

Peter Macindoe

Vindication  
of the  
Reformed Presbyterian  
Church  
in  
Scotland

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*See also Dr McLeod  
with the kind regards  
of the author.*

# VINDICATION



OF THE

REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN

SCOTLAND,

FROM VARIOUS CHARGES PREFERRED AGAINST HER ON THE  
SUBJECT OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

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*[Extracted, with the kind permission of the EDITOR, from the EDINBURGH  
CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTOR, for April, May, and June, 1830.]*

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BY

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CHIRNSIDE.

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TO  
ALEXANDER M'LEOD, D.D.  
OF NEW YORK,  
THE FOLLOWING VINDICATION  
IS INSCRIBED,  
AS A SLIGHT EXPRESSION OF ESTEEM  
FOR HIS WORTH, TALENTS, AND LEARNING,  
AND  
AS AN HUMBLE MEMORIAL OF GRATITUDE  
FOR THE PLEASURE, INFORMATION, AND STIMULUS,  
DERIVED FROM HIS VISIT  
TO THIS COUNTRY IN  
MDCCCXXX.

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## ERRATA.

- Page 13, line 6 from bottom, *for eight read* eighteenth  
— 14, — 4 ————— *for misstatements read* mistatements  
— 20, — 2 ————— *for presbysery read* Presbytery  
— 32, — 2 *for* expression *read* affections

# VINDICATION

OF THE

## REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

ON THE

### SUBJECT OF CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

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SIR,—There are, I believe, a very few individuals, both in the other dissenting bodies, and especially in the national church, to whom such a vindication, as that now proposed, is scarcely necessary. *They already know*, by impartial examination of authentic documents, by occasional correspondence with intelligent members, and by continued observation of our public proceedings, that our *political creed* is neither so erroneous, so absurd, nor so dangerous, as has usually been supposed. *They have* even been candid enough to acknowledge, at various times, and in different forms, that it derives much greater countenance from the volume of revelation, and possesses much greater subserviency to the interests of society, than its opponents have frequently represented. Such, however, is the impression only of a few. The great mass of the population, even in this part of the island, entertain a very different opinion,—if a mere *prejudice* which they have imbibed, without the due exercise of their own minds, deserve the dignified appellation of opinion. They, too indolent to inquire for themselves on a subject to which they, on insufficient grounds, cherish dislike, too prone to indulge, with pleasure, injurious prepossessions against *any* party with which they themselves are not connected, and too ready to appropriate to their own denominations respectively, all truth, all excellence, and all honour, with glaring illiberality,—seem fully persuaded that our political belief is either totally groundless, or practically injurious, inconsistent with the virtuous subjection of citizens, and the proper supremacy of rulers, and deserving from all men, in this enlightened age, either of unbounded contempt or of unmingled abhorrence. Looking at it only through the thick mists of prejudice, passion, and ignorance, they have given it any *shape*, however inaccurate, fantastic, or frightful, that their imaginations have sug-

gested ; and have usually *supposed* it either a strange spectre, from which prudence requires them to maintain the greatest distance, or a hideous monster, which they cannot survey with too great horror, or visit with too speedy destruction.

It is true, Sir, we have no strong claim on the attention, the indulgence, or the consideration of our countrymen. As a church we occupy but a small space in the list of modern denominations, and but an inferior rank in the scale of civil distinctions. We are very sensible to the defects with which she is chargeable in her constitution and administration,—in her partial declension from that elevated piety and high-toned morality, that were once more conspicuous in her members, and in her occasional conformity to the doubtful maxims and questionable amusements that prevail, unchecked, in all departments of irreligious society. Neither are we disposed to deny that, in our lives, as individuals, are improprieties over which we ought, in the sight of God, sincerely to mourn, and from which we ought, with increased vigilance, habitually to abstain. But, while we would not *obtrude* ourselves on the notice of our fellow men, we think ourselves entitled to justice, whenever they, of their own accord, are pleased to *take* notice of us. If they *will* pronounce judgment on us, in the plenitude of their numerical strength and collective wisdom, they should surely first allow us a fair bearing, examine with care the evidence produced in our favour, as well as the vulgar clamour which has so long resounded against us, and come to a judicious decision, warranted by a candid review of the whole case, no less than consonant to the dictates of discriminating judgment and impartial feeling. No doubt, *so long* as we are doomed only to mere neglect, or even to silent contempt, we are bound to exercise continual patience under these partial evils, rather than proclaim those good qualities, or those virtuous actions, or those just principles, that entitle us to some measure of esteem, affection, and approbation. But the moment that we are made the subjects of spontaneous reflection in historical narration,—in private circles, or in public assemblies, in ephemeral pamphlets, or standard publications,—that moment we are warranted to demand the exercise of impartial justice, in reference at once to our general character, our peculiar views, our judicial determinations, and our political department ; and never is any individual warranted, however superior to us he may think himself in personal accomplishments, and ecclesiastical connexions, to load us with the odium of obnoxious tenets, which we do not hold, or of mischievous practices which we do not pursue, however narrow the bounds of our depressed communion, or small our claims on public consideration.

It were certainly discreditable, in any age, to *persist* in indulging any injurious prejudices against any party, however small, when a very little trouble might serve to ascertain their total groundlessness. But, surely, in such an age as the present,—an age in which liberality of sentiment has been recently extended to all classes of *heretics*, however pernicious their peculiar opinions, and however absurd their distinctive forms,—an age in which a spurious charity has become the idol, at whose shrine are willingly sacrificed the articles of scriptural belief, and the principles of eternal rectitude,—an age in which such laudable efforts are made to extend the bounds of our knowledge, by travels in remote countries, by voyages on distant seas, and by researches in all the branches of useful science, physical, moral, and political,—in *such* an age, it were surely more than discreditable to *persist* in imputing to us irrational views,



which we have explicitly disavowed, and dangerous designs, which we are not conscious of entertaining. It is time for all of us to banish from our minds those preconceived judgments which we have so long indulged,—erase from the tablet of our hearts all bitter remembrances, all injurious associations, all unkind emotions,—and fling back, in the face of such accusers, every charge, however gratifying to party spirit, that is not substantiated by sufficient evidence, either from valid documents, or from credible witnesses. Henceforth let *truth*, not victory, be the object of our unwearied search,—*mind*, not passion, the instrument we employ in the noble pursuit,—*revelation*, not reason, the standard with which we compare our respective peculiarities,—and *caudour*, not prejudice, the umpire to which we look for an impartial decision—an umpire that will acknowledge truth, in whatever creed it is found, and applaud excellence whatever party it adorns.

Among all the opprobrious phrases that have so long been bestowed on our church, by ignorant, or uncandid, or malicious opponents, no one has proved more painful to our feelings, or injurious to our reputation, than the phrase “*anti-government people.*” This uncourteous designation was first applied to us, in a regular form, about a hundred years ago,—has since figured, in capital letters too, in many ephemeral productions,—and even now, instead of being cheerfully consigned to that oblivion of which it is so worthy, is kept in smart circulation, through various channels, over which, we have no opportunity of exercising any direct control. Surely, the continued reiteration of such an obnoxious name, in the unrestricted sense in which it is generally used, by our opponents, is, to say the least, a very unkind, illiberal, and contemptible employment,—an employment that evinces a sad destitution of that charity to which they assert such lofty pretensions, an ungenerous anxiety to lower the credit of our party, in the estimation of the public, who generally abhor political disaffection, and a pitiful ambition of raising themselves higher in popular favour, by those vulgar artifices which have, in all ages, been the chief resource of selfish, and base, and mean minds. “It costs no labour,” to borrow the language of a profound writer, who exposes, with singular force, and with becoming indignation, all such artifices; “it costs no labour, and needs no intellect to pronounce,” the terms that have now been mentioned. “The weakest, or most uncultivated mind, may, therefore, gratify its vanity, laziness, and malice, all at once, by a prompt application of vague condemnatory words, where a wise and liberal man would not feel himself warranted to pronounce without the most deliberate consideration, and where such consideration might, perhaps, terminate in applause. You cannot wonder that, such compendious words of decision, which can give quick vent to crude impatient censure, emit plenty of antipathy in a few syllables, and save the condemner the difficulty of telling exactly what he wants to mean, should have had an extensive circulation. Such terms have a pleasant facility of throwing away the matter in question to scorn, without any trouble of making a definite intelligible charge of extravagance or delusion, and attempting to prove it. What a quantity of noisy zeal would have been quashed in dead silence, if it had been possible to enforce the substitution of statements and definitions for this unmeaning, vulgar, but most efficacious term of reproach. What a number of persons have vented the superabundance of their loyalty, or their rancour, by means of this and two or three similar words, who, if,

by some sudden lapse of memory, they had lost these two or three words, would have looked round with an idiotic vacancy, totally at a loss what was the *subject* of their anger or their approbation." \*

In attempting to wipe away, from the character of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, unmerited reproaches, on the subject of civil government, I may, not improperly, begin with a brief investigation of their principal *causes*. Such an investigation may prove, not only gratifying to that curiosity which naturally delights in tracing facts to their remotest causes, but also instructive to our minds, both in showing the moral obliquities under which the hearts of some men, otherwise estimable, have laboured, and in furnishing useful directions that may, in time coming, prevent the adoption of those unfounded prejudices, and those injurious aspersions, under which the party in question has hitherto, so unjustly, suffered.

On this part of the subject, I may remark generally, that governments have, naturally, a strong tendency to look, with suspicion, on all classes of dissenters from the national church. The single circumstance that they have formally withdrawn from the church that the state has adopted, sanctioned and endowed, and complied with the dictates of their own judgments, rather than with the requirements of the legislature, in the organization of their respective churches, leads many, particularly weak rulers, their immediate satellites, and their injudicious friends, to imagine that they are, equally, unwilling to submit to the *political* branch of the constitution, form, necessarily, a part of the regular opposition with which government has usually to contend, and entertain designs unfriendly to any administration that commits that interference with religion, against which they have, in the face of the world, recorded their solemn protest. This, no doubt, is very inconclusive reasoning on the part of those who belong to the ecclesiastical establishments,—reasoning abundantly refuted by the loyal behaviour of all protestant dissenters in the three kingdoms, amounting to several millions,—reasoning of which no magnanimous prince, no enlightened ministry, and no honourable partisans, will ever suffer themselves to be guilty,—reasoning that can never find supporters, except among those who, either from obtuseness of intellect, cannot perceive its glaring inaccuracy, or, from corruption of moral principle, are disposed to use any artifices, even in logic, for the purpose of rendering all dissenting denominations obnoxious to the civil authorities. Such reasoning, however, *has*, sometimes, been resorted to, by the monopolizers of political loyalty and royal favour, brought upon dissenters a degree of odium, in the eyes of the rulers, which even their proverbial subordination has scarcely been sufficient to remove, and exposed our church, *in particular*, to the suspicion of being a little nursery in which the leading principles of sedition are nourished, supported, and avowed. But there are *peculiar causes* which have operated very powerfully against our political credit, to which I would request, for a few moments, the kind attention of your readers.

*A primary cause is the public procedure of the more rigid Presbyterians or Covenanters,†—our venerated predecessors,—before the Revolution.*

\* Foster's Essays, pp. 167, 170, 171, 172.

† Many persons of distinguished worth never hear the Covenants mentioned, without strong feelings of aversion to these venerable deeds. If such are unwilling to examine the instructive writings which have been produced on this important subject, by divines

That *they* opposed the measures of the government, during several years prior to this memorable event, by their counsels, their writings, and their actual struggles, is readily admitted. Subjected to unrelenting persecution on account of their sound opinions, religious observances, and laudable habits; exposed to the greatest cruelties at the instigation of an oppressive administration, and the hands of barbarous soldiers; and ruminating on the gloomy prospects they had of continued sufferings under a monarch who had subverted the fundamental laws of the constitution, violated the solemn oaths he had sworn, and arrogated to himself "absolute power,"—they thought themselves warranted to disown, in the most explicit manner, the royal authority, to resist the daring infringements that were made on their most valued privileges, and even to defend, by arms, those imprescriptible rights on which their dearest interests were suspended. And who, recollecting, that the Scottish convention, in 1689, resolved that the king had "forfeited" the crown by his previous misdeeds,\* that resistance to misused power is an essential principle in the British constitution,†—and that "a great preponderance of good"‡ thus accrued from the revolution to the country, in the great interests of religion, and liberty, trade, commerce, and agriculture, will say that they acted wrong? "Considering their circumstances," says a living writer, "it is not surprising that they assumed an attitude of defiance, or spoke in language which their rulers deemed seditious and insulting. The wonder would have been had they acted otherwise,—had they felt no resentment for past indignities, or expressed no inclination to retaliate. And who, we are tempted to ask, in the same situation, but would have pursued similar steps? Is it possible to put on bowels of compassion towards murderers and incendiaries, or speak of their atrocities with affected tenderness? It is a surer mark of an honest mind to avow its indignation openly and boldly, to be ingenuous and undisguised in word as well as in deed. If we do discover fierceness in their expressions, or asperities in their temper, we may well suppose that their sensibilities must have been a little impaired, and their kindlier feelings worn off amidst the storms of persecution and the strife of party contentions. Taking these into account, there is a tone of sobriety, of indulgence, and forbearance which we could scarcely have expected, and which may be thought almost incompatible with their stern principles, or the unavoidable irritation of their spirits. Towards the established authorities

of various churches, will they listen to the testimony of an illustrious historian, whom no one can accuse either of bigotry, or fanaticism, or liberalism? Principal Robertson, referring to the period when the National Covenant was adopted, says, "The zeal of the people, on this occasion, was not inferior to that of the king; and the extraordinary danger, with which they were threatened, suggested to them an extraordinary expedient for their security. A bond was framed for the maintenance of true religion, as well as the defence of the king's person and government, in opposition to all enemies, foreign and domestic.....The king, the nobles, the clergy, and the people, subscribed with equal alacrity.....At the juncture in which it was first introduced, we may pronounce it to have been a prudent and laudable device, for the defence of the religion and liberties of the nation; nor were the terms in which it was conceived other than might have been expected from men alarmed with the impending danger of popery, and threatened with an invasion by the most powerful prince in Europe." *The History of Scotland*, vol. i. 542—544.

\* Laing's *History of Scotland*, vol. ii. p. 191.

† De Lolme on the *Constitution of England*, p. 308, 309.

