concerns? The civil and the spiritual provinces are essentially as distinct as if they belonged, as in truth they do, to two different worlds. In the one, God, and conscience as his vicergerent, are supreme; in the other, the civil magistrate, as the minister of God for good, exercises in matters civil his supremacy. The civil and the spiritual government ought not, and do not, necessarily or naturally come into collision with one another. Christianity does not obstruct or impede the execution of just and equal enactments. On the contrary, it strengthens the hands of the civil ruler, by enjoining submission as a duty to God in everything not in opposition to the divine will. Ah! but it breathes the spirit of rational and enlightened liberty; it frowns on tyrants; it condemns oppression in every form. A corrupt christianity is a convenient engine of State; it adds to the majesty of human laws the terrors of superstition. A pure christianity is dangerous in the eyes of ignorant rulers; it cannot with safety be left

to itself; it must be more or less under the restraints of the civil government. This is the only explanation which can be given of the eagerness which the great ones of the earth have at all times discovered to hold the supremacy in spiritual as in civil affairs. It is, however, no more than the explanation of a fact; it is not the establishment of a right; but it is all which, in the present times, and especially in the recent history of the Church of Scotland, has been offered in justification of the invasion by the State of our religious liberties. In the seventeenth century, the Stuarts claimed the spiritual supremacy as a part of the divine right of kings; in the nineteenth, the responsible advisers of a limited monarchy have deprived a once free church of its liberties, avowedly on the ground of an unwise and unhallowed expediency.

The arguments which have been drawn for the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction, from the nature and end of christianity, and the relative condition of the church, receive the most ample confirmation from the descriptions and express declarations of scripture on this subject.

No person can have read the Bible with any measure of seriousness and attention, without perceiving that, both in the Old Testament and in the New, the ascendancy of true religion is represented to us under the figure or emblem of a kingdom; or, as Dr Campbell has rendered the word *βασίλεια*—a reign—distinct from the reign or government of the kings and queens of the earth, but of which it is their glory to be

'nursing-fathers' and 'nursing-mothers'—a reign or government distinct also from that universal moral government which Jehovah exercises over the nations of the earth—a kingdom in which Messiah rules over those who are peculiarly his own subjects, with supreme and exclusive authority.

Take, for example, the second Psalm, applied to Christ in the New Testament, and admitted on all hands to be prophetic of his sufferings and triumphant exaltation to the right hand of power: 'Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. . . . Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.' The reign which is here predicted is beyond all question a spiritual reign—the inheritance of the heathen, and of the uttermost parts of the earth—a spiritual inheritance. The power and authority to be exercised by Christ is an authority to which the kings and judges of the earth are exhorted meekly and reverently to submit. 'Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his

wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'

Or, take the seventy-second Psalm, also admitted to be prophetic of the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. There also the prevalence of pure and undefiled religion is represented under the emblem of a kingdom whose king shall reign in righteousness, and shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. It is predicted of Him—and we know that the prediction shall one day be fulfilled in the universal triumph of christianity—that 'all kings shall fall down before him—that all nations shall serve him.' And the blessed effects of his reign are described in language applicable only to a spiritual kingdom—a kingdom of righteousness—in which the greatest earthly monarchs are not rulers or sharers in the government, but subjects: 'He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper. He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence, and precious shall their blood be in his sight. . . . His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed.'

We might add to these and similar passages in the prophetic Psalms, the sublime descriptions of 'the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,' by the evangelical prophet Isaiah, and other Old Testament prophets, in which the reader will search in vain for a

single expression which, on any fair principle of interpretation, can be regarded as affording the least countenance to the interference of the civil with the spiritual jurisdiction. But let us turn to the New Testament, and hear its utterances on this important subject.

We begin with that oft-quoted passage, in which our Lord answers the insidious question of the Pharisees, 'Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?''\* and we refer to it, just because it has been so often unanswerably adduced as decisive of the question in dispute.

The evangelist Luke informs us that the question was put by the Pharisees or their emissaries, 'that they might take hold of Christ's words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.' The Romans held the government of Palestine by the right of conquest—certainly no valid title, especially in the eyes of a Galilean and a Jew. The Pharisees wished to draw from our Lord the expression of his opinion on its validity. The deciding of questions of this description was no part of the object of his mission. When one came to him and said, 'Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me,' he answered, 'Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?' By abstaining from the expression of opinion regarding the title of the Roman emperor, he virtually answered the Pharisees, 'Who made me a judge between you and

\* Matt. xxii. 17, etc.; Mark xii. 14; Luke xx. 21.

him?' at the same time, he announced to them that it was not only lawful, but their bounden duty to pay tribute to him: 'Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute-money; and they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.' The coin current among them, with the head and superscription of the Roman emperor, showed that the government of Rome was the existing government, whether its title were valid or not. This being the fact, it was their duty to pay the tribute-money.

The question which the emissaries of the Pharisees had asked was answered. He needed not to say more in reply. But there was another King, to whom, in a higher relation than that of any earthly monarch, they owed an undivided allegiance—a King whose reign over their fathers in former generations was their pride and their glory, and whose reign, they hoped, was about to be restored in the person of the promised Messiah. It was this remembrance, this expectation, which suggested the question to which he had replied. While, therefore, he tells them of their duty to one sovereign, he embraces the opportunity of reminding them of their duty to another: 'Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things which are God's.'