‡ Brown's *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, vol. iv. 351.

they manifested disrespect and aversion ; but this arose from the accumulation of intolerable grievances, of which they saw no prospect either of termination or redress. They could not reverence the emblems of official power when borne by hands that were polluted by extortion, and reeking with human blood. They could not pay reciprocal homage to a government which had not only refused them the benefits of justice and protection, but driven them beyond the reach of clemency and forgiveness. They could not respect laws that had violently overturned all the fences about their lives, properties, and religion ; laws that had delegated a judiciary power to the meanest soldier, and planted the assassin's dagger in the hand of every mercenary spy ; that had ruined their estates by enormous exactions, and laid their conscience under an absolute and inextricable subjection to the crown.\*

Now, since we hold, substantially, the same political views which they advocated, respecting the duties of sovereigns, and the rights of subjects, it has been inferred that we must be disposed to adopt, at any time, similar proceedings. It has been even argued that we too, though placed in far more favourable circumstances, would be the turbulent subverters of thrones, and the sanguinary asserters of liberty, had we a proper opportunity. No doubt, *were* we placed in the same circumstances in which they were placed, we should probably feel ourselves constrained to act the same part which they pursued, only endeavouring to avoid any excesses into which they were betrayed by their outraged feelings, and to add any improvements which subsequent experience may have recommended. Should our present race of princes ever so far degenerate as to resemble that which the revolution drove from these realms ; should they ever, with incorrigible obstinacy, stretch their prerogatives beyond the checks of the constitution, and the barriers of the Parliament ; should they ever attempt to rob us, by military violence and legal injustice, of our religious privileges and our political liberties ; should they ever, with ferocious resentment, proclaim a new "campaign of judicial murders" against us, for no other crimes than avowing the scriptural opinions we entertain, and rejecting the episcopal hierarchy, which our consciences, judging according to revelation, disapprove ; should they ever, at the instigation of "ermined and mitred sycophants," pursue with the sword the once hated presbyterians, until the solitudes of our country shall again resound with the praises of numerous conventicles, the streets of the capital again flow with the blood of martyred saints, and the groans of an oppressed people again reach the ears of some foreign deliverer,—we should account ourselves unworthy the name we bear, the cause we profess, and the precious legacy of social privileges won back to us by the struggles of our honoured sires, did we not use every means of *constitutional* resistance. But, while we are, by the kindness of divine providence, in very different circumstances, we are sincerely inclined, and firmly resolved, to pursue a different course. While we enjoy the exercise of our religion in our churches without any sinful restrictions, the protection of our property, our liberty, and our lives, the impartial administration of justice, and many other privileges which none can appreciate so highly as those whose minds have been familiar, from infancy, with the story of our ancestors' numerous privations, we trust, we shall feel gratitude for the superior regimen under

\* Life of Lieut.-Col. J. Blackadder, pp. 41, 42.

which we are permitted to live, and yield subjection to the just laws under the operation of which we have, happily, been brought. Let no one then, overlooking our respective circumstances, argue that we must be the disturbers of the public tranquillity and the enemies of social order, because we are the avowed successors of the more zealous covenanters, who suffered, and bled, and died, during the disastrous years that preceded the revolution. Such a mode of arguing respecting our political designs, and actions, and motives, has been countenanced too long by many, and has brought on our very name a measure of political odium which, I am sure, no part of our procedure, and no principle of our creed, does, in the slightest degree, warrant.

*A second cause is the freedom with which our church has, in all ages, testified in various forms, against the evils of the government, even since the revolution.* It is no doubt true, no other party in this country hailed that event with livelier joy, embraced its immediate advantages with warmer gratitude, or contributed greater exertions on the momentous emergency,\* to put down the enemies of the new government, who, in the north, clung around the fallen standard of the deposed king, and, under the torn banners of despotism crimsoned with the blood of martyred thousands, followed the orders of the intrepid but unprincipled Dundee. They rejoiced in the stop that was thus put to their own severe sufferings, which had now continued during twenty-eight years, in caves and dens, in prisons and in fortresses, in foreign countries as well as on their native muirs. They rejoiced in the expulsion of a race of kings who had, with characteristic ingratitude, rewarded their generous services with a series of intolerable oppressions, evinced, during several reigns, greater capacity for the lowest buffoonery and the coarsest licentiousness, than for advancing the true interests of the ancient kingdoms subjected to their sway, and proved, by their public acts, that they would never rest till they had re-established the whole system of popery, at whatever expense to the lives of protestants. They rejoiced too in the recognition, by the three kingdoms, of a number of the political principles for which they had borne such sufferings, in the adoption of various measures calculated to promote the prosperity, the independence, and the honour of their country, and especially in the permission granted them, unaccompanied with any sinful conditions, to worship, in any form which their own judgments had conceived agreeable to the Scriptures. But, while they cordially rejoiced in the great deliverance that was now accomplished, in its immediate results and future benefits, they did not give way to *blind admiration*. They did not express *unqualified approbation* of the new *Settlement*, though glorious in many particulars, or vow the implicit subjection promised by some others who never intended to give it, or join in the boisterous applauses which rose from the lips of many who proved, by their overt acts a few years afterwards, that their hearts were, even now, after the royal fugitive.† They reserved to themselves the right of condemning, in various ways, and on proper occasions, any false principles admitted into the constitution, any unjust measures that might be adopted by the new rulers, and any palpable neglect of the great duties they owed to the community over which they

\* Proofs of this will be given in a subsequent part of this article.

† “ Struck with astonishment and consternation, he abandoned a throne which he had neither policy to fill nor courage to defend; leaving to his successor a victory without blood and a crown without a competitor.” P. 55, *Life of Lieutenant-Colonel Blackadder*.

were placed by the signal interposition of divine providence. Accordingly, this right they began to exercise very soon after the Revolution, by pointing out, in written declarations,\* those evils which, they conceived, the government had committed; nor have they ceased, at any future period, to exhibit, in appropriate testimonies, their joint disapprobation of those things, in the management of the national affairs which they believed to be inconsistent with the word of God, the inalienable privileges of the Christian church, and the genuine interests of civil society.

But is it *fair*, on the part of any, to infer from this practice, pursued by our Church since her commencement, that we must, therefore, be enemies to the righteous laws, or to the virtuous acts, of the government? No inference ever drawn by the most illogical head, or the most unprincipled heart, could be more illegitimate. Am I an enemy to an erring friend, because I honestly tell him the truth, clearly describe the improprieties of which he has been guilty, faithfully exhibit the pernicious consequences to which they must lead, and earnestly warn him to return to the paths of piety and virtue, from which his evil passions have seduced him, and in which alone he can recover either true tranquillity of mind or genuine respectability of character? Will *he himself*, after he shall have *reflected* on the kindness of my intentions, the soundness of my counsels, and the importance of his own reformation as the ultimate end to which my anxious efforts are wholly directed, exclude me from the number of his *best friends*? No surely. No more then ought that section of the Church which condemns most explicitly the public evils of the government, denounces most faithfully the threatened judgments of heaven, and pleads most strenuously for the speedy abolition of those legalized evils which have exposed our land to evident tokens of the divine displeasure, to be accounted hostile to the *excellent* principles of the constitution, the *just* measures of the ministry, or the *real* interests of the country. On the contrary, in proportion to the fidelity with which it exposes the existence, the criminality, and the hurtfulness of these evils, and endeavours to rouse the nations from their present insensibility, to the exercises of genuine repentance and necessary reform, in the same proportion is it contributing, in its own sphere, however narrow, to avert dreaded calamities, to procure the exercise of divine forbearance towards our country, and to draw down public blessings, never attainable, either by the policy of irreligious statesmen, or by the courage of immoral warriors.†

\* From August 1692 to October 1707, they emitted four declarations. Considering that they were deprived of the assistance of ministers till 1706, when the Rev. John Macmillan became their pastor, and that they were smarting under the bitter remembrance of unmerited sufferings, the authors of which, instead of having been legally punished for their crimes, were admitted to important offices in the church, the army, and the government, it would not have been surprising had they expressed themselves in very strong language respecting their rulers. After, however, a repeated perusal of these documents, with a determination to mark every thing that might appear exceptionable, I must say, they have uttered their sentiments with a *temperance* which could scarcely have been expected in their *irritating* circumstances, and with a *propriety* which shows the laudable care with which their minds had been improved by early education, and enriched by subsequent reflection. Well might Bishop Burnet feel surprised at the superior intelligence which *their fathers* displayed during the persecution, and which, contrasted with the ignorance of the generality of the curates who had supplanted their beloved teachers, was to them exceedingly creditable.

† For illustration of the principle, that nations best promote their prosperity, their

Do any of our opponents allege that, we should, this day, have been higher in public estimation, had we never emitted a single declaration of our sentiments respecting the evils of government? I am not disposed to question the truth of their allegation. But I would ask them, would we have been higher in the estimation of our Redeemer? Would a temporizing policy like that which they recommend, have been creditable to us, either as the inhabitants of a free country, or as the friends of revealed truth? Would that popular applause, which might have been secured by a base neutrality or a timid silence, regarding the honours of the Saviour, and the liberties of the church, have been either soothing to our consciences in the season of calm reflection, or consolatory to our feelings in the hour of final dissolution? Too long, I fear, have many ministers of Jesus been slumbering at their posts, respecting the public interests of religion and morality,\* instead of "going forth to him without the camp bearing his reproach." Too long, I fear, have many been courting the smiles of their civil superiors, by unworthy compliances, rather than seeking the approbation of their Divine Master, by uncompromising fidelity. Too long, I fear, have they been excluding from the pulpit the politics,† which, they must see, form a part of the Bible, lest they should offend the political prejudices of their hearers, bring into suspicion their own boasted loyalty, or mar their promotion to richer livings. While the *press*, even in the hands of men not governed by the principles of religion, has done much for the removal of stupid prejudices, and antiquated abuses, favourable only to absolute government; the *pulpit* has been, generally speaking, either *silent* on those grand principles in revelation which promote the rational liberties and the political improvement of mankind, or *active* in supporting established evils by courtly orations and servile prayers. It is high time for the ambassadors of Jesus (not to interfere in the disputes of worldly politicians, or solve the problems of political science, but) to expound the great principles of political morality that are clearly inculcated in the Bible,‡ to demand from kingdoms and empires, submission to the laws of the reigning Mediator, and, emulating the approved example of ancient teachers, to "bear his name before the Gentiles, and *kings*, and the children of Israel."§

honour, their safety, and their influence, by *obedience to the Divine will*, the reader may consult Dr. Romeyn's Sermons, i—iii. Dr. Dwight, Sermons cxiii, cxiv. Dr. Dewar, Discourse x. and particularly the historical parts of the Old Testament.

\* "True politics I look on as a part of moral philosophy, which is nothing but the art of conducting men right in society, and supporting a community among its neighbours."—LOCKE.

† "To preach such sermons (political) is unquestionably the right, and, in certain cases, as unquestionably the duty, of every minister of the gospel." Dwight, vol. iv. 129.

‡ "It is surprising that any person of sense should deem a subject introduced in the Scriptures for the instruction of mankind unfit for the pulpit. It seems to convey a very unjust reflection on the Spirit of God, but, we doubt, it implies no slight censure on the conduct of preachers. It is the uncommonness of a subject, often, which leads people to think it unsuitable; and, if preachers gave that variety to their instruction which the word of God furnishes, there is no scriptural topic against which hearers would entertain a prejudice." The Christian Repository, vol. ii. 101.

§ "To us it has often been a matter of regret that religion, as taught by all sects, has been kept at such a distance from enlarged and comprehensive views of the duties which man owes to *society*.... We think it a reproach to them (many ministers) and their system, that they did not sow a single idea in the minds of the people which could teach them to see through the tinsel of false glory, to detest tyranny, to respect their own rights, and to love justice between nation and nation, as well as between man and man. They

Or, do any insinuate that, in thus testifying against what appear to us evils in the government, our designs are not good? We repel the ungenerous insinuation, as utterly groundless. For the purity of our motives, we appeal to *Him* to whose all-seeing eye our inmost thoughts are intimately known, and at whose impartial tribunal our deepest feelings will be completely exposed. We can say, honestly, we have never been actuated by factious views, by impatience under legal restraints, by the mere desire of political changes, or by resentment at not sharing in those civil offices, emoluments, and distinctions, from which we are excluded by legal disabilities. We feel conscious we have had in view,—the exonerating of our consciences,—the admonition of our fellow-men,—the removal from the government of those things which have long been reckoned, by the purest patriots, its greatest blemishes,—the supremacy of the revealed law over the maxims of human wisdom in all public affairs, civil, judicial, and ecclesiastical,—and the honour of our blessed Lord, to whom the subjection of all nations, in their public character, and of all rulers, in their official capacity, has been so clearly promised, and so authoritatively enjoined. In short, for the perfect justification of our motives, may we not appeal to the candid judgment of those of our countrymen to whom we are known, whether we have not been exemplary, at all times, in discriminating submission, in peaceable behaviour, in virtuous efforts for the preservation of our national liberties, whenever they have been threatened with danger, and in pecuniary sacrifices for raising our country, already the admiration of most free states, to those heights of purity, piety, and order, that shall render her still more worthy of that admiration?

*A third cause of the suspicion in which we are held, with regard to civil government, is the unfairness of several writers who have appeared against us, at different times, in the Secession.* Scarcely had this respectable denomination separated themselves from the judicatories of the national church, when they commenced, against us, a series of attacks, which has been continued ever since, at short intervals, till about twelve years ago, when the war which had been waged, with undue keenness, on both sides, was succeeded by a truce, of which there has been no open rupture. Had they been satisfied with condemning our *real opinions only*, and endeavouring to refute *them* by true statements and fair arguments, we would not have blamed them, since we have always invited the freest discussion of the several questions that have so long divided the two denominations. But justice compels me to say, that several of them have ventured, in regular succession,—whether from ignorance, inadvertence, or design, I will not say,—*first*, to produce false representations of our political principles, feelings, and intentions, and *then* to heap upon us all the odium which should certainly have been our due, had these slanderous fabrications been correct. One document affirms\* concerning our party, that “they had gone into the dangerous extreme of impugning the present civil authority over these nations, and subjection thereunto in lawful commands,” without explicitly declaring, that they impugned the present constitution *no farther* than it

have, on the contrary, with a few exceptions, flattered power themselves, and instilled those slavish maxims into the minds of the people, which have made them traitors to their own best interests, and fit tools in the hands of profligate rulers, to spread ruin and slaughter over the world. Such was not the spirit of John Knox.”

\* Answers to the Rev. Mr. Nairne, p. 291.



seemed, in their judgment, opposed to the revealed will of heaven, and to the solemn engagements under which the nations had been brought. Another pamphlet\* declares, "they are men of no candour, probity, or truth,—whose mouths are filled with virulent speeches and scurrilous language,—stated open enemies to reason, common sense, and divine revelation, and set to proclaim war, even against the Bible itself,—as men of shameless sophistry and uncommon ignorance,"—whose "sentiments about magistracy are just a mine of absurd unscriptural imaginations." A third publication,† from the same school, asserts, "They maintain that our magistracy ought not to be supported, ought not to be prayed for, but ranked with those plagues which God sends upon a sinful people; nor can it be any sin to *resist* such, to endeavour to overturn such usurpation. They do now publicly avow such principles as do necessarily unhinge magistracy, yea, all the common relations which unite mankind in civil society." A fourth production,‡ worse even than most of its predecessors, impudently avers, they "are men of bloody principles; if they had a king in their own way, he would delight to glut himself in the blood of recusants. They have arms, yea, an armoury by them,§ to use and improve in case of a confusion in the land; a door was opened by them for the pretender to mount the throne." A fifth pamphlet|| asks with an air of confident triumph, "Are the reformed presbyterians walking in the steps of the great Teacher come from God? No, indeed; their refusing obedience to the present civil government in things lawful, is a direct contradiction to the supreme authority and unblemished practice of the Son of God. According to them, the sense of the text, "render unto Cesar the thing that are Cesar's," is *render unto him a haltar and a gallows.*" A sixth document,¶ sanctioned by official authority, declares, without restricting the meaning within due limits, "they hold that all the civil rulers, whether supreme or subordinate, in Britain and Ireland, for more than a century past; have been unlawful, and that it was sinful either to acknowledge, obey, or pray for them." Nor did the publication of such unfair representations terminate with the last century. So recently as the year 1817, a periodical work,\*\* supported chiefly, if not entirely, by individuals of that party, announced that while "many of the reformed presbyterians were," ("early in the reign of Queen Anne,") "truly religious persons who retained the manners and opinions which distinguished the preceding period, others of them were men of restless and violent tempers, *who repeatedly engaged in the plots of the jacobites for the restoration of the Stuart family to the*

\* Goodlet's Vindication of the Associate Synod. See Humble Attempt, &c. p. 3.

† Thomson's Presbyterian Covenanter. See Vindicæ Magistratus, &c. pp. 208, 212, 6.

‡ Turnbull's Review of the Anti-Government Scheme. See Newton's Voice to Seceders, pp. 12, 62.

§ "An armoury by them"!! He should just have added that, they have also powder magazines sufficient to blow up Edinburgh, a fleet large enough to sweep the royal navy from the ocean, and an army ready to lay waste the country with fire and sword; and that they had fixed the gloomy month of November following for beginning their barbarous operations, by an indiscriminate massacre of all the *seceders in the Merse.* This would have been a morceau for hungry credulity to swallow and rancorous bigotry to boast of.

|| Fletcher's Scripture Loyalist. See Answers by the Rev. W. Steven, pp. 96, 97, 101.

¶ A Narrative of the State of Religion, by the General Associate Synod, p. 88.

\*\* The Christian Repository, vol. ii. 431.

throne.\* Their conduct might have afforded plausible grounds for the general prosecution of all who held their peculiar doctrines; but, under a mild administration, which left them undisturbed, they soon became perfectly harmless.”

\* Than this no accusation more injurious to our political credit, or more inconsistent with historic truth, could have possibly been conceived. Recorded in a religious magazine that obtained considerable circulation during several years, and published with the implied sanction of the excellent editor whose own writings are distinguished for great accuracy, candour and liberality, it requires particular animadversion that is by no means due to the senseless ebullitions by which it is preceded.

1. Any attempt to bring back the Stuarts was *contrary to their avowed political opinions*. They held that the first magistrate of this reformed land ought to be a protestant presbyterian, a professor of the true religion, possessed of the various qualifications prescribed in the Sacred Scriptures, and recognised in the public covenants. These opinions had been indelibly impressed on their minds, by their familiar acquaintance with their Bibles, by numerous discourses from their pastors, and by various publications that were extorted from divines and lawyers, during the tempests of persecution. Was it at all likely, then, that *they* would concur in any “plots” for the restoration of “the titular Prince of Wales, who was a catholic, bred up in the court of France, inheriting all the extravagant claims, and probably the arbitrary sentiments of his father,”\* and who, on his acquiring the crown, instead of promoting the public views of the rigid covenanters, as a reward for their friendly services, would have, as they were well aware, surrounded his throne with exiled jacobites, and filled the pulpits with ejected curates?

2. Such an attempt was *forbidden by their painful recollections*. But a very few years had rolled away since they had suffered the greatest hardships and the severest cruelties, all the ravages of military violence and all the pains of legal oppression, at the hands of these very Stuarts. Was it at all likely then that they, with childish fickleness, with glaring fatuity, would wish *their* return,—that men who had endured such accumulated sufferings, under popish rulers prior to the Revolution, who had disowned their authority several years sooner than the majority in this kingdom, who had received the intelligence of their flight from our shores with transports of joy and gratitude, and who had done so much to consolidate the new dynasty, under which they were permitted to enjoy many privileges to which they had long been entire strangers,—was it likely, I ask, that *they* would, either early in the reign of Queen Anne, or at any other period, countenance any measures for the purpose of bringing over to their country a *Popish* successor? I cannot imagine any thing *more* improbable. As well might it be alleged that Daniel, after he had escaped from the den of lions by miraculous interposition, solicited his enemies to have him *again* thrown back; or that the three Hebrew confessors, after they had been delivered unhurt from the “burning fiery furnace” urged their accusers to procure a fresh order from Nebuchadnezzar to have them *again* flung into the flames.

3. Such an attempt was *contradicted by their own forcible declaration*. “We protest,” they say in 1707, “We protest against and disown the pretended Prince of Wales, from having any just right to rule or govern these nations, or to be admitted to the government thereof. And whereas, (as is reported,) we are maliciously aspersed by those who profess themselves of the Presbyterian persuasion, especially the *Laodicean preachers*, that we would be accessory to the advancement of *him* whom they call the pretended Prince of Wales to the throne of Britain, therefore, to let all concerned be fully assured of the contrary, we protest and testify against all such so principled to rule in these lauds, because we look upon all such to be standing in a stated opposition to God and our covenanted work of reformation.”†

4. The charge in question is *not once insinuated by any of our Scottish historians that I have seen*. I have examined, with some degree of care, all that has been written against the Reformed Presbyterians, usually nick-named *Cameronians*, by Hume, Laing, Heron, Sir Walter Scott in the Second Series of “*Stories taken from Scottish History*,” and some others, and certainly these writers have not been reluctant to bestow upon them a variety of opprobrious terms, to charge them with factious designs which they never entertained, and to impute bad motives, when they could not deny that they had performed

\* Tales of a Grandfather, Second Series, vol. iii. 260.

† Protestation against the Union with England, published on the 2d October 1707. See Informatory Vindication, 271.

Such, Sir, I am sorry to say, are a very few of the monstrous misrepresentations, which have been fabricated at different times, in the bosom of another church, entitled, on various accounts, to our best wishes, obtruded upon the notice of the country, in numerous publications, most of which should have died with those who gave them birth, and circulated in many places, with an officious assiduity that has never been practised in acknowledging, on fitting occasions, any good qualities they allow us to possess. Is it wonderful that such unfavourable accounts, sanctioned with the approbation of respectable ministers, applauded to the skies by the eulogies of unsuspecting partizans, and not contradicted, in many cases, by ourselves, till the very worst suspicions might have been excited against us, in many quarters whither the truth, concerning us, has not yet been conveyed, should have strengthened the previous impression in the country, of our hostility to government? Assuredly, had not our *practice* proved the falsity of the charges that were thus so recklessly preferred,—had not the uniform subordination and proverbial sobriety of our people, convinced the minds of impartial observers, that they were very different from the representations given in these printed statements,—had not their habitual refraining from all illegal associations, and all tumultuous meetings, in times of political agitation, satisfied the local authorities, under whose eye they lived, that *they* would never countenance any disturbances in the country, whatever might be the conduct of many *others* who had loyalty on their lips, and rebellion in their hearts,—in short, had not the exemplary propriety of their conduct, even in seasons that drove multitudes of their fellow-men to political violence, proved a sufficient antidote to the venom that was circulating through so many channels, we must assuredly have been the objects of greater jealousy than has ever been felt regarding us by our present rulers, and the victims of severer restraints than they have been accustomed to impose, even on their most turbulent subjects.

It is gratifying to think, that such scurrilous effusions as those now under review, have ceased, for several years, under a printed form, in the Secession; though the injurious impressions produced by them on the public mind, remain still, to a certain extent; just as the furious torrents of the last storm have passed onwards to the ocean in which

meritorious actions. But to *this* charge, which has been brought forward in the Repository, they make not the slightest allusion. Had *they* found any evidence for it in the authorities from which they compiled their respective histories, it is certain they would have assigned it a conspicuous place in the roll of bitter revilings which they have penned against the party. Their perfect silence furnishes an ample refutation.

Since writing these remarks I have ascertained from the writer in the Repository, that “the statement was made on the authority of a manuscript history of the Secession by the late Mr. Brown of Haddington.” Now that *he* would record this accusation without having evidence *which appeared to him* satisfactory, is not, for one moment, to be supposed. *We ourselves* would repel, with indignation, the very insinuation against that venerable father, whose great excellence we have always esteemed, whose judicious writings we highly value, and whose scriptural illustrations, occasionally introduced, of some of our peculiar views, we have often perused with pleasure. Still, like many other good men, he was fallible; and, if he made the statement merely on the oral tradition which had been handed down from the beginning of the eighth century, and which was “a malicious aspersion” invented by persons of the established Church who hated the uncompromising Dissenters,\* we are bound to reject it, even at the very moment we feel the greatest respect for his judgment, the fullest confidence in his integrity, and the warmest veneration for his memory.

\* Informatory Vindication, 271.

they have totally disappeared, while the distressing ravages they have occasioned, present themselves along the whole tract over which they have swept. Whether, however, the misrepresentation of our peculiar opinions, and the vilification of our judicial proceedings, *by oral communication*, have ceased everywhere among that party, admits, I suspect, of strong doubt. That there are many, very many, in it, who, while they dislike our political views, possess too much integrity to deliberately misrepresent them, and who, while they even applaud their own body in no measured terms, are candid enough to acknowledge in ours, the prevalence of piety, moral worth, and political order, I well know, both from personal observation, and from credible testimony. But if there be *others*, however few, among the laity or the clergy, who can still *talk*, in convenient quarters, about our “bloody principles,” our “dangerous designs,” our “violent tempers,” our “anti-government schemes,”—who, instead of accepting our reiterated declarations, made in perfect sincerity, that we do not entertain in our bosoms such evils, continue to give their calumnies the greatest currency possible, through the various channels over which they have influence,—who, instead of practising toward *us* the charity to which they advance such superior claims, scruple not to revile our tenets, either among the lower orders, many of whom have credulity enough to receive, with implicit trust, their grossest misrepresentations, or among the higher ranks, some of whom cherish that political jealousy that prompts them to embrace, with eagerness, their vilest insinuations,—who, instead of drawing a correct *picture* of our political creed, that others may condemn or approve, according to their *own* judgment, persist in furnishing a studied *caricature*, calculated to call forth against us the bitterest reproaches which they themselves know our political views do not deserve,—if there be any of *this* description, under any cloak whatever, is it possible for us to reflect, either on such baseness with an indignation too burning, or on such meanness with a contempt too supercilious? Such despicable slanderers,—resembling, in this respect, those reptiles which display malignity, cunning, and cowardice in their very lowest forms, and never creep forth from their lurking places, except when they are protected by thick darkness, and sure of a safe retreat,—must be acting a part exceedingly inconsistent with genuine liberality, true courage, and “godly sincerity,” exceedingly painful to the men of pure and candid and honourable minds, with whom they are connected, and exceedingly ungenerous towards that humble communion upon which they are so lavish of the most unmerited abuse. Rather, indeed, would we encounter the *open* antagonists of the last century, rude, and vulgar, and scurrilous though they sometimes were, than meet those *secret* enemies who throw their poisoned shafts only under cover of the darkness with which they are careful always to surround themselves, and assail by insidious manœuvres an injured community which *they* have not the courage, the candour, and the justice to meet in honourable combat. “If scandal is to be secret, it is the crime of a coward; if it is to become known, it is the crime of a madman.”\*

I must add, to the causes already specified, of our unpopularity on the subject of government, a fourth,—*the gross misstatements respecting us, that abound in the principal writings yet produced on Scottish affairs, opinions, customs, and manners.* The love of truth is a noble passion,

\* St. Lambert, Tome ii. p. 251.

which all writers should cultivate and maintain with the greatest care, in whatever branch of literature they choose to toil. It is unworthy such men, whether their genius be brilliant, or their talents be moderate, to neglect any sources from which they may ascertain the truth; to grudge any personal labours that may clear away misrepresentations; or to sacrifice authenticated facts at the shrine of those vulgar passions, and those sordid interests, which it is disgraceful, even in literary hirelings, to worship. With unceasing fidelity they should strive to expel from their minds those prejudices which they have imbibed; to resist those passions which mislead the judgment; to forget the secular results suspended on the execution of their projected lucubrations; to despise the fame that no other price can purchase but the defamation of the illustrious dead, and the slander of the virtuous living,—and never, on any account, to put down on their pages, any one statement which they may wish to erase, when, from their death-bed, they shall look back on their errors detected by the rigid scrutiny of future inquirers, or when, before the judgment-seat, they shall survey their misrepresentations placed in the clearest light, by the omniscient Judge.