The radical and essential distinction between the

civil and the spiritual cannot be more clearly and distinctly marked than in these words. There is a kingdom in which Cæsar—that is, the earthly sovereign under God, and as the minister of God—has his rights, his power, and his authority, to which it is the duty of his subjects to bow. There is another kingdom in which God has the supreme and the sole authority, to which all men, as his subjects, ought to bow with still deeper reverence. There are duties owing to the former which must not be neglected; there are duties of a different, but not opposite kind, owing to the latter, which, whether Cæsar wills it or no, we must faithfully perform. To the Jews the day of trial was approaching when Jesus uttered these words—yea, it had already come. The Prince of Life, the King of Zion, was addressing them. It was for them to determine whether they would ‘kiss the Son,’ and believe in him, or say, in the blindness and infatuation of their souls, ‘We will not have this man to reign over us.’ Alas! they chose the latter side of the alternative: the chief priests answered, in the presence of Pilate, ‘We have no king but Cæsar.’ They crucified their King.

The connection between the occurrence in our Lord’s history, on which we have now been commenting, and the false accusation of the Jews when he was brought before Pilate, is interesting and instructive, and directs our attention to a saying of Christ not less clearly declarative of the distinction between the civil and spiritual jurisdictions.

After the high priests and rulers had condemned Christ before the Sanhedrim, because he had declared that he was the Son of God, they arose and led him bound to Pilate, the governor of Judea, and, regardless of truth, began to accuse him of stirring up the people against the Roman government, and particularly of 'forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he himself is Christ a king.' On hearing this accusation, Pilate asked him whether he were the king of the Jews; Jesus answered in the affirmative, 'Thou sayest it.' The fulfilment of prophecy, in his appearance at the tribunal of Pilate, proclaimed him to be the promised Messiah, the King of the Jews. But in order that Pilate, as the constituted guardian of the interests of the Roman empire in Judea, might be assured that these were not endangered by the claim which Jesus put forth, Jesus said, 'My kingdom is not of this world.' Pilate repeated the question, 'Art thou a king, then?' Again Jesus answered in the affirmative, 'Thou sayest that I am a king;' and, in explanation of this and of the assertion, that his kingdom was not of this world, he added, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth; every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.'\*

Again, therefore, we read of a kingdom—a kingdom of which Christ is the King and Head—a kingdom not proceeding from this world,† nor partaking of the character of the men of this world, but essentially

\* John xviii. 36, 37. † εκ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου.

distinct from it—a kingdom proceeding, like the New Jerusalem, out of heaven, having for its subjects not the world at large, but those who, having received the love of the truth, to which Christ came to bear witness, hear the voice of Christ, and willingly submit to his authority. Christianity is not presented to us as an appendage of the secular government, a part and parcel of the State, nor as a mere system of theology and code of morals, like the systems of philosophers; but as a spiritual kingdom, having its place in the heart and conscience of men, and manifested in the belief and profession of the truth as it is in Jesus. It is not presented to us as a kingdom, the subjects of which stand isolated from one another, and without any principle or bond of union; but as a kingdom, the subjects of which, coming to Christ, meet with one another in Him, are together subject to his laws, and enjoy together the unspeakable blessings of his wise and paternal government.

It is obviously the intention of Christ, in his answer to Pilate, to declare that the regal authority over his church is in his hands, and in his exclusively, *because* his church, or kingdom, is not of this world. 'I am a king; I avow that I am a king; I claim this as my exclusive prerogative. If you ask, on what ground? I answer, on grounds which ought to cause no alarm to the Roman emperor. My kingdom—my church—is not of this world.' If it were otherwise—if the church of Christ were a thing of this world's creation—if it were the product of the boasted wisdom of

philosophers, or of the might and power and policy of the kings of the earth, there would be a show of reason in their holding it under their sway. But these do not create—they cannot create this spiritual commonwealth; they have no power to persuade a single human being to hear, that is, to obey the voice of Christ; they cannot make, or put into its place, one stone of the spiritual temple; they cannot gather one lost sheep into the fold of the heavenly Shepherd. All is of God. Christ, and Christ alone, builds the temple of the Lord. Therefore, ‘he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne. . . . a priest upon his throne.’\* The house is ‘his own house;’† the family consists of his own children. Who shall dare to dispute his right—his exclusive right—over them?

Has Christ used this right? has he exercised his regal authority? He has revealed his will to mankind; and that revelation comes to us in the form of a command to believe and obey. But has he, in addition to this, recognised his church as a collective body, and given any instructions or commandments for the regulation of its affairs? If he had not, we should have no small difficulty in understanding on what ground he calls his church a kingdom—a flock—a family. Let us inquire.

During the public ministry of our Lord, no churches were organised of those who believed in Christ and followed him. Till his work was finished by his death,

\* Zech. vi. 12, 13.

† Heb. iii. 6.

the church was that of the Old Testament dispensation; its worship and ordinances were those of the law of Moses; the preaching of John Baptist and of Christ was the preaching of repentance, because 'the kingdom of heaven *was at hand*.' But after his resurrection, and a short time before his ascension to the right hand of God, Christ addressed the eleven apostles in these memorable words: 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.\* The kingdom of God *had come*.

The principal part of the commission thus given to the apostles undoubtedly has reference to preaching and making disciples; † for there must be converts ere there can be churches. Notwithstanding, even here we have the plain indications of the will of Christ respecting the social and governmental state of his church. We have, first of all, the assertion of his mediatorial supremacy—the universal and unlimited power belonging to him in heaven and on earth—then the authority given by him to the apostles, and to his ministering servants 'unto the end of the world,' to baptise those whom they should be the means of converting—not certainly without receiving from them a solemn profession of their faith; and,

\* Matt. xxviii. 18-20. † Πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε.

last of all, there is the injunction to teach them to observe or keep all things which he had commanded them, including, doubtless, in these comprehensive words, the doctrines which he had taught, the ordinances and moral precepts which he had delivered, and the discipline which he had prescribed—to which we shall afterwards refer more particularly.

There is a majesty and sublimity in the matter and language of this commission which cannot fail to strike the attentive reader, and which, we think, ought to lead almost irresistibly to the contemplation of Christ as the supreme and exclusive ruler of the church which he was about to establish on the earth. We see the risen Lord and Redeemer of his people attended by his faithful disciples, the fishermen of Galilee. He looks on an unbelieving world—on the Jews—‘his own’—who had a little while before despised, rejected, and crucified him—on the Gentiles sunk universally in the lowest depths of idolatry and pollution—on the opposition which his servants were certainly to experience from Jews and Gentiles, from the kings and rulers of the earth, and from the prince of darkness—on a contest in which the weapons to be employed were the weak and foolish things of the world:’ and—with the majesty of one to whom not men only, but angels and principalities and powers are subject—he says, ‘Go, teach all nations, baptising them . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’ The contest cannot be doubtful; the work is his own—his own in every age,

even to the end of the world. Is there anything in these words giving to the church of Christ the slightest tinge or colouring of secularity—anything to warrant the notion to which many cling so fondly, that the spiritual warfare ought to be under the guidance and control of the rulers of this world? On the contrary, do we not hear in these words the signal which the Captain of Salvation gives to his faithful followers to buckle on their armour, and join battle with error and wickedness everywhere, and in every age, until truth and righteousness shall have the ascendancy in the earth?

It has been gravely objected to the claims of Scottish Presbytery, that, admitting, as all professing christians do in terms, the headship or spiritual supremacy of Jesus Christ, we can produce no evidence that the ministers and elders of our church are invested with the right of administering its spiritual affairs. The Pope, we are told tauntingly, claims this as his prerogative; and the Church of Rome acquiesces in the claim. He acknowledges Christ to be the Head of his church; he calls himself his vicar upon earth; he professes to act by his authority.

This is worse than trifling. There is not, we need hardly say, the most distant analogy between the Pope's claim of infallibility and his demanding universal submission to his decrees, and the claim of the ministers of a Protestant church fulfilling, with concurrence of the people under their pastoral care, the charge committed to them by their divine Master

before his ascension into heaven. We will not be tempted by the objectors to enter on the discussion of the claims of Presbytery as opposed to Episcopacy or Congregationalism ; nor do we think it necessary to guard ourselves against being supposed to hold the presumptuous and untenable dogma of the apostolical succession. But this we affirm, that when Christ said to the eleven, 'Go teach all nations,' etc., he addressed the apostles as the representatives of his faithful ministers in every age, and in that capacity invested them with the office of teaching men 'always unto the end of the world' whatsoever he had commanded them. The duty of instructing, of baptising, and of teaching men to keep the commandments of Christ, is laid on his faithful ministers in words so express and so intelligible, that the hardest critic dare not put upon them any other interpretation.

We address these pages to those who believe in the inspiration of the canonical scriptures, and regard the writings of the apostles as expressing the mind of Christ no less authoritatively than if their words proceeded from his own lips. When we look into these, we find that they contain the most ample confirmation of the distinguishing principle of the Church of Scotland. In the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul, after representing the church as 'one body,' having 'ONE LORD, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all,' refers to the spiritual gifts bestowed on the church by its risen and ascended Saviour and head. Quoting the sixty-eighth psalm, pro-

phetic of his ascension, the apostle says, 'When he ascended up on high he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.' And the gifts which Paul mentions are not, with the exception of the inspiration of 'apostles' and 'prophets,' the supernatural and miraculous gifts which are elsewhere enumerated, but gifts (v. 12) 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,' in other words, gifts necessary to the church's existence, and the church's prosperity in every age—'apostles, . . . prophets, . . . evangelists, . . . pastors and teachers.' Christ, the 'one Lord,' the alone king and head of his church, 'gave these gifts unto men.' It was his right—his sole prerogative to give them: it was from him apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers received their authority, and on them only was that power and authority conferred. The commission which Christ, before his ascension, gave to his apostles, the representatives of his ministers in every succeeding age, he gave after his ascension to pastors and teachers, their fellow-labourers and followers in 'the work of the ministry—for the edifying of the body of Christ.' On them, as on the eleven apostles, was laid the honourable and arduous duty of teaching men to observe the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Is there any man so wedded to his opinions as to resist the inference obviously deducible from this passage? Christ continues to sit at the right hand of God. His church continues, and shall continue till the end of time. From generation to generation men

need to be instructed in the oracles of God, and to be taught the ordinances and commandments of Christ. At all times, therefore, there must be fishers of men—there must be pastors and teachers to gather the lost sheep into the flock of Christ. We ask, Has Christ ceased to act as the head of his church? Are pastors and teachers less his gift now than were uninspired pastors and teachers in the primitive age? Is their authority less? Is their province in any respect abridged? Does not everything fall within that province which concerns the edifying of the body of Christ? The inference from the words of the apostle seems to us irresistible, namely, that the christian ministry is in every age the gift of Christ to his church—that the administration of the spiritual affairs of the church is committed to them and the other officers of the church—and that, in so far as they speak and act agreeably to the mind of Christ, they are to be revered and obeyed as speaking in his name, and by his authority.

In conformity with the will of Christ, thus clearly expressed, we find the apostle Paul enjoining the Hebrews to ‘obey them who had the rule over them, and to submit themselves;’\* and the Thessalonians, to ‘know them who were over them in the Lord, and admonished them; and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake.’† We find him reproving the church at Corinth for neglecting to maintain a wholesome discipline; in other epistles giving particular injunctions regarding the government of the church, all proceed-

\* Heb. xiii. 17.