Now, have all the writers who have animadverted on the sufferings, the opinions, and the character of the Covenanters manifested *such an ardent love of truth*? That some *have*, to a very considerable extent, I readily grant, and gratefully rejoice. It is refreshing to see the rigorous fidelity with which Wodrow\* compares his original authorities, studies his ample compilations, and pronounces his own judicious reflections. It is gratifying to see the occasional candour with which Burnet† acknowledges the decided superiority of the Presbyterians in intelligence, piety, and moral excellence; and confesses the despicable condition in which the mass of the Episcopalian clergy continued, in respect of ignorance, irreligion, indolence, and immorality. It is spirit-stirring to survey the manly independence with which M'Crie‡ rescues the memory of Scotland's best patriots from the reproaches of ungrateful posterity; vindicates the virtuous struggles by which they stemmed the tide of unrelenting oppression, and rouses our moral feelings at the contemplation of heroic virtues, and the repulsion of heinous crimes. Nor is it less delightful to listen to the pious bard § whose mind the purest inspirations had enriched, celebrating “the virtuous race to godliness devote,” “their constancy in torture and in death,” their firm resistance to “a tyrant and a bigot's bloody laws,” their brave endurance of the winter's fiercest blasts,|| and persecution's bitterest storms, that they might hear in any solitudes “the word of God, by Cameron thundered, or by Renwick poured in gentle stream.” But, excepting these, and a few other works, that have lately issued from the press,¶ it is mortify-

\* History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland.

† History of his Own Times.

‡ Life of John Knox,—Life of Andrew Melville,—Memoirs of Veitch and Bryson.

§ The Sabbath, and Other Poems, by James Grahame. pp. 12—15. See Notes pp. 139—148.

|| ————— “No more  
The assembled people dared, in face of day,  
To worship God, or even at the dead  
Of night, save when the wintry storm raved fierce,  
And thunder-peals compelled the men of blood  
To couch within their dens.”

GRAHAME.

¶ Such as the historical novel, entitled Ringan Gilhaize, by Galt, 3 volumes; The History of Scotland, by Aikman, vols. iii and iv.

ing to find the greater number of any literary merit, filled with the grossest misrepresentations concerning the original Covenanters and their proper successors. I might refer to Hume,\* who has loaded them with indiscriminate abuse, by calling them bigots, fanatics, and rebels, and polluted his elegant pages with many of those foul slanders that were fabricated by servile courtiers during the reigns of the Stuarts, and circulated with great activity during many years afterwards, by the discontented Jacobites. I might refer to Laing,† who, while he has described with lively feelings of indignation the inhuman sufferings and the atrocious massacres with which they were visited, has heaped upon them many opprobrious terms, which were originally applied by avowed Tories, and justly incurred the censure passed by the poet on that other historian, who

—————“ execrates, indeed,  
The tyranny that doomed them to the fire,  
But gives the glorious sufferers little praise.”

I might refer to one of the earliest novels‡ of Sir Walter Scott, of which the undue partiality shown to the leading persecutors, the groundless charges preferred against the suffering Presbyterians, and the vile aspersions cast on the glorious privileges for which they struggled, have been so ably, so accurately, and so fully demonstrated by a learned contributor.§ I might refer to a second effusion || from the same prolific mind, in which he evinces similar aversion to the Covenanters, though somewhat subdued, mistakes their ardent piety for rancorous bigotry, confounds their laudable hatred of oppression with factious turbulence under regular government, and altogether draws such a picture of their public proceedings as makes them more to be derided for their alleged weaknesses, than applauded for their patriotic exertions. I might refer to his little volumes of historical tales lately published,¶ tales in which,—though it is truly gratifying to see his splendid genius gradually bursting the trammels of political Toryism, and gradually associating with itself an exalted passion worthy of such high companionship, the love of liberty,—it is still mortifying to find no adequate measure of justice awarded the purest patriots under the greatest troubles our country has ever endured, and the liberal principles, from the partial adoption of which she has reaped her unrivalled blessings. I might refer to the popular writings of Chambers,\*\* who, with the graphic descriptions he has given, in his flowing style, of Scottish scenery, antiquities, manners, and revolutions, has mingled a considerable quantity of venom against the Covenanters of all periods, reiterated many terms of vituperation which he should rather have placed among the *relics of the Jacobites*, and manifested a political spirit by no means friendly to the dearest rights and the noblest privileges of a free country. I might refer to a celebrated monthly Magazine,†† in which, only a few years since, several very incorrect articles were inserted respecting some of our earliest ministers and religious festivals, had the extraordinary circulation which that periodical has obtained in several

\* History of England, vols. vi. vii. viii.

† History of Scotland, vols. i. ii.

‡ Tales of my Landlord.

§ See Review of these Tales in the Christian Instructor for 1817.

|| Second Series of Tales of My Landlord.

¶ Tales of a Grandfather, Second Series.

\*\* The Picture of Scotland; History of the Rebellions in Scotland under the Viscount Dundee and the Earl of Mar in 1689 and 1715.

†† Blackwood's.

countries, must have proved very injurious to the credit of our Church among those readers who have never sought information from purer sources, and completely showed that the writer was not afraid to sacrifice the dictates of impartial justice to his love of mere humour, for the amusement of frivolous readers. I might refer to various other publications that have been conceived in the same spirit of hostility to the principles and the proceedings of the Covenanters, devoured with eagerness by many minds to which naked truth presents no charms, and even still, recommended by the beauties of style, and the sallies of wit, and the coruscations of eloquence, are diffusing their pernicious poison through a thousand channels, along which the stream of authentic history and accurate delineation is not allowed to flow.

No doubt it may be alleged that, such scurrilous attacks as have been made in these publications, have, in some cases, done good, by provoking further inquiry into the principles, actions, and sufferings of the original Covenanters. I grant this with pleasure. I rejoice that there is a benevolent Power in heaven who extracts real good from seeming evil,—that there are faithful men on earth whom assaults on the character of their pious ancestors, rouse to more vigorous defences than have formerly been produced. It is to the misrepresentations that originated with curates, and cavaliers, military executioners, and hired spies, that we are indebted for the *Informatory Vindication*, in which the united Societies defend their principles with manly intrepidity, great clearness, and singular moderation. It is to the gross attack that was made, a few years since, on the Covenanters by our celebrated novelist, that we owe one of the most triumphant vindications that have been written in modern times,\*—a vindication which, in point of historical research, irresistible argument, and masculine eloquence, deserves a place on the same shelf to which the applauded memoirs of Knox and Melville, Veitch and Bryson, have been justly elevated. But how few have had the patience, the candour, the justice, to study such defences with the care they deserve, compared with the multitudes who have read the works in which the unprovoked attacks have been made! How difficult is it to induce those who learn their history from fictitious writings and their politics from servile histories,—as certain authors have been said to draw their poetry from intellect and their science from imagination,—to assert the rights of *thinking* beings, to reject the errors which future inquiries have exploded, and to adopt only those conclusions to which either sound reasoning or incontrovertible evidence leads! Such persons will sigh over the silliest productions with which our circulating libraries are stuffed till they are literally worn to tatters, and rehearse with unswerving fidelity the impious exclamations and the sickening sentiments with which they abound, till we have heard them the thousandth time, rather than read one instructive volume in history, or biography, or literature, or the useful arts. With pitiable infatuation they entertain their minds upon chaff, while the wheat provided in rich abundance lies neglected,—endanger their mental constitution by taking poison while the appropriate antidote furnished by skilful hands is rejected with stubborn indifference or with sovereign contempt.

Hence it is, I conceive, that such publications as those which have been mentioned, are a principal cause of that injurious suspicion which

\* The *Review* of the First Series of *Tales of My Landlord*, published, first in the *Instructor* for 1817, and afterwards in a separate form in 1824.

occupies the public mind respecting the Reformed Presbyterians. So long as the bulk of our reading population surrender their minds to the guidance of the incorrect writers that have been named, prefer "the lively sarcasms, brilliant explanations, and artful remarks" with which they have interspersed their works, and consider every attempt at defence, rather as an effort of petty cavilling and unreasonable austerity, than a vindication due to injured worth, and calumniated truth, so long must our reforming ancestors be looked back upon, with mingled feelings of aversion, pity, and scorn. But shall such be always their doom? We are fully persuaded it shall not. We do not despair of seeing, at a future period, a glorious reaction, accelerated even by the bitter reproaches which were, perhaps, meant to ruin their memory for ever. We do not despair of seeing many, even of the present generation, bitterly regretting the pleasure with which they have read the grossest abuse on their names, and the ignorance that has so long prevented them from feeling the enlightened admiration due to their exertions. We do not despair of seeing some of these gifted revilers living till they shall sincerely lament the ungenerous abuse they have poured upon their character, and, like the penitent Rochester,\* eagerly wish that some parts of their writings, had never been produced to vitiate the public taste, ridicule serious religion, and injure political freedom: Or, should they finish their career, without expressing their sorrow for the evil they have done in these respects, we doubt not *others* will yet arise, gifted with equal genius, governed by purer emotions, and devoted to a Muse that "disdains the servile strain of fashion's quire," who will esteem it their noblest avocation to "celebrate their unambitious names" in living song, and picture bright their heroic virtues "on history's honest page, to latest times."

"Yes—though the sceptic's tongue deride  
 These martyrs who for conscience died,—  
 Though modern history blight their fame,  
 And sneering courtiers hoot the name  
 Of men who dared alone be free,  
 Amidst a nation's slavery,—  
 Yet long for them the poet's lyre  
 Shall wake its notes of heavenly fire;  
 Their names shall nerve the patriot's hand,  
 Upraised to save a sinking land;  
 And piety shall learn to burn  
 With holier transports o'er their urn."†

\* This celebrated nobleman was endowed with brilliant talents. "His poetry," says Hume, "discovers such energy of style, and such poignancy of satire, as give ground to imagine, what so fine a genius, had he fallen in a more happy age, and followed better models, was capable of producing."‡ But what were his reflections upon his hurtful publications, when, with altered views, he looked back on them from the bed of death? "He gave," says Dr. Olinthus Gregory, "numerous proofs of the depth of his repentance: amongst which his earnest desire to check and diminish the evil effects of his former writings, and too uniform example, deserve particular recollection." §

† *Epistle to R. S.* inserted in the Poetic Mirror for 1816, and said to have been written by Sir Walter Scott. Such an unqualified eulogy from his pen, may strike some with surprise, on account of its contrariety to the spirit of his other writings; but contradictions of this sort, are not uncommon in the works even of the principal tory

‡ History, vol. viii. 336.

§ Letters, vol. ii. 151.



Having thus adverted to what seem to me the *chief causes* of that suspicion into which our church has been brought respecting civil government, I now proceed to demonstrate, by the abundant evidence in my power, the groundlessness of the principal charges that have been preferred against her on this delicate subject. These charges, it is mortifying to find, are not often stated in a tangible shape, either in printed publications, spoken harangues, or private conversation. They exist, generally, in the form of vague insinuations, which their authors never put themselves to the trouble of explaining, and sometimes in that of undefined suspicions, of which they are unable to give any intelligible account. Having their minds so beclouded, they do not know on what particular point of our political creed they should make their attack, nor what particular part of our political conduct they should arraign before the bar of public opinion. Accordingly, they attack us on *all sides* in those verbal hostilities which they wage with our party, and convey the unfavourable impression, that there is scarcely one thing in the whole circle of politics in which our views are tenable. On this account, I am compelled to enter on a much longer line of defence than my wishes would, in other circumstances, have dictated, and to bring forward a variety of arguments, illustrations, and authorities, which might have been spared, had our assailants occupied less ground. The aggression, however, has been on their part; we appear only on the defensive; and it were certainly a hard matter if those in rightful possession of the citadel, secured by the heroic struggles of their ancestors, and furnished with the noblest privileges of religion, were not allowed to direct the ample means of defence placed at their disposal to *any quarter whatever* on which attacks are made.

1. An injurious surmise, sometimes whispered against us, especially in the ears of those who have not had opportunities of learning our real views, is, that we are enemies to *monarchical government*. Such a surmise was circulated with great activity against our persecuted fathers shortly before the Revolution, who accordingly were reproached with republicanism; \* and there is reason to apprehend, their avowed successors, in the present day, have not always escaped this hurtful suspicion. Such a suspicion, in *this country*, where the peculiar institutions of monarchy have long existed, the present distinctions of rank have long prevailed, and the slightest tendency of opinion towards democratic equality awakens a host of bitter antipathies, must naturally expose *us*, in

writers. Hume, for example, has scarcely allowed the opprobrious names *fanatics, rebels, incendiaries, traitors*, bestowed on the covenanters, to dry on his paper, when he adds, "they, alarmed with such tyranny, from which no man could deem himself safe, began to think of leaving the country,—were justifiable in their resistance to the king, &c. (Consult vol. viii. 172, 173, &c.) Chambers, too, though he applies to them, with the utmost facility, all possible terms of reproach, is compelled at times to award them considerable praise. Does he not praise them indirectly, when he speaks of "appreciating the infinite advantages which have accrued to Britain from the deposition of this race of kings," the Stuarts? and especially when he adds, "the inhabitants of Scotland *fre* *laudably* inspired with feelings of the utmost admiration and reverence for the pious man who contributed to bring about that glorious event in their own country." (History of the Rebellions, pp. 25, 152, 153.) Such testimonies to the *laudable* proceedings of our ancestors, drawn from Tories by the pure force of truth, in opposition to their political partialities, are doubly valuable; and more than neutralise all the special pleadings and fulsome compliments which they have produced in defence of arbitrary government.

\* Aikman's History of Scotland, vol. iv. 584.

the estimation of our countrymen, to considerable odium. I would respectfully request, however, that they suspend their judgment in this case till they shall have examined the evidence of our innocence, and withhold their reproach till they shall have discovered the prevalence of republican notions in some *other* body than ours.

It is a truth, Sir, as you will readily suppose, that the comparative excellencies of the several forms of civil government present a question on which our church has never indulged any formal discussion, or delivered any judicial decision. We are all left, surely with the greatest propriety, to form what opinions we choose on this debateable subject, according to the intimations of Sacred Scripture and the lessons of practical experience. Accordingly, in whatever country our church has obtained a footing, she inculcates dutiful submission, and enjoys ample protection, whatever be the *form* of the government. In the United States of America, where she has organized, during the last fifty years, about sixty congregations, over most of which well-educated pastors preside, it is more than probable her members, generally, will have yielded to the influence of national peculiarities, and imbibed the spirit of republican institutions. Indeed it is matter of history, that some of her ministers have manifested their preference for a "representative democracy," by some eloquent orations on the subject,\* and obtained applause in the *highest quarter* for their patriotic efforts in vindicating the injured rights of American citizens.† In this country, however, having our judgments modified by early prejudices, by political associations, by particular influences from which even the most independent minds are not wholly exempted, and by numerous advantages which have been derived from monarchy during past ages, it is certain that we are all *partial to that form*, founded on correct principles, and bounded with certain limitations.