† 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

ing on the supposition that it is in the hand of the church itself, and its constituted office-bearers. With a view to its continuance, we find him charging Timothy to commit the things which he had heard among many witnesses to faithful men, who should be able to teach others also,\* and Titus to ordain presbyters, bishops, (spiritual overseers,) in every city: these being manifestly understood to be clothed with the same authority as the inspired ministers who preceded them. We find him commanding every soul to be subject to the higher powers; because rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil;† and the apostle Peter in the same spirit, teaching men to ‘submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme, or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well.’‡ But nowhere do we find either Christ or his apostles enjoining submission to civil rulers in matters spiritual. Many warnings are given of the opposition which his faithful followers might expect to receive from them; many exhortations to bear a true and undaunted testimony to Him, when they should be accused before them. But no one passage can be found investing the civil ruler with authority over his church, or enjoining submission on the part of christians, when he presumes to exercise such authority. Peter himself was one of the first under the New Testament to exemplify the grand maxim of the true ser-

\* 2 Tim. ii. 2.

† Rom. xiii. 1, 3.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

vants of God in every age—‘We must obey God rather than men.’

We do not think that the Duke of Argyll can say with justice, or will say, that the quotations which have been made are ‘irrelevant.’ Not only have they no exclusive reference to the age of the apostles, but they are either general declarations applicable to the state of the church in every age, or they have reference to times posterior to the apostles. They do not refer to supernatural gifts—to the exercise of judicial acts under the unerring guidance of the Holy Spirit, or to anything whatsoever peculiar to the primitive age of the church—but they establish the following most important conclusions: *First*, that there is an inherent and essential distinction between the civil and spiritual jurisdictions. *Second*, that the Lord Jesus Christ is the king and head of his church, and that the church must be governed by his word. *Third*, that the office-bearers of the church, with concurrence of the other members thereof, have been constituted and appointed by Christ to administer the spiritual affairs of his kingdom; and that, in so far as they act agreeably to his will, they ought to be revered and obeyed.

On the passages which have been quoted we are willing to rest the whole of our argument in favour of the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction. We can afford to give up to our opponents not only the formulæ in which our principles have been declared, but other passages of scripture which some regard as of more ‘pri-

vate interpretation.' These, however, are of considerable weight, and ought not to be altogether overlooked in a vindication of the Church of Scotland.

The perversion by the Church of Rome of our Lord's words to Peter (Matt. xvi. 13-19), and the charge brought against the Free Church, of claiming a spiritual authority similar to that of the Papal Antichrist, shall not deter us from quoting them in proof of the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction.

Let us first of all inquire what these words mean, and then whether the power with which the apostle was invested was confined to himself, or was conferred on him and the other apostles, and the ministers and other rulers of the church in every age.

The instruction of his disciples in the design of his coming, and the nature and government of his kingdom, was evidently one of the chief objects of Christ's ministry, and of his associating his apostles with him in the work in which he was engaged. That there might be no misapprehension on these subjects, in the minds of those who were afterwards to be witnesses to the world of his miracles and doctrine, he took occasion, some time before his crucifixion, to ask them: 'Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona;

for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

No intelligent christian needs to be informed what Christ means by building his church. He certainly does not mean the erection of a great spiritual power or government on the earth in the hands of the apostle Peter, or any other man or body of men; but the gathering together of all true believers in one body in Christ, 'to whom coming,' as Peter himself has expressed it, 'as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, they also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.'\* And the church thus defined does not consist only of believers in Judea and in heathen countries in the apostolic age, but of all true believers to the end of the world. The building of the spiritual temple is not complete till the cope-stone be laid upon it with shoutings of 'Grace, Grace' unto it—till the last of God's chosen ones be brought to Christ, and have his place as a living stone in that spiritual house of which Christ is at once the corner-stone and the head.

\* 1 Peter ii. 4, 5.

But who or what is the 'rock' on which Christ, addressing Peter, declared that He would build his church?

When Paul says of believers in the church at Ephesus, 'Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,'\* it cannot be doubted that his meaning is that they were built on the doctrine of the apostles and prophets—that they had become stones in the living temple, and were 'buildd together for a habitation of God through the Spirit,' in consequence of their reception and belief of the truth proclaimed by Christ and his apostles after him. If this be admitted, no candid person will refuse to put a similar interpretation on our Lord's prediction to Peter, whether we consider the words 'this rock' as applicable to him personally as one of the twelve, or to the gospel preached by him. It was in his character as an apostle Christ addressed him. It is in this character alone that the church is, in any sense of the words, built on him. Apart from his miracles and doctrine, Peter had no influence, no power, no authority. These constituted him not the founder or builder, for that honourable title Christ claims for himself in the words on which we are commenting, but the foundation, or a chief part of the foundation of the church of Christ. And the reason why he is mentioned singly,

\* Eph. ii. 19, 20.

and without the addition of the other apostles, is either, that, having declared what was the belief of all the apostles as well as his own, he is addressed as representing the twelve: or that he had shown by his confession of the Messiahship and divinity of our Lord, that he had profited more than they by the instructions of his divine Master, and had obtained from the Father a clearer revelation of the truth concerning him. Peter was signally honoured on the day of Pentecost, and during the whole of his apostleship, as the instrument of adding to the church of those who should be saved; in other words, as one of those on whose doctrine Christ has built his church. But he was not alone in the enjoyment of this distinguished privilege. It was largely shared by the other apostles, and by none more than by him who says of himself that he was 'as one born out of due time,' but, notwithstanding, was 'in nothing behind the very chiefest apostles, though he was nothing.'

The spiritual house being built—the church being gathered into one by the instrumentality of Christ's ministers—it was his will, as head over his own house, that its government should be committed to them. To the prediction, therefore, that on Peter he should build his church, he adds the promise or declaration, 'And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' etc.

In ancient times the key was the badge or symbol of authority. The possession, therefore, of the keys of the kingdom of heaven signifies the possession of

the power of ruling in that kingdom, which, in contrast with the kingdoms of the earth, is called so frequently in scripture 'the kingdom of heaven.' Still addressing Peter, our Lord announces to him that this power should be given to him—that this charge should be committed to him—so that whatsoever he bound on earth should be bound in heaven, and whatsoever he loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven. The charge thus given stands in inseparable connection with the announcement that on him he would build his church. If, therefore, we have interpreted that announcement correctly as including in it the other apostles, we are equally well founded in explaining the promise as applicable to them also. This is demonstrated by fact. History is the best, and in most instances the only sure interpreter of prophecy. There is no evidence from history that Peter, at any period, took into his own hands the government of the church, or laid claim to any superiority over his brethren; but the contrary. The kingdom of God was ruled—a government was exercised over the primitive church, not by Peter alone, or by any one of its ministers, but by teaching and ruling presbyters in its different sections, and by the apostles, elders, and brethren at Jerusalem, for the whole church. It was from the latter that the decrees went forth which the churches in other countries were required to keep. To these were committed, without objection or remonstrance on the part of Peter and the other apostles—we ought rather to say with their full concurrence—the

keys of the kingdom of heaven; and thus did they obey the command and fulfil the duty which their divine Master had committed to them.

We submit, therefore, that the words of Christ to Peter prove incontestably: *first*, that it was his will that, besides the preaching of the gospel, there should be a spiritual government in the primitive church; and *secondly*, that this government should be in the hands of the apostles and other ministers of the church, with concurrence of the brethren. The question still remains: Did this commission extend beyond that remarkable period? Did it reach to times when inspiration has ceased, and the judgments of men are no longer infallible? Without hesitation, we answer both these questions in the affirmative.

It must, we think, be admitted as a general principle or rule of interpretation, that every declaration of our Lord and of the inspired writers, which cannot be proved to be applicable only to the church at one particular period—whether it was in general terms, or addressed in the first instance to particular churches or individuals—is applicable to the church in every age. For example, the command, ‘Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature,’ was addressed in the first instance to the apostles, and to them only; but no one thinks of confining it to them. Why? Because there is nothing in the command indicating its application to that period only. On the contrary, it is evidently implied in the command that it is obligatory on the church till the end of the world.

On the same principle, we hold that there is nothing in the words of our Lord to Peter limiting their application. On the contrary, the building of the church is not the work of one age more than of another; nor is the government of the church peculiar to the times of the apostles. Peter was not the only person who was to preach the gospel, and on whom the church was to be built; he was not the only person to whom 'the keys of the kingdom of heaven' were to be committed. There was nothing in either of these duties peculiar to the primitive age. The declaration of our Lord must therefore be considered as applicable to all ages, and the duty of governing the church is laid by authority of Christ, not on his apostles only, but on those who, in later times, even to the end of the world, should be the teachers and spiritual overseers of the people of God.

The consequence of admitting an opposite principle of interpretation must at once be obvious. Let it be conceded that commands given, or duties committed to the apostles, were limited to them only, when no such limitation is indicated by the nature of the command, or by our Lord himself; and there are ordinances and moral precepts recorded in scripture, the obligation of which has ceased with the life and ministry of the apostles. We have referred to the preaching of the gospel and baptism. We might in like manner refer to the Lord's Supper. Let us suppose that Paul had not 'received of the Lord' the facts which he communicated to the church at Corinth relative to the in-

stitution of the Lord's Supper, and had not added, 'For as often as ye do eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come;'\* and on the principle against which we are contending, it might be argued that the observance of the Lord's Supper was peculiar to the primitive age, and is not binding on christians in the present day. It is impossible to say how far this principle of interpretation might be extended, or how many of the most sacred and revered commandments of Christ might by means of it be expunged from the word of God.

It is not necessary, however, to fortify our argument for the application of the passage which we have now been considering, by indicating the consequences of adopting an opposite principle of interpretation. Another passage from the same evangelist may be regarded as setting that question at rest. In the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, at the fifteenth verse, our Lord supposes the case of one christian trespassing against another, and gives express instructions regarding the way by which the person offended should aim at a reconciliation. He commands him to seek this first by private conference between himself and his offending brother. If that should fail, he is enjoined to take with him 'one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' Our Lord adds, in the seventeenth verse, 'And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto

\* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

thee as a heathen man and a publican.' Then follow the words employed by our Lord in describing the actual government of his church, when, on the occasion formerly alluded to, he gave to Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the symbol or emblem of the spiritual government, 'Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.'

On this passage we have *first* of all to remark that the words which on the former occasion were addressed to Peter singly are here addressed to all the apostles, whence the inference seems to be unavoidable, that the authority with which he was invested was conferred equally upon them all, and that in the first instance he was addressed as representing them all, or, to speak more correctly, as representing the spiritual rulers of the church to the end of the world. 'Whatsoever YE shall bind,' etc.; 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of *them*.'

In the *next* place, our Lord speaks of 'the church'—the church which was about to be 'built upon the apostles and prophets,' against which he had declared the gates of hell should not prevail. He speaks of it as a governing church, a church having the power of judging between contending brethren. But, at the time when Jesus spoke, it had no existence as such. He speaks therefore of a future church—a church of which the apostles were the representatives, and of which they, and not they only, were to be the first

spiritual rulers; and to it he gives the very same power which he had previously given to his fervent and zealous apostle in the same words, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.' On what ground can any man affirm that the power thus conferred in such general terms upon 'the church,' extended no farther than the apostles, or the church of the times in which they lived? Who shall dare to assert that the care of the Chief Shepherd for his flock reached only to the eleven, and their immediate followers in the faith and obedience of Jesus Christ?