It is worthy of recollection, that our covenanting ancestors—whose political views we profess to hold—often displayed even a chivalrous affection for their kings. When the republican regimen was adopted in England, after the execution of the first Charles, and the numerous sectaries in that country were crouching under the energetic administration of the first Protector, who were *they* in Scotland, that most firmly clung around the monarchy, though despoiled of its head—proclaimed, with the usual formalities, the lineal successor, though he was then in a foreign country—and made the greatest sacrifices with the utmost promptitude, to have him, on proper conditions, raised to the throne of his fathers? They were none other than the party who have now been named—a party whose eagerness, to have

\* Scriptural View, &c. by Alexander M'Leod, D. D. of New York.

† There is one species of political equality they have accomplished, for which they deserve unmingled praise. In the year 1800, their supreme ecclesiastical court passed an act requiring members who held any of their fellow-men in *slavery* to restore them to their just rights, otherwise they could not be retained in full communion. "This produced an additional evidence of the force of Christian principle. It triumphed over self-interest; and, in several parts of the United States, have men sacrificed on the altar of religion, the property which the civil law gave them in their fellow-men. There is not a slaveholder now in the communion of the Reformed Presbytery."—Preface to a Discourse on "Negro Slavery," preached in 1802, by Dr. M'Leod.

"The presbytery required of their connexions a general emancipation. No slaveholder is since admitted to their communion."—Sketches of Ecclesiastical History, p. 128.

the monarchy perpetuated in the person of their young prince, has subjected them to the sneers of some of their warmest admirers—a party whose persevering struggles, to retain for him these northern dominions, showed very clearly the dislike they entertained to democracy with its concomitant evils—a party whose feverish anxiety to obtain from him the greatest securities he could give for the preservation of the civil constitution, previously established, demonstrated the inextinguishable regard they had for monarchy with its various benefits—a party, in short, who never shrunk from conflict with the victorious arms of Cromwell till they were routed by superior numbers at Worcester, and even then “never surrendered their religious or political principles, even when they submitted to physical force.\*” Was it fair, was it not drawing largely on the credulity of mankind in their cotemporaries, to represent such men, who have been justly called “the best friends of the monarchy, the constitutional supporters of the throne,” as turbulent democrats, and fierce republicans?

Let me recall, to the minds of your readers, the *favourable* account which Hume has given of their proceedings during this period. “Though invited,” he states, “by the English Parliament to model their government into a republican form, they resolved still to adhere to *monarchy*, which had ever prevailed in their country, and which, by the express terms of their covenant, they had engaged to defend. They considered, besides, that as the property of the kingdom lay mostly in the hands of great families, it would be difficult to establish a commonwealth, or without some chief magistrate invested with royal authority, to preserve peace or justice in the community. The execution, therefore, of the king, against which they had always protested, having occasioned a vacancy of the throne, they immediately proclaimed his son and successor, Charles II.; but upon condition ‘of his good behaviour and strict observance of the covenant, and his entertaining no other persons about him, but such as were godly men, and faithful to that obligation.’”†

“The opinion of the Scottish nation,” says another historian, “was ever *monarchical*, and in all their disputes about liberty, they never once suggested the possibility of a republic; their covenants in the most solemn manner, recognised the principle, and the people, although they discarded the personal *jus divinum* of a king, had never denied the divine authority of kingly government, when exercised according to the word of God and the constitution of the country. Had the Scots, at this moment possessed the power, there can be little doubt but that they would immediately have declared war against the republicans; but the exhausted state of the country forbade any such attempt, and the only alternative that remained, was to proclaim the son of the unfortunate monarch king in his stead. Standing in the most delicate and trying situation possible, the Scottish covenanters displayed a magnanimous affection for the race of their hereditary monarchs, which had been meritorious had it not been so wretchedly misplaced.”‡

Even after they were driven by the pressure of continued sufferings and the prospect of future oppressions, to disown the authority of

\* Aikman, vol. iv. 445.

† History of England, vol. viii. pp. 159, 160.

‡ Aikman's History of Scotland, vol. iv. p. 361, 362.

Charles II., and his successor, they did not relinquish their attachment to the monarchy. Had they entirely discarded a system under which they had endured every species of cruelty, barbarous and refined, speedy and protracted—had they wholly uprooted that tree from which they had reaped only the bitterest fruits, during many long years, instead of reposing in security under its shade, their conduct could scarcely have excited our surprise. But they were too intelligent, too judicious, too discriminating, to confound an institution which they had always conceived to be good in itself, with the temporary abuses that were resulting from the misrule of wicked administrators. Their minds were fortified against that wretched logic which leads many, in modern times, to declaim against various institutions sanctioned by divine approbation, and conducive to human happiness, merely on account of the *practical evils* to which they have been prostituted by the ignorance, or the folly, or the depravity of man. While they denounce the administration of affairs in those terms which justice warranted, patriotism prompted, and posterity have approved, they carefully avow their continued affection for monarchical institutions, so far as these have been limited by the precepts of revelation and the solemn engagements of the nation. Do they not, in their declaration emitted at Rutherglen,\* admit that it is the usurpation of supremacy over the church, the subversion of various fundamental laws, and various other gross abuses of which they could not obtain any redress, that moved them to disown the government? Do they not, in that published at Sanquhar † state, that though they “reject Charles Stuart, who has forfeited the crown several years since, by his perjury, breach of covenant, usurpation in church matters, and tyranny in matters civil;” yet they are “for government and governors, such as the word of God and the covenants allow?” Do they not, in their next manifesto, emitted at Lanark,‡—a manifesto in which they draw an affecting picture of their increasing sufferings, and make a forcible appeal to the public, on the necessity they conceived themselves under of prosecuting the vigorous resistance they had commenced—expressly declare, “We ought always to acknowledge government and governors as ordained by God, in so far as they rule and govern according to the rules set down by him in his word, and constitutive laws of the nation. Is it any wonder that true Scotsmen, though we have been, always, and even to extremity sometimes, *loyal to our kings*, should, after twenty years’ tyranny, break out at last, as we have done, and put in practice that power which God and nature hath given us, and we have reserved to ourselves, as our engagements with our princes, have been always conditional?” In one word, do not the authors they produced, during the persecution, vindicate the propriety of the kingly office, and the advantages of limited monarchy, in the same volumes || which expose, with such force, the evils of arbitrary government, and the inconveniences of universal democracy, as might be made evident by numerous extracts? In short, no accusation could be more groundless

\* May 29, 1679.

† June 22, 1680.

‡ January 12, 1682.

|| Such as *Lex Rex*, by Samuel Rutherford, professor of divinity in St. Andrews; *Apologetical Relation*, by Mr. Brown, minister of Wamphray; *Naphtali*, by Mr. James Stirling of Paisley; *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, by Sir James Stuart of Goodtrees, Lord Advocate, after the revolution.

than the "universal representation given of them as republicans, by their adversaries; and they found themselves called upon to declare their adherence to the monarchical system of government acknowledged by the covenants, while they disavowed Charles Stuart, as their lawful sovereign,—although descended 'as far as they knew' from their ancient kings."\*

2. Equally unjust and ungenerous is it to insinuate that we are enemies to the *genuine principles of the present constitution*. Though we cannot bestow *unmingled* applause, we can honestly declare, the more we compare this system with what it might have been, under a different race of princes, we see the greater reason to hold it in grateful remembrance. How degraded must our country have been, had the Stuarts been permitted to persevere in exterminating her purest patriots, overturning her noblest institutions, converting her churches into dens of licensed robbers, her colleges into monkish cloisters, and her palaces into military fortresses! How wretched were our external situations, how dwarfed our mental energies, how few our social privileges, and how gloomy our future prospects beyond that horizon which terminates all our earthly troubles, had our lot been cast under any one of the antiquated despotisms that degrade, demoralize, harass, and plunder, our unfortunate fellow-men in most of the continental kingdoms! Assuredly, we owe to God a debt of gratitude we can never fully discharge, and to the memory of our patriotic fathers, during a succession of centuries prior to the revolution, a tribute of veneration we can never adequately pay, for the superior political institutions under which it has been our happiness during several ages to live, and from which we are permitted to derive, at the present moment, many distinguished blessings. Well may we rejoice in such constitutional principles as the following—"that the legislative power belongs to parliament alone," instead of being yielded to the mere will of the prince, as in almost all the other states of Europe; that representation extending, in certain proportions, to all classes of the people, is an essential element of the constitution; that no taxes can be imposed on any order of the subjects without the consent of their legal representatives; that the country cannot be burdened with a standing army in time of peace, without the concurrence of the imperial parliament; that the king cannot, of his own absolute will, dispense with the laws passed during preceding reigns, without incurring deposition; that resistance—that ultimate resource of an oppressed people—has been sanctioned by the conduct of the three kingdoms at the revolution, as a privilege of British subjects; that the liberty of the press—that mighty instrument of universal good—has been established under no greater restraint than that authors shall be responsible for whatever they write contrary to law. Of these vital principles of the constitution, established by long practice, on a basis not likely ever to be shaken, we may justly be proud; nor should we value less highly, the private liberty of individuals, the perfect security of property, the impartial administration of justice,† and that grand axiom declared a few years since, by Lord

\* Aikman, vol. iv. p. 584.

† Such as are desirous of knowing the good principles of the British Constitution, while they lament its manifold evils, may consult "The Constitution of England," by J. L. De Lolme. To increase our gratitude, too, for the superior blessings we en-

Mansfield, in a solemn decision promoted greatly by the philanthropic exertions of Granville Sharpe, *that persons, though they are slaves in other countries, the moment they arrive on British ground, that moment they are entitled to British liberty*,—an axiom that justly entitles our country to the poet's praise "slaves cannot breathe in England," and justifies the orator's splendid peroration, which I cannot help quoting: "I speak in the spirit of the British law, which makes liberty commensurate with, and inseparable from, British soil; which proclaims, even to the stranger and sojourner, the moment he sets his foot on British earth, that the ground on which he treads is holy, and consecrated by the genius of universal freedom. No matter in what language his doom may have been pronounced; no matter what complexion incompatible with freedom, an Indian or an African sun may have burnt upon him; no matter in what disastrous battle his liberty may have been cloven down; no matter with what solemnities he may have been devoted upon the altar of slavery: the first moment he touches the sacred soil of Britain, the altar and the idol sink together in the dust; his soul walks abroad in her own majesty; his body swells beyond the measure of his chains that burst from around him, and he stands redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled by the irresistible genius of Universal Freedom."\*

It is no doubt true, we have declared in various writings, our disapprobation of what appear to us evils in the present constitution, even while we admire its distinguished excellencies. We *have* said, that the total disregard which it implies of divine revelation which unfolds the fundamental principles of political morality, and constitutes the true basis of civil legislation, is a capital defect. We *have* said that, so far as it does not inculcate national subjection to the authority of the reigning Mediator, and secure the subordination of all political interests to the promotion of true religion, so far must it fail in accomplishing the real welfare of the community. We *have* said, more particularly, that the supremacy granted the king over the internal affairs of the church, as an inherent right of the crown,—that the ratification of ecclesiastical forms obviously inconsistent with the Scriptures, even though they coincide with the wishes of the people,—that the presentation to vacant parishes of candidates who have not been chosen by the unbiassed suffrages of the Christian people,—that the admission to civil offices of men who possess not the religious and moral qualifications which revelation peremptorily requires,—we *have* said, we *still* say, and while the Bible remains our perfect standard in politics no less than in religion, we will *continue* to say, that these appear to us glaring evils in the present constitution,—foul blemishes in the statute book. But what then? Will any be so uncandid as to designate us enemies to the many just principles incorporated with the constitution, merely because we have condemned the unscriptural deeds that have, so unwisely, so sinfully, and so perseveringly, been associated with them? Surely to utter the injurious insinuation, even to indulge the ungenerous thought,

joy under the present government, even while we testify against its immoral acts, we should often recollect the dreadful sufferings our ancestors endured under their despotic rulers, and, occasionally, survey the abject vassalage to which large communities of our fellow-men in Catholic countries are still doomed by their tyrannical masters;—as the Italians, the Portuguese, the Spaniards.

\* Edinburgh Review LXXXIII. p. 173, 174.

were most unkind, most illiberal, most unjust. Such, indeed, is the nature of our moral constitution, that we are disposed to regard, even with ardent affection, the very object whose faults we perceive with the greatest readiness, expose with the greatest freedom, and would remove with the utmost expedition. He who regrets most bitterly the defects of the mansion he has erected for his accommodation, points them out most clearly, with an accurate eye, to the superintending architect, and suggests most fully the requisite improvements for bringing it to as high a state of symmetry, elegance, and splendour, as human art can accomplish, *he* surely displays the deepest interest in his dwelling, and the greatest solicitude about the domestic advantages for which it was originally built. So is it with the enlightened, benevolent, conscientious citizen. If, with judgment, he exposes the defects of the political fabric which his ancestors, in the infancy of the human mind, have erected,—if, with zeal, he urges the political builders to supply, as speedily as possible, those defects that now impair its actual usefulness,—and if, with success, he demonstrates how much more beautiful the whole structure would become, in the eyes of adequate judges, and how much greater happiness it would yield to the millions reposing within its capacious halls, were it completed, according to the perfect model drawn by the pencil of inspiration in the sacred volume,—*he*, I maintain, evinces the purest, the warmest, the noblest affection for our applauded constitution,—an affection inexpressibly more rational, healthy, and vigorous than that of *those indiscriminating loyalists*, who profess they cannot see, in the present system, any evils that require correction,—*those political worshippers* who daily prostrate their minds before the golden image, without ever allowing themselves to question the divinity of the idol,—*those grovelling sycophants* who are ever fruitful in extravagant eulogies and unlimited professions as the *easy* price of any power, emolument, and honour that may prove gratifying to their ambition, avarice, and vanity. Such persons, let them be laymen or ministers, churchmen or dissenters, nobles or commons, are the very worst of all domestic enemies to our boasted constitution, inasmuch as they do what they can, by their injudicious applauses, to perpetuate those very evils that now so much obscure the lustre of its brightest excellencies, circumscribe the enjoyment of its noblest privileges, and hinder the increase of its truest friends and purest supporters.

To confirm still farther these views, and enrich the pages in which they are recorded, allow me to quote a most appropriate passage from an enlightened politician, an acute metaphysician, and an accomplished writer, who was snatched away, a few years since, from those select circles which he graced by his amiable manners, and captivated by his instructive eloquence. “He is not a true lover of the society to which he belongs,” says Dr. Thomas Brown, “nor faithful to those duties which relate to it, who contents himself with admiring the laws which he might amend, and who, far from wishing to amend them, regards perhaps, or professes to regard, every project of reformation, not as a proposal which is to be cautiously weighed, but as a sort of insult to the dignity of the whole system, which is to be rejected with wrath, and treated almost as a subject of penal censure. This blind admiration is not patriotism, or, if it be patriotism, it is only that easy form of it which the most corrupt may assume, without any diminution of their own political profigacy. He who does not feel, in his whole heart, the

excellence of a wise and virtuous system of polity, is indeed unworthy of living under its protection. But he who *does* feel its excellence will be the swiftest to discern every improvement that can be added to it. The very nature of affection is to render us quick to imagine something, which may make still *better* what is *good*; and though he who admires least a system may innovate most extensively, there can be no question that the most *continued tendency to innovate in some slight degree* is in him who admires most, upon the whole, what he therefore wishes most evidently to improve."

"If such be, as I cannot but think, the tendency of affection, the loud and haughty patriotism of those who profess to see in any of the systems of human policy,—which as human, must share, in some degree, the general frailty of humanity,—no evil, which can require to be remedied, and even no good which can, by any means, be rendered still more ample in extension or degree, seems to me, for this very reason, suspicious;—at least as suspicious as the loud and angry patriotism of those who profess to see in the whole system nothing which is not a fit subject of total and instant alteration. If they loved truly what they praise so highly, they would not praise it less indeed, but they would wish, at least, to see it still more worthy of praise; there would be a quickness, therefore, to discover what *would* make it more worthy; and, though they might be fearful of innovating, they would yet have many wishes of innovating, which nothing but the value of the subject of experiment, as too noble to be put in peril, could operate to suppress."\*

3. It is equally unjust to represent us as enemies to the *measures of every administration*. No doubt, were the *unmingled* approbation, and the *unconditional* support of any measures, fixed as the true tests of political friendship, no administration could find any friends within the pale of our church. We have long been accustomed to compare political transactions, so far as they have been brought fully before our minds, with the *Bible*—our system of politics, and to award approbation proportionate only to the degree in which they have approximated this supreme, perfect, and immutable standard. Our magnanimous fathers, in the seventeenth century, acted in this way with their usual fidelity, even when the avowal of sound opinions, on various topics, which were obnoxious to the Privy Council, subjected them to outward privations and corporeal sufferings, never exceeded even in ages of papal persecution. It were, then, disgraceful in *us*, who live in happier times, and behold such bright models, to surrender the right of private judgment, even on political opinions, to our superiors, and bestow, without the smallest examination, unqualified applause on any acts, however doubtful their moral character, which they have performed. We *have* in the *Bible* an infallible rule,—“a perfect law,”—to which both we and they owe unceasing obedience in our respective relations,—from which we and they are never warranted, in any case to swerve, out of respect to the maxims of political expediency,—by which we and they shall be judged according to our works, at the general resurrection, by the exalted Redeemer; and, according to *this* law, we feel ourselves equally disposed as bound, to estimate the character of whatever measures they adopt, either in their domestic or foreign policy, and to measure the

\* Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind. Vol. iv. 386, 387, 388.



degree of approbation to which they are entitled from a Christian community.

Now, will any venture to allege that *this thinking for themselves* on political matters, according to this supreme standard, must render our people turbulent citizens, disaffected subjects? Such an allegation, under whatever pretext made, were most irrational, unjust, absurd. The same habit of discrimination that makes them quick in detecting the errors into which administration falls, renders them equally quick in discovering the virtuous measures which it pursues. If, at any time, they find a good deal fitted to awaken their indignation, their astonishment and alarm, their scriptural intelligence teaches them to regulate these dangerous passions, to adopt only constitutional remedies, and to shun, as they would a neighbourhood infested with the plague, or a village visited with the eruptions of a volcano, the haunts of those turbulent spirits whose ignorance, irreligion, and licentiousness, render them pliable tools in the hands of unprincipled demagogues. Besides, the growing disposition which they cherish, rather to applaud the good actions of others, than to censure their occasional faults, and rather to manifest gratitude for the numerous blessings they enjoy, than betray murmuring under the comparatively few evils they endure, leads them, by a very natural process, rather to rejoice in the important advantages they are deriving from government, than to repine under the partial evils they are suffering. Such is the laudable course which they, guided by intelligence, principle, and patriotism, desire to pursue; and though they can animadvert on the practical evils of the kingdom, with greater freedom perhaps than some other parties use, and charge the existing rulers with those public sins, from which, at the bar of revelation, they cannot plead exemption, with a fidelity similar to that which prevailed in the ages of the ancient prophets and Scottish reformers, yet are they so convinced of the preponderating blessings they enjoy, under the present regime, with all its imperfections—of the great advantages that accrue to society from due subordination,—and of the sacred obligations under which they are brought, “to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty,” that they habitually shun all violent proceedings, all disorderly practices, and all seditious meetings—much more so, unquestionably, than those swaggering loyalists who, having no fixed principles, no moral convictions, and no political standard, can applaud *any* measures, however questionable their morality, panegyricize *any* administration, however unconstitutional the policy they are pursuing, and, in short, follow with crouching servility, any course, good, bad, or indifferent, that seems, in their little minds, consonant to their selfish passions, and conducive to their secular interests.

Let not, however, this public avowal of a declaration dictated,—not by presumptuous vanity, but,—by the painful consciousness that the church to which I belong, suffers *unmerited* reproach, rest on my authority alone—the authority of an interested party, and, therefore, an incompetent judge. I appeal to other sources of appropriate evidence. I appeal to our public department, ever since the revolution, in times even of political convulsion and mercantile distress. I appeal to the observation of our fellow citizens, who cannot say that they ever knew us entering into political clubs formed for revolutionary purposes, or countenancing tumultuous meetings held for unconstitutional objects. I appeal to the experience of our local magistracy, who will publicly

attest, what some of them have affirmed oftener than once in private, that, whatever our political principles are, our political practice has always been exemplary, so far as it has come under their notice, and has never augmented the disagreeable business occasioned them on the bench, by many others whose *professions* of loyalty have been peculiarly loud, frequent, and ostentatious. I appeal to the *candid* ministers of other churches, who will not hesitate to declare, that, whatever freedom we use in testifying against the sins of the land, they have never witnessed, in our conduct, any resistance to the civil authorities,—any violation of the public peace—or any concurrence with those *political societies*\* which have been formed, on many occasions, in different districts of the kingdom, for purposes deemed seditious or treasonable. I am perfectly willing that the credit of our people for dutiful submission to the laws, preservation of the public tranquillity, and exemplification of social order according to the word of God, should thus be determined by the unbiased voice of impartial spectators altogether irrespective of our own private statements and public declarations.

It is no doubt true, that we have repeatedly testified, in the most public manner, against the practical evils of the government,—particularly those which affect the interests of true religion and rational liberty. Nor do we feel ourselves warranted to retract any of the judicial declarations which we have formerly emitted, or to recede from the scriptural ground on which we have hitherto stood in all the firmness of conscious rectitude. After repeated consideration, we still think government guilty in giving such countenance to popery, a system that lies under the severest denunciation of heaven†—in granting it a legal provision in the provinces of Canada,‡—in upholding its great supports in the principal nations of the continent,—in admitting its avowed adherents to political offices in this country for which they are not quali-

\* Upwards of thirty years ago, when various societies for *political reform* arose in this country, out of the French revolution, the supreme court of our church passed an *act*, warning the people under their inspection, against having any connexion with them, lest they might be led into the adoption of theoretical principles which are erroneous, and of practical measures which are injurious. How peaceful was their demeanour during that stormy period, may be learnt from the testimony of impartial cotemporaries, and from the concessions of candid historians, as well as from the statements of various writers among themselves. “They dare challenge their most virulent and spiteful adversaries,” said an able advocate in 1793, “to produce a single instance wherein they were found with multitude or tumult, in a disorderly way, having any behaviour tending thereunto, at any time. In the late popular commotions,—although there was nothing in them that could be called seditious, as the people of every civil state have surely a right to be heard in their own cause, yet—because of the too general and promiscuous nature and tendency of their principles and procedure, none of the reformed presbytery were found at the head, or making any part, of those bodies of people called societies of reform. No body of their people were found taking any part in these commotions, nor even an individual with their allowance and approbation. As their principles have no tendency to confusion, but to peace and order, so they have all along led peaceable and orderly lives, endeavouring to maintain a conversation, void of offence toward God and toward man; and would desire to be found waiting in the exercise of prayer, faith and patience, until the Lord’s time to favour Zion come.” Answers to Twelve Queries, by Rev. William Steven, p. 7

† 2 Thess. ii. 7, 8. Rev. xviii. xix.

‡ See the “Act for regulating the Government of Quebec,” and “Free Thoughts on the Toleration of Popery,” pp. 13, 14.

fied according to the obvious requisitions of revelation,\*—and in voting such large sums from the treasury to its chief colleges, from which are issuing every year noxious swarms of professed Jesuits.† We still think government guilty in supporting the gross evils that exist in the united church of England and Ireland; in perpetuating the undeniable corruptions that have crept into the Scottish church, *such as the law of patronage*; in tolerating the monstrous evils to which they are accessory in our Indian territories, *such as Suttees*; in prolonging the atrocious system of slavery in our numerous colonies, without using *efficient* exertions for its gradual mitigation and ultimate extinction; and in protecting a variety of pernicious abuses, against which just complaints have been often preferred, in the constitution of our courts, colleges, and corporations. But, upon what principle are we to be accounted enemies to the government, because we have the honesty to tell them what we, on good grounds, conceive to be undeniable truth? Rather, ought we not to be accounted their truest friends, because we wish the abolition of those moral evils, from which they derive no real honour or genuine happiness? And should not *those* be accounted their greatest foes who, while they address them in the language of unmingled adulation, can grumble forth their discontents in secret societies, private coteries, and clandestine correspondence?

Should it still be alleged, that we have never voted any loyal addresses to government during all the time we have existed, I frankly acknowledge the fact, and candidly think it no disgrace. *We* have preferred showing our submission to the laws, and our attachment to the country, rather by our *actions* than by our *words*. *We* have never been conscious of any secret misgivings in our minds respecting our *reasonable* loyalty, and therefore have never proceeded to the throne with verbal professions, intended to lull asleep any rising suspicions in the breast of the king. *We* have never entertained in our bosoms any hostile designs against the authority of our civil rulers, and therefore have never needed to conceal them by a cloak of extravagant allegiance, which some have, at different times, found it convenient to wear. *We* have never been guilty of the inconsistency into which several denominations of Christians have fallen, of first laying it down as a settled axiom, from which none must dissent, that *churches have nothing to do with politics*, and then voting flattering addresses, filled with the very worst politics that ever insulted the common sense of a Christian country. *We* have never cringed at the feet of our sovereign with servile effusions, which must have offended his superior mind; or danced attendance at his levees, with officious servility, which must have disgusted honourable courtiers; or striven to ingratiate ourselves into the favour of his principal secretaries, by voting them complimentary addresses expressing political sentiments we did not hold, and promising public services we did not mean to render, should our temporal interests dictate a different course. *We* have done none of these things; but will any man say, that our submission has been the less steady, our patriotism the less

\* Exodus xviii. 21, 22. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1—4, and many other passages.

† Their college at Maynooth, which was established by Act of Parliament in 1795, received at first from government L.40,000, and, on a principle of false expediency, obtains from the same source, every year, for the support of its professors, L.5000. This statement is founded on an extract, from an Irish author, inserted in the Protestant, vol. iii. 351; but were the parliamentary statement of their pecuniary votes before me, I could easily show that the yearly grant is somewhere about L.2800.

pure, and our sacrifices for the public weal the less liberal, on that account? I again refer him to the best of all umpires, in a question of this kind, our *practical deportment*—our practical deportment, especially in seasons of strong political excitement, and under grievances of a highly irritating character.

I could say much, Sir, on the insincerity of that noisy loyalty which has sometimes assumed such extravagant pretensions, and uttered such ludicrous offers. It may be laid down as an indisputable maxim, that *whoever makes great professions on any subject, evinces a consciousness that the substantial qualities themselves are either grossly defective or totally wanting.* See you an individual boasting of his prayers, his fastings, and his other devotions, and displaying his piety in sanctimonious looks, affected tones, and visible mortifications, you may, generally, without any breach of charity, pronounce him a hypocrite. See you a demagogue declaiming with vehemence on the wrongs of his country, the oppressions of her rulers, and the numerous improvements *he* would introduce in managing the public affairs, had the monarch only penetration enough to discern *his* superior merit, and only patriotism enough to call *him* to public office, you will generally find him a tyrant in the domestic circle, exacting blind submission to his orders, trampling on the rights of his nearest connexions, and crushing all resistance by the fury of his ungovernable passions. See you a medical practitioner puffing his nostrums in all the possible channels through which he can reach the public mind, relating the marvellous cures which they have effected on the patients whose maladies had baffled for years the whole faculty, and proclaiming that their singular virtue can, in the very worst cases, ensure success never attainable by the combined skill of the most accomplished graduates, you at once class his advertisements with impudent pretences, and himself with unprincipled empirics. In like manner, see you a public body vaunting of their distinguished devotion to the prince, their unqualified admiration of the ministry, the high pleasure they would feel in advancing the service of his majesty with their lives and fortunes, and the unqualified honour they should receive, were they allowed only once, during an age, to draw their swords, you may rest assured that the patriotic principles themselves are not in due proportion to the extravagant pretensions,—that the sterling gold falls far short of the dazzling tinsel,—that the destructiveness of the fire against an enemy in the day of actual trial, would by no means correspond with the brightness of the flash. The profligate “supporter of a system, for which he cares only as it ministers to his vices, may see, perhaps, some more tempting promise of wealth and power in a rebellion against that very authority, the slightest attempt to ameliorate which he has been accustomed to represent as a species of treason. The ignorant, who fall on their knees to-day, merely because something is passing which is very magnificent, and before which other knees are bent or bending, may to-morrow, when other arms are lifted in tumultuous rebellion, join their arms to the tumult and the dreadful fury of the day. It is only in the bosom of the *wise and good*, as I have said, that any security of obedience is to be found.”\*

4. Not less unjust and unkind is it to represent us as *enemies to our country.* That we should love the land that gave us birth—the land on whose romantic scenes and venerable antiquities we have looked from

\* Brown's Lectures, vol. iv. 370.

our earliest years—in whose elementary schools we received our chief lessons in useful education—in whose churches we have drunk the pure water of life fresh from the living fountain of inspiration—the land under whose government we have enjoyed, in security, our property, personal liberty, and select friends—in whose venerable universities some of us have conversed with the illustrious dead, and listened to the learned living—in whose cities benevolence has reared her noblest institutions, reflecting on their citizens far higher honour than even the splendours of their boasted architecture, and the beauties of their surrounding scenery—in whose bleakest solitudes, the fervent devotions and persevering struggles of our “fathers’ grandsires” have left behind indelible traces that speak to our piety and our patriotism, in language that thrills the soul with hallowed emotions we could never feel in any other land—that we should love *such* a land is not more natural than laudable. If the natives of the Polar regions love *their* mountains, and enjoy *their* storms—if, notwithstanding their numerous privations, they cling to the arid soil on which they have trod from infancy, to the wild scenery from which they have seldom lifted their eyes, except to gaze on the starry heavens, and to the wretched hovels, rude implements, and gross superstitions, which have been consecrated in their minds by a venerable antiquity, much more ought we, surely, breathing a more temperate climate, enjoying a more advanced civilization, and possessing the distinguished advantages of religion, laws, trade, commerce, science and literature, to cultivate a strong attachment to *our* country, so pre-eminently distinguished above all others, and raise unceasing thankfulness to “God who has not dealt so with any nation.”