The exercise of the power thus conferred is described by the words 'bind' and 'loose,' which, it is well known, were employed in the days of our Saviour to signify authoritative disapprobation and approbation—punishment, and liberation from punishment. Applied to spiritual government, they signify the actual exercise of that authority of which 'the keys' were in figurative language the recognised badge or emblem, in the infliction of spiritual censures, and releasing from these on the acknowledgment of sin, and the profession of repentance. The ratification of these acts is promised in the emphatic language of our Lord, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth *shall be bound in heaven*; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth *shall be loosed in heaven*.' Spiritual rulers have their authority from heaven—from the Son of Man who is in heaven. Therefore, acting in obedience to his will, and execut-

ing his commands, their decrees are ratified in heaven. Whether they consist in the infliction of censures, or in releasing from them, they have the sanction of his authority, and are to be revered accordingly.

Let no one say, These are high and extravagant pretensions. If discipline and government be part of the ordinance of Christ no less than the preaching of the word, and we are reasoning with those who admit this to be the fact, is it too much to affirm that he who has promised to give his blessing to the latter will give it to the former also—that he who said to his disciples, when he commanded them to preach the gospel, ‘Lo I am with you alway,’ will, in the government of his church, ratify in heaven the execution of his own laws? The man who despises the minister of Christ in the preaching of the gospel, is declared to be a despiser of Christ, and of him who sent him; must not similar condemnation rest on those who set at nought the authority of the spiritual rulers carrying into execution the laws of Christ’s kingdom? The apostles, to whom this authority was first committed, were endued with miraculous gifts, eminently qualifying them for the right and infallible government of the church. For the spiritual rulers of later times to lay claim to such gifts were nothing short of fanaticism. They have erred; and they ever will be liable to err. But as the Lord Jesus bound and loosed in heaven what his inspired servants bound and loosed on earth—not because of their inspiration, but because the commands which they executed were his commands—in like manner he

now ratifies in heaven what the spiritual rulers do in execution of his will. It is the duty of all, and more especially the christian people willingly under their charge, to try their every act of government by 'the law and the testimony;' and if they submit to their rule, to submit to it only because it is agreeable to that unerring standard. It is when 'two or three are gathered together in Christ's name,' that he is 'in the midst of them.' It is when spiritual rulers bear in mind their responsibility to Christ, as the alone king and head of the church—when they act as *his* servants, not as 'lords over God's heritage'—and when, conscious of their liability to err, they look to his word for direction, and implore the guidance of his good Spirit—it is then, and then only, that he will ratify in heaven what is done agreeably to his mind and will upon earth.

Considerable light is thrown on the passage of which we have now given an exposition by John xx. 23.

On the evening of the day of our Lord's resurrection he appeared to the eleven, and, addressing them with the well-known salutation, 'Peace be unto you,' he renewed the commission which he had previously given to them, saying, 'As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'

It can scarcely be doubted that the power thus com-

mitted to the eleven was in substance the same with that to which our Lord referred when he gave them authority to bind and loose. What that power was we have already explained. It was the power of approving and condemning—of admitting to and excluding from the privileges of the church. More than this was not communicated—could not be communicated in the words addressed to the apostles on the day of the resurrection. Assuredly it was not the intention of our Lord to grant to them the power of remitting and retaining sins at their own pleasure. The supposition is monstrous. Nay, it is not even the power of granting forgiveness to those whom, on good grounds, they might regard as truly penitent. There was no such delegation of authority to these eminent servants of Christ. When Jesus addressed the man sick of the palsy, and said, ‘Son, thy sins be forgiven thee,’ the Jews remarked with truth, ‘Who can forgive sins, but God only?’ All the power which the apostles could receive was the power *to declare* those sins to be remitted which their divine Master had remitted, and those sins to be retained which he had retained. The ‘discerning of spirits’ was one of the gifts bestowed upon them, and they might know supernaturally and with certainty who were, and who were not true believers in Christ, so that the judgment pronounced by them was true and infallible. Still it was nothing more than the declaration of the judgment of Him who alone has the power of remitting and retaining the sins of men.

We appeal to the candid reader, whether the exercise of discipline by a spiritual court now amounts to anything less or more than this—whether, for example, admission to privileges, and exclusion from them, be not virtually a declaration that the sins of the one class are remitted, and the sins of the other retained. On the supposition that the members of the court have sincerely and earnestly endeavoured to ascertain the mind of Christ with reference to both—that they have made his word their rule, and looking up for the divine direction, have put on it a sound and true interpretation, and pronounced a righteous judgment, they have done precisely what the apostles were authorised and enabled to do—they have declared the will of Christ. Let us suppose, on the other hand, that their judgment, in both cases, has been erroneous, and that they have not expressed the mind of their divine Master; for no man, and no body of men, is infallible. On that supposition, no benefit is received in the one case—the privilege conferred is nominal and external, not real. In the other, exclusion from external privileges does not imply exclusion from the true church and body of Christ. Spiritual rulers have no power but to declare what they conscientiously believe to be the will of Christ, and to maintain order and discipline in his church. Acting otherwise than ministerially, presuming to infallibility, arrogating to themselves the power of forgiving sins, or of withholding forgiveness, and as ‘lords over God’s heritage,’ attempting by the terrors of spiritual fulminations to coerce men’s

consciences, they are more guilty of offending against the supreme authority of the alone King and Head of his church than Henry VIII. of England, or any one of the sovereigns who, since the Reformation, has swayed the sceptre of these realms. As it is the duty of a private christian, in striving after holiness, to be guided implicitly and exclusively by the will of God revealed in the scriptures, so the perfection of the spiritual government consists in seeking to know the laws and ordinances of Christ, and faithfully and tenderly carrying them into execution.

On these grounds, we think ourselves warranted in affirming, that the power given to the eleven on the day of Christ's resurrection extends to his faithful servants, in the government of the church, in every age; and that the language of Knox, quoted in a former chapter, is not extravagant or presumptuous, especially when we keep in view the ground on which he rested his claim, and that of the other ministers and rulers of the church, namely, their preaching and believing the doctrine of Christ's word:—'Ye may perchance contemn and despise the excommunication of the Kirk (now by God's mighty power erected among us) as a thing of no force: but yet doubt we nothing but that our Kirk, and the true ministers of the same, have the same power which our Master, Christ Jesus, granted to his apostles in these words, "Whose sins ye shall forgive, shall be forgiven; and whose sins ye retain, shall be retained;" and that because they preach and

we believe the same doctrine which is contained in his most blessed word.'