Have the party in question, then, manifested, by appropriate fruits, this noble passion? It must be admitted, no doubt, they have never displayed that easy form of it which consists in empty declamation against her enemies, in vaunting professions of regard for her welfare, and in mere offers of personal service and pecuniary sacrifice when there is no prospect of their ever being required, and no intention of their ever being given. These are *delusive* appearances of patriotism, which the most profligate demagogues may assume, without any diminution of their political profligacy—exhibit in political assemblies with such seeming earnestness as shall impose on the credulous judgment of large multitudes—and even maintain, through a series of years, till they shall have secured some earthly prize, for which they were base enough to act the part of political hypocrites. Assuredly, other manifestations of patriotism are necessary to convince intelligent rulers and shrewd observers, that the genuine principle has an abiding seat in our *minds*, and procure ourselves that confidence, esteem, and gratitude that are justly due to those whose hearts are under its ennobling influence. Of these manifestations permit me to mention a few of the more prominent.

All Christians will admit that, *the cultivation of personal piety is an important element of true patriotism*. Infidels, both speculative and practical, cannot possibly be such pure, and disinterested, and devoted patriots, as a genuine believer. Though *they* may contribute to their country’s service intellectual powers of the highest order, public labours of great value, and pecuniary sacrifices of considerable amount,—though *they* may, if statesmen, wear out their lives in vindicating her dearest rights by the fruits of their arduous studies, and if warriors, shed their blood in defending her social institutions by the exertions of their mili-

tary bravery, it is impossible they can equal *him* in the purity of his benevolent expression, the expansion of his public spirit, the prevalence of his importunate intercessions, and the elevation of that virtuous magnanimity with which he can, in the hour of national trial, subordinate his private interests to the public good. *He* has learned, from the precepts, the examples, the very genius of revelation, to “deny himself,” to love his neighbours with that affection which he expects from them in similar circumstances, and to seek, by all the good offices in his power, the well-being of the political society of which he finds himself, during his brief sojourn on earth, an humble member. While he cultivates religious affections, performs devotional duties, and prefers the unmingled pleasures which await the soul in its highest state and brightest abode, he cherishes an inextinguishable regard for the best interests of his present country, the preservation of her temporal blessings, the promotion of her commercial prosperity, and the happiness of her future generations. Is he not, indeed, the firmest of all bulwarks established for her defence in seasons of imminent peril, the *salt* that preserves from corruption and dissolution the national body with which he is incorporated, the chosen favourite of heaven, for whose sake many calamities are averted, and many blessings are bestowed? So far, then, as our party have been cultivating the spirit which their religion breathes, and practising the devotional duties and social virtues it inculcates, thus far have they, in the noblest form, been adding to the moral strength of their beloved land, and the prosperity of her greatest interests.

*The practice of correct morals is another thing equally conducive to the real welfare of a country.* No man of vicious habits, however exalted his rank, princely his fortune, powerful his influence, splendid his talents, can be justly accounted a true patriot. “I would lay it down as an axiom,” says a judicious moralist, “that a bad man cannot be a patriot. A man of no private virtue must want principle, and a man who wants principle cannot be actuated by pure motives. *He* cannot entertain so liberal and exalted an affection as a rational and disinterested love of his country. I repeat, therefore, it will be necessary to convince ourselves that a bad husband, a bad father, a profligate and an unprincipled man, cannot deserve the name of a patriot, unless it is given him, as it may indeed in the present age, by way of derision. If a peer of the realm is found to be in constant opposition to the measures of a ministry, it is easy to know the causes and the extent of his patriotism, for a minister cannot always be wrong. The truth is, the peer is of a conceited and turbulent spirit, yet unemployed by his king. He lusts after power, and hopes to acquire it by force, since it cannot be obtained by gentler means. He will even patronise rebellion, and diffuse discontent throughout a kingdom, to injure a few individuals whose riches he covets, and whose honours he views with an envious eye. Though he should sign a hundred protests in a session, and daily eructate his invectives against the most respectable men, we will not be misled; for his patriotism is passion, his perseverance avarice, and the same tongue which is ready to revile his king and embroil his country, is usually as prone to blaspheme his God. When they whom the constitution has appointed the hereditary guardians of the laws, and liberties, and religion of their country, become the patrons of lawless licentiousness, and the scoffers at every thing sacred, why hesitate their countrymen to strip the coronet from their heads, and to trample on their honour? Tear off their ermine and that star which

belies their breast, for the meanest of their menials who performs his humble duties in his humble station, is far nobler than they.\* These remarks being admitted, it follows, that in proportion to our practice of pure morals, our performance of social duties, and even our ridiculed abstinence from fashionable amusements, pleasures, and luxuries, which usually enervate while they refine, and demoralise while they embellish, in the same proportion are we contributing, in our humble sphere, to advance the best interests of our country, to stem the tide of moral profligacy which has swept away the foundations of government in many other lands, and to swell the amount of national virtue which will prove a moral bulwark more valuable in the season of public danger than either the prowess of our boasted fleets, or the valour of our veteran armies.

Another thing which powerfully contributes to the welfare of a country, is the conscientiousness with which the inferior orders perform their respective duties. Splendid examples of patriotism must, no doubt, be sought in the higher ranks, among those whose birth, opulence, hereditary influence, and official power, under the direction of genuine benevolence and public spirit, enable them to accomplish an amount of good utterly unequalled by any thing that takes place in the lower walks of life. But surely the very humblest members of society, who conscientiously fulfil the several duties which they owe to the state, and diligently prosecute the civil callings they have undertaken, are proving themselves, with equal truth, though in a smaller measure, the real benefactors of their country. "Why," asks an elegant author, "why hath God instituted amongst us such a gradation of rank, such a variety of conditions? And why hath he created us mutually dependent upon one another? Why but

"That each may fill the circle mark'd by heav'n."

Why, but to teach us that the happiness and comfort of civilized life do not depend upon this or that individual, on this or that condition, on this or that circumstance, but are the production of a reciprocity of services, and of innumerable combinations? Why, but to instruct us that, as the animal system feels an equal necessity for the limbs and head, so the frame of society has the same occasion for the labours of the hand, as for the operations of the brain; that the field and the shop are as essential spheres of usefulness, as the closet and the cabinet; that the poor are as necessary to the rich, as the rich to the poor; and that the husbandman who tills the ground, the carpenter who carves the wood, and the miner who digs in the bowels of the earth, render services as essential, if not as important, to the community of which they are members, as the magistrate who executes justice, the minister who inculcates virtue, or the physician who practises the art of healing. In the great body corporate of human society, strength of hands is as much wanted as vigour of mind; promptness of execution as fertility of invention; and the meanest offices in which the lowest ranks of men can be engaged, are as requisite to the maintenance of civil order and the preservation of social harmony, as the highest offices of church or state can be, though filled by men of political wisdom and unimpeachable integrity." What, then, though most of our people belong to the lower classes of the community? If they are active in the secular avocations to which

\* Essays Moral and Literary by Vicesimus Knox, M.A. vol. i. pp. 40, 41, 42. See also pp. 52, 57.

they have been called, and devoted to the relative duties which they owe to others around them, they ought to be enrolled among the genuine friends and actual benefactors of their country.

Nor should we forget the prodigious benefits a country derives, as to wealth, population, power, and happiness, from the *vigorous prosecution of trade, commerce, and the useful arts*. "He is justly counted a benefactor to his nation," says Dr. Brown, "who has been able to open to its industry, new fields of supply, and to open to the products of its industry, new distant markets of commercial demands. He, too, is a benefactor to the community who plans and obtains the execution of the various public works, that facilitate the intercourse of district with district, or give more safety to navigation, or embellish a land with its best ornaments,—the institutions of charity or instruction. In accomplishing, or contributing our aid to accomplish, these valuable ends, we perform a part of the duty which we are considering,—the duty of augmenting, to the best of our ability, the sum of national happiness."\* Now, to whom are modern countries principally indebted for these important public benefits? I know I only echo the voice of European history during these three centuries that have passed away since the dawn of the Reformation, when I declare that *they owe them chiefly, if not, in some cases, exclusively, to the friends of true religion, rational liberty, and popular rights*. Look you to France; "it has always been to its protestant subjects that that country has been indebted for its manufactures and commerce,"† not merely during the reign of Louis XIV., when their immense wealth, as well as their religious *heresy*, tempted him to drive them, by persecution, from his dominions, that he might seize upon their property, but during every subsequent age, when the freedom of human thought has developed itself in important inventions and commercial activity. Look you to Switzerland; there those cities that are governed on the liberal principles of protestantism are advancing every year in intelligence, trade, opulence, and population, while those that have submitted to the withering influence of popery,—as Constance,—exhibit the most painful contrast, the principal streets grown over with grass, the finest buildings decaying, and the once flourishing commerce reduced to the wretched traffic of *relics*.‡ Look you to the United States of America; there "the most orderly, moral, and intelligent community in the world at that time," (the latter part of the seventeenth century.) "the first body of men who went out with the rational view of gaining their bread by honest industry, in its usual forms, were the Puritans" from England,—enterprising colonists, who, though they "occupied an indifferent soil, destitute of the precious metals, *have surpassed twenty-fold in wealth and power their rivals*."|| Look you to England; we are told that the "Puritans were animated by views large, and generous, and noble; that to their prevalence and success the nation owes its liberty, perhaps, its learning, its industry, commerce, and naval power,"§—that she "owes a considerable share of her eminence, in several important branches of trade, to religious foreigners,¶ whose liberal opinions, provoking persecution in

\* Lectures, vol. iv. 385.

† Dewar's Discourses, 288.

‡ Cox's Sketches, quoted by Mackray in his "Essay on the Effect of the Reformation on Civil Society in Europe." pp. 100, 101.

|| Scotsman, 12th December 1829. See also Cooper's "Notions of the Americans," vol. i. 120-146.

§ Hume.

¶ Dewar, 288.



their own lands, induced them to settle in ours,"—and that "it has been found, by a recent and accurate investigation, that her chief manufactures still continue to be conducted, either by religious persons, or by those who are the descendants of such persons."\* Look you to Ireland; we are further informed, that, "it was the covenanters expelled from Scotland by the profligate ministers of profligate tyrants, who began the linen-trade of that country; and this trade was greatly extended by the ample accession of talent and industry introduced to that country by those whom the revocation of the edict of Nantes sent into exile."† Or look you to our own part of the island? to what are we indebted for the public works, parochial schools, agricultural improvements, domestic trades, and foreign commerce, that give it such pre-eminent distinction, but to the exertions of enlightened protestants, or rather to the spirit of invention, enterprize, and activity that has been generated in their bosoms by the liberty of private judgment, and the security of actual property, they have enjoyed ever since the revolution? Now, from this induction of facts, the conclusion I am warranted to draw is, that, so far as our people have imbibed the enterprising spirit produced in all Protestant countries by the reformation, and have persevered in diligent application to the several branches of industry in which they have been engaged, *thus far* have they been contributing, in their humble sphere, to the national wealth—just as the smallest rivulet, joining in its descent other rivulets, *helps* to form the majestic river that rolls along the plains beneath, diffusing fertility, health and joy, over its verdant banks, and bearing the richest products of other climes to the crowded cities past which it flows.

The manifestations of patriotism hitherto mentioned, are manifestations which our people have given in common with the thousands of Christians, both in the national church and other classes of Protestant dissenters. But there are two other manifestations *peculiar to themselves*, which it were singular injustice to pass over in total silence, and which can be related nearly in the laudatory terms which writers in other churches have been constrained to record.

The first of these is the *brave resistance which they opposed to the "gigantic encroachments of despotism" for several years prior to the revolution.* I readily grant, many sufferings should be endured, many remonstrances presented, and many strenuous endeavours to improve their political condition made, before a people are warranted to reject by declaration, and oppose by force, even such a government. A revolution is always a dreadful experiment,—“the very last resource;” and never, until all other practicable means of removing political grievances have been tried in vain, are they justified in hazarding such a crisis. But, when all these means have been used with prudence, energy, and perseverance, without procuring any relief—when the afflicting tyranny *continues*, with remorseless cruelty, to trample down the rights, the privileges, and lives of an unoffending nation—when “the prospect of the

\* Dewar, 288, 289.