We assert this with the greater confidence that the miraculous or extraordinary influences of the Holy Ghost do not appear to have been granted to the disciples till the day of Pentecost, when Christ fulfilled the promise made to them immediately before his ascension: 'And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.'\* 'Ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you.' † Before his ascension the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles, as to all true believers, to guide them into all truth. He 'opened their understandings to understand the scriptures:' he corrected their erroneous conceptions regarding the character and work of Messiah, and the nature and end of his kingdom—imparted to them a more enlightened faith, and more just apprehensions of the path of duty; and, in the knowledge and experience of vital religion, gave them the essential qualifications for the ministry of the word and the government of the church. More than this the apostles do not appear to have received till the day of Pentecost. When, therefore, on the evening of the resurrection-day he breathed on them and said, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost,' are we not warranted to conclude that in these words, and the significant action with which he accompanied them, he renewed the commission which

\* Luke xxiv. 49.

† Acts i. 8.

he had formerly given, and encouraged them, and his faithful servants in every generation, in the discharge of their arduous duties, by the promise and gift of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge and application of his word ?

## CHAPTER IV.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST'S HEADSHIP NOT A MERE QUESTION OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT—IT IS OF NO SECONDARY IMPORTANCE EVEN TO PRIVATE CHRISTIANS—THERE IS NO PORTION OF THE REVEALED WILL OF GOD UNIMPORTANT—THE DOCTRINE IN QUESTION IS NO HIDDEN MYSTERY—THE SPIRITUAL JURISDICTION PRINCIPLE IS FUNDAMENTAL—CHRISTIANITY OBTAINED AN ASCENDANCY IN THE WORLD UNDER THE SHADE OF THIS PRINCIPLE.

IN the immediately preceding chapter, there has been presented to the reader a brief and concise statement of the doctrine of the Church of Scotland, from the Reformation downwards, on the subject of what the author, following some of the fathers of his church, has called 'the exclusive spiritual jurisdiction.' It has been his endeavour to show that, from the very nature of the thing, the state has no right or title to intermeddle with the opinions and professions of men in matters spiritual, except in the way of encouraging the preaching and dissemination of the truth—that men are responsible to God, and to God only, for their religious belief; so that the distinguishing principle of the Church of Scotland is, in substance, the great principle of toleration. He has selected from the Old and New Testaments a variety of passages in which

the church, or 'kingdom of God,' is represented as a spiritual kingdom, truly and essentially distinct from the kingdoms of the earth, in which the Lord Jesus Christ, as its alone King and Head, has consigned to his ministering servants the important and responsible duty of ruling in his name, and according to his laws; and in which apostles, evangelists, and others, acting ministerially, consulted and determined for the glory of God and the good of his church, in the face of almost unceasing opposition from the princes of this world. 'My kingdom,' said Christ, 'is not of this world.' He is, indeed, 'the Prince of the kings of the earth,'—all human beings are under his control; but 'the kingdom of heaven' is emphatically *his* kingdom. It is his as distinguished from the principalities and powers of a present world; it is his, because he claims the prerogative of ruling in it by his servants and his laws, to the entire exclusion of the kings and judges of the earth. He is not only 'Head over all things to the church,' having the whole world under his command; but he 'is the head of the body, the church.'\* 'As the husband is the head of the wife, even so Christ is the head of the church—the church is subject unto Christ.'†

There is a very common delusion—a delusion not confined to irreligious men, or to those who do not apply their minds to the subject-matter of religion, but existing, we fear, in the minds of many real chris-

\* Col. i. 18.

† Eph. v. 23, 24.

tians—that the doctrine of the headship, or exclusive spiritual jurisdiction, is nothing more than a question of church government—a question not affecting vital, practical christianity—with which, therefore, private christians have no concern. ‘If,’ say they, ‘we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and have the liberty of professing our faith in him, what does it concern us, if the administration of spiritual affairs be partly in the hands of the church, and partly in those of the civil magistrate? The dispute is about the possession of the power of ruling; with which, so long at least as we are in the enjoyment of religious liberty, we do not need to perplex ourselves.’ In answer to this apology for refusing to listen to argument on this subject, we would present, to candid and christian minds, the following considerations:—

1. There is no portion of the revealed will of God unimportant to the followers of Christ, whether they be ministers of the gospel, and rulers of the church, or private christians: ‘All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable.’ One part of it is not intended for the learned, and another for the unlearned—one for the professed theologian, another for the humble, illiterate disciple. It has its ‘milk for babes,’ and its ‘strong meat’ for ‘men of full age.’ There are ‘the first principles of the oracles of God,’ and there is the ‘perfection’ of christian knowledge, and faith, and obedience; but surely it is not the will of Christ that any should content themselves with the infancy of the spiritual life, when, growing in know-

ledge, it is in their power, through grace, to attain to the 'fulness of the stature of perfect men in Christ Jesus.' The scripture has its doctrine for convincing and converting sinners, and for building them up in holiness and comfort—which it is the primary duty of every hearer of the gospel to believe and apply; but it tells us also of a spiritual government to be exercised by the church in the name of Christ, in which some have been appointed to rule, and others to obey. The submission of every true christian to this divine ordinance ought to be an enlightened and willing submission. If it be his duty to be able to 'give to every man that asketh him a reason of the hope which is in him,' it is also his duty to be able to give a reason for his submission to the discipline and government of the church.

2. These remarks, familiar, we doubt not, to the hearers of the gospel, are peculiarly applicable to the subject before us. The doctrine for which we contend is no mysterious doctrine, hidden deep in the treasury of divine wisdom and knowledge, and requiring for its comprehension the utmost effort of a vigorous and highly cultivated mind. It is a doctrine which any one, with a capacity a little elevated above that of childhood, can comprehend. It is simply this, that, in matters spiritual, we must 'render to God the things that are God's'—that, as in these, we are responsible to him, and to him only, we must acknowledge no authority but his—that Christ has declared it to be his will that in the administration of the affairs of his

church his servants should act in his name ; and that, unless it can be proved that they are abusing their power in the gospel, they are entitled to the enlightened, reverential obedience of the flock of Christ. 'He that heareth you, heareth me,' said our Lord to his disciples. 'He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.'\*

Whether this be the doctrine of scripture or no, every one must admit that it is plain and intelligible; there is nothing mysterious in it. And, if it be the doctrine of scripture, as we confidently believe, and have endeavoured to prove, there is nothing fanatical, nothing contrary to good taste in such phrases as 'the Headship of Christ,' 'the crown-rights of the Redeemer,' etc. A spiritual government by Christ, 'the King and Head of his church,' 'in the hands of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate,' is an ordinance of God. The man who refuses to acknowledge this divine ordinance, or who presumes to disturb and subvert it, by acquiescing in the interference of the secular with the spiritual power, 'resisteth the ordinance of God,' does what in him lies to transfer the rights of his spiritual King to another, and to put his crown on the head of the civil magistrate. He is chargeable with spiritual disloyalty and rebellion, and cannot be held guiltless in the judgment of him who has solemnly declared, that he will not 'give his glory to another,' and that 'before all the people he will be glorified.'

\* Luke x. 16.

3. The spiritual jurisdiction principle is fundamental. The question is not with regard to forms of worship and government, concerning which there is more room for argument and diversity of opinion: it respects the authority which Christ possesses, and has an undoubted right to exercise in the administration of the affairs of his church. It is a first principle in christianity, which cannot be yielded without manifest danger and injury to faith and morals. When we speak of Christ as the alone King and Head of his church, administering its affairs by spiritual rulers or office-bearers, we do not represent them as receiving for this purpose, by immediate revelation, the knowledge of his will, but as acting in obedience to his will revealed to them in his word. In this point of view, the principle for which we contend is the grand protestant principle of the supreme authority of the scriptures in its application to the spiritual government. Let it be yielded to our opponents in this branch of christian obedience, and who can tell where the encroachment shall terminate? Let it be admitted that rulers, whether temporal or spiritual, may and ought to legislate and administer of their own proper mind in matters of religion—that the laws and ordinances of men may be put in the place of the laws and ordinances of Christ, and enforced by merely human authority, and what security should we have for purity of faith and manners in ministers and private christians? The supreme authority of the scriptures is, on such an admission, virtually abjured; and the interests of truth

and christian order are exposed to the pernicious influence of the imaginations of men.

The assertion of the supremacy of Christ is just another form of asserting the great principle of the Reformation—the supreme authority of the scriptures in matters of religion. No sober-minded, intelligent christian man, when he speaks of Christ's Headship, pretends to receive direct revelation, in any form, from his divine Master—he means nothing more than that it is his duty, and the duty of all men, to submit unreservedly and implicitly to Christ speaking to them in the scriptures, and to repudiate every kind and degree of interference with his authority as there declared. When, therefore, we assert Christ's supremacy, we do nothing more than assert the supreme authority of the scriptures. On the other hand, we virtually abjure this great principle when we consent to the interference, and submit, in matters spiritual, to the commands of the civil magistrate. If we consent to his interference in any one point coming within the province of the spiritual jurisdiction, we virtually consent to it in all. Our faith, our worship, our discipline, is at the mercy of a fellow-creature. The bible is set aside: Christ is set aside, and a fallible human being is set up in his room.

It cannot be said with justice, in answer to this, that men do submit to fellow-creatures when they acknowledge the authority of *spiritual rulers*; for subjection to their authority is a voluntary subjection—voluntarily given and continued to them, because they

are the ministers of Christ, and subsisting no longer, if such be the will of the individual, than while they act consistently with their character and profession. On the contrary, if we consent to the interference of the civil ruler in matters spiritual, if avowedly or tacitly we admit this vicious principle, we must needs be subject, however contrary his laws and decrees may be to the word of God and our own convictions. By our own act we withdraw our allegiance from our rightful sovereign, and transfer it to another, perhaps an open enemy, or, what is worse, a deceitful friend; we give up, not the rights of Christ only, but his very cause and kingdom in the world, into other hands.

4. It is well known to all who have the slightest acquaintance with the history of the church, that christianity obtained an ascendancy in the world under the shade of the principle for which we are now contending, and that no sooner was it overruled and practically abjured than christianity began to decline, and to be overspread, and at length supplanted, by the abominations of the Roman apostacy:

Every reader of the scripture knows that the gospel was preached at Jerusalem in direct opposition to the priests and rulers of the Jews, and that it was when the watchword of the followers of Christ, in succeeding ages—'We ought to obey God rather than men'—was first adopted, that the apostles had filled Jerusalem with their doctrine. Prosecuting their godlike undertaking in the same spirit and by the light and guidance of the same great principle, Paul and the other apostles

carried their conquests into the midst of the Roman empire, braving persecution and death; and whilst they inculcated subjection to civil authority, even in its most despotic form, they never forgot that they were also the subjects of a spiritual kingdom, and that in that kingdom they owed no allegiance but to Christ their only Lord.

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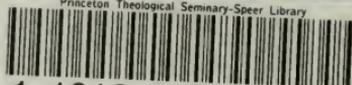
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