† “A considerable stimulus was given to the English silk manufacture by the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685. Louis XIV. drove, by that intolerant and disgraceful measure, several hundred thousands of his most industrious subjects, to seek an asylum in foreign countries; of whom, it is supposed, about 50,000 came to England. Such of these refugees as had been engaged in the silk manufacture, several branches of which were then in a comparatively advanced state in France, established themselves in Spitalfields, which has continued, ever since, the principal seat of the British silk manufacture.”—*Edinburgh Review*, vol. lxxxv, p. 77.

future appears as bad as the experience of the past,"\* and when there is a rational probability of securing, by persevering struggles and prudent counsels, not only the removal of present despotism, but the erection of a happier system, then does it become morally right to avail themselves of that *last resource*.† Such was the conduct of our oppressed ancestors during upwards of eight years before the exclusion of the Stuarts from the throne. Perceiving clearly, from the debased character of these princes, the flagitious counsels of their ministerial hirelings, and the crouching servility with which the majority were succumbing under every new encroachment on their rights, laws, and parliaments, that there was before them the dismal prospect of still severer cruelties, and still greater infringements than any they had yet suffered, *unless open resistance were offered*, they "had the integrity and the boldness to resist with arms, the gigantic encroachments of despotism—to assert in the face of every danger their rights as Christians and as freemen. They did not openly announce their revolt from government, until they were provoked and exasperated to a degree of madness, by its oppressive exactions, and brutal inhumanities. The law, by placing their lives and properties at the mercy of every ruffian soldier, or every hireling informer, had laid them as it were, under an absolute necessity of entering into leagues and compacts for their mutual security. Their example served to keep alive a wholesome spirit of resistance in the nation. It was the hidden leaven that fermented the mass of public opinion. Amidst the solitude of caves and deserts, they fanned the feeble spark of opposition, and cherished, on their lonely altars in the wilderness, the vestal fires of expiring liberty; unconscious, perhaps, that the flame was so soon to burst forth, and wrap, not only the British isles, but the continent of Europe in the general conflagration."‡ Are these the men upon whom this generation should be taught to pour out their ridicule, —men who sacrificed their private interests for the sake of those social liberties which the majority were tamely surrendering—men who hurried, with noble daring, to the vessel of the state, shattered by the storms of persecution, and sinking in the "great waters" into which she had been brought by unprincipled "rowers," while multitudes, with unenvied pusillanimity, were content to remain on the shores, regarding chiefly their own personal safety, and their own private advantages, and refusing the least *efficient* help till they *saw* the fury of the storm exhausted, and the clouds of the political horizon spent, upon the heads of others?

The other distinguished proof of patriotism, to which I have alluded, is the *distinguished part they acted at the revolution*. Important as were their previous sufferings in preparing this kingdom for that grand crisis, and precious as were the seeds of liberty they scattered over the vallies and mountains from which succeeding generations have reaped such an ample harvest, it is now, generally, admitted, that their services *on this occasion* eclipsed even the splendour of their former achievements. "They are," says an episcopalian clergyman, "of longer standing, as a distinct body, than any denomination of presbyterians who

\* Burke.

† On this delicate but legitimate subject of discussion, consult Brown, vol. iv. p. 366—382.—Dwight, vol. iv. 149—153.—De Lolme, 308—318.

‡ Life of Lieutenant-Colonel Blackader, 37, 38, 43, 44. See two other testimonies in their favour, quoted in a former communication, inserted in the *Christian Instructor* for September 1829, p. 642, 643.

have separated from the established church. They, in fact, never belonged to the present establishment, but are the only existing one of that multitude of sects that started up during the troubles in Britain, in the middle of the seventeenth century. The present establishment, however, owe them a debt of gratitude, for their services at the revolution. A memorial of their activity and zeal on that occasion still exists in the 26th regiment of foot, which was first raised from their body, and still bears the name of Cameronians.\* “The part they acted at the revolution,” says another living author, “while it wiped off reproaches from their past conduct, extorted approbation even from their enemies. Their general political principles were recognised by the whole kingdom. Many commended their zeal, their sincerity, and consistency, who had shrunk with irresolution from the same dangers, and were then anxious to bury the memory of their delinquencies in silence and forgetfulness. The language they employed in their memorial to King William for redress of grievances, and their activity in his service, show that they could be peaceable subjects as well as factious rebels, that they could bow with submission to the sceptre when swayed by proper hands, for the good of the people and the prosperity of religion. We find those turbulent subverters of thrones and authorities, not only acquiescing, without a murmur, in the restoration of magistracy and limited monarchy, but cheerfully expending their lives and fortunes in their support. That their professions of loyalty might not evaporate in idle words, they stood forth in arms, to realize their declarations, the moment their interposition could be of service. As they had been eminent for their sufferings under tyranny, they were not less conspicuous as *the first* to take the field in the war of emancipation. “In order,” they declare in their memorial, “to make good our intentions, we modelled ourselves into companies, that we might be in readiness to offer our assistance. This we did offer, and had the honour done us to be accepted. We were admitted to guard and defend the Honourable Meeting of Estates, against all attempts of the Duke of Gordon, Viscount Dundee, and other enemies. Thereafter, understanding that the government required the raising of forces, for its defence against intestine insurrections and foreign invasions of the late King James and his accomplices, upon this occasion, we were *the first* that offered to raise a regiment for his majesty’s service, and, accordingly did make up the Earl of Angus’s regiment of 800 men, all in one day, without beat of drum, or expense of levy-money, having first concerted with Lieutenant-Colonel Cleland, such conditions and provisions as we thought necessary for clearing our conscience, and securing our liberty and safety.” Nor did their activity relax, after they had secured the confidence, approbation, and even admiration of the new government. “Their activity was pre-eminent, and their general conduct marked with a forbearance surpassing expectation. When the rumour spread that the Irish catholics had commenced a general massacre, and burnt the town of Kirkcudbright, they ran to their arms; but finding no enemy to oppose, they turned their weapons against the images and idolatries of popery. They afterwards distributed themselves in several parties along the borders, to cut off the enemy’s sources of information, by preventing all strangers, without passes, to enter or leave the kingdom. A considerable body of them were stationed as a regular guard, on the castle-hill, to intercept intelligence and provision for the garrison, and

\* The Religious World Displayed, by Robert Adam, M. A. vol. ii. 3.

others were employed in digging trenches preparatory to the siege." Afterwards, at Dunkeld, "a company of seven or eight hundred raw volunteers, who had never seen a pitched battle, and had scarcely been three months in the service, repulsed and defeated an army of 5000 disciplined Highlanders," under General Canon.\* "This engagement gave rise to a great deal of surmise and discourse. The regiment was everywhere commended for their bravery and intrepid conduct. Their unparalleled courage was the subject of universal admiration. It so intimidated the rebels, that they never attempted to appear in any great body afterwards, or attempted to disturb the peace of the country. The terror of their name served to keep the country in awe; for a body of Highlanders, having come to plunder about Montrose, as soon as the Cameronians showed themselves, fled with precipitation without daring to stand or offer the least resistance."†

5. Not less uncandid is the charge, frequently stated in books, and insinuated in conversation, that we hold *persecuting principles*. So utterly groundless is this charge, *we allow*, in the fullest sense for which any Christian can plead, *the right of private judgment on religious opinions*. We consider this one of the greatest rights ever granted to man by his gracious Creator,—a noble privilege, worth all the blood, and treasure, and eloquence, that have been expended, in past ages, in various lands, for its recovery from the iron grasp of despotism, spiritual and political. It is, indeed, the grand foundation on which the whole fabric of protestantism, in its doctrines, and laws, civil institutions, and ecclesiastic privileges, has been erected. Remove this, and the magnificent structure, reared by the hands, and cemented with the blood, of our intrepid fathers, in these countries, would be magnificent no more. Remove this, and the Reformed churches, that now rejoice, so justly, in the precious liberties they possess, and the unrestricted inquiries they prosecute, would become *little papacies*, trampling on the imprescriptible rights, and disregarding the deliberate convictions, of others who had exercised only the privilege of thinking for themselves, in religion, or morals, or politics. Hence, our church strenuously contends, that no authority whatever, residing either in individuals, in councils, or cabinets, has any warrant, under any pretext, to dictate to others, the creed they are to adopt, or the mode of worship to which they should

\* Even Chambers, referring to this brilliant affair, is constrained to record the following concessions: "It was soon to appear that their spirit, however compounded, was to make them perform one of the most unexceptionably brilliant military exploits which occurred throughout the whole of the war. They made a most desperate resistance. From the tops of the walls which enclosed them, they fired furiously and incessantly upon the clustering multitudes which came forward. They maintained a close and effective fire from Dunkeld House, the leaden roof of which they fused down into slugs during the engagement. At length when the skirmish had continued four hours, the Highlanders, having failed in their supplies of ammunition, judged it advisable to retire from the town. Quitting the scene with the most acute sensations of disappointment, they ran off towards the hills, leaving, it is said, nearly 300 of their body killed on the spot, while the enemy had lost only two officers, and fifteen private men. Their feelings were not a little embittered as they were retiring, when they saw the Cameronians flourish their colours triumphantly within their fort, at the same time beating their drums, and hurling after them phrases of contempt and defiance. Their officers attempted, after they regained the hills, to make them come back and renew the assault; but they answered that, however willing to fight against men, they begged to be excused from fighting any more with devils." History of the Rebellions in Scotland, 121, 124, 126.

† Life of Lieutenant-Colonel Blackader, 44, 45, 48, 49, 60, 61, 89, 100, 105, 106. See Faithful Contendings, 364 413.

conform. Such dictation, in our judgment, were an insolent usurpation of a right which belongs to themselves, by an irrevocable grant from heaven,—an unprincipled invasion of a sacred province, which even the feet of royal strangers cannot touch without polluting,—an impious substitution of human power in the room of that supreme Ruler, who alone is “the author and finisher of our faith,”\*—who “only is Lord of the conscience which he has left free from the doctrines and commandments of men in matters of faith and worship.”†

No doubt, we maintain that every man, in exercising this natural right, should yield *unreserved subjection* to the authority of divine revelation. Upon no account is any one warranted to exert his mind, apart from that perfect standard, on theological topics,—to follow the feeble glimmering of the light of nature, instead of the full blaze of revelation that shines around him. However cultivated his mind, however copious his intellectual acquirements, and however well qualified to explore the interesting regions of natural science, with the lamp of genius, and the light of observation, he has no right to elevate his fallible judgment above the unerring mind of the Deity, or to prefer the crude notions suggested by natural reason, to the certain truths developed in the oracles of inspiration. Accordingly, we uniformly teach, that his conscience, though free from human interference, and exempted from civil jurisdiction, continues under the absolute control of Deity, owes scrupulous subjection to *his Spirit*, and is accountable to *his tribunal* for whatever opinions it adopts in the interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. Now, will any man, who possesses the smallest portion of penetration, candour, and honesty, aver that this is a persecuting principle? Would it not be more correct to admit, that this is a most salutary restriction imposed on our erring minds, to keep them from the adoption of fatal errors on the most important subjects, and to confine them within the fixed limits of that province in which alone they can employ their powers, with propriety, in the pursuit of religious, moral, and political truth?

When, therefore, we state, in any of our writings, that no man, living in a country blessed with revelation, has a right to worship God according to his conscience, our language must be understood in the restricted sense that has now been explained. We do not mean that *civil rulers* have any authority to restrain him in the exercise of his private judgment,—to call him to account for the religious opinions he holds,—or to inflict on him positive penalties for any speculative heresies into which he may have fallen. We mean merely that *God* has set bounds to private judgment which he cannot pass, without the greatest presumption,—prescribed certain doctrines in revelation which he cannot reject, without incurring divine displeasure,—and “appointed a day” on which he must answer to the *Supreme Judge* for all the acts of his understanding, and all the articles of his belief, no less than for the emotions of his heart, the words of his tongue, and the actions of his life. Indeed, a claim to think, as he pleases, without any respect to the authority of the Bible, is a claim not more presumptuous towards the “Father of our Spirits,” than productive of the most pernicious errors and licentious rites that have ever disgraced any part of our fallen species. Where is there a single absurdity in belief, however monstrous, or a single abuse in worship, however degrading, for which this unrestricted liberty of conscience is not pleaded, at the present moment, by deduced thousands? Ask yon emaciated fanatic, who has vowed to exercise his austerities in the unpeopled desert, or the solitary cave, who

\* Heb. xii. 2.

† Confession, chap. xx. sec. 2.

boasts of the numerous penances, and frequent ablutions, to which he subjects his body, and who expects heaven as the reward of these irrational services, so degrading to himself, and so disgusting to others,—ask *him*, what prompts him to such foolish observances, he will answer, *his conscience*. Ask that expiring Hindoo, who has been carried, at his own request, within water-mark of the Ganges, who is afflicting his frame with all the sufferings the remains of his strength can inflict, and who imagines that his soul will be washed from all its impurities by the approaching waves that shall produce the suffocation of his body,—ask *him* why he submits to such suicidal practices, he will at once reply, *his conscience*. Or ask that priestly procession issuing from the gates of the Inquisition amid the deafening sounds of music, conducting an avowed heretic to the stake, around which the flames shall soon rage with a fierceness equalled only by the phrenzy of his ghostly murderers, and rejoicing in his near destruction for no other offence than that of having exercised, with commendable freedom, the judgment which his Maker had given him,—ask *them*, why they are thus putting him to death, they will unblushingly reply, *their conscience*. And thus is the sacred authority of conscience—the moral deputy of God in the human bosom—alleged as an excuse for the perpetration of crimes, at the very thought of which humanity shudders, and for the maintenance of absurdities, on the very mention of which common sense blushes. Away with that licentious use of conscience which the Deity has never sanctioned, and revelation does not tolerate; and let revelation itself, henceforth, be preferred as the supreme standard to which all the dictates of private conscience should be conformable,—“as a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place.”\*

Is it alleged against us, that we hold the opinion, that civil government in every country should employ its power, its resources, and influence in favour of the true religion? I admit the truth of the allegation. We do hold, on *scriptural* evidences, which have always proved to our minds quite irresistible, this important doctrine, however obnoxious to many dissenters in modern times. We cannot erase from our hearts the conviction that *this* is a truth, taught in the strongest terms in the sacred volume, and entitled, therefore, to our cordial assent and zealous support, whatever abuses may have, in past ages, arisen from the *undue* interference of temporal rulers in the affairs of national churches. When we reflect on the importance of genuine religion to the moral welfare of civil society, on the approved examples of pious magistrates among the Hebrews, who used their office in supporting revealed religion, on the express precepts obligatory under the Christian economy, by which civil rulers are commanded to perform various duties on behalf of the church, and on the numerous predictions in which it is clearly promised they shall employ their authority, their riches and their rank, in testifying their cordial subjection to the Redeemer, and their warm devotion to the church,—when we reflect on these and similar considerations,† we are unable to repress the unwavering conviction that arises in our minds, that they, if they act according to the evident requisitions of the Bible, have a great deal more to do *for religion* than is as-

\* 2 Pet. i. 19.

† One of the ablest discussions of this subject I have met with, is contained in a small volume that deserves to be more generally known—“Statement, &c. by Dr. M'Crie. See pp. 109-154. Much scriptural illustration is also furnished by another excellent seceder, venerable for his piety, his worth, and his years—the Rev. John Brown of Haddington—in his “Letters,” &c.

signed them by infidel politicians, and a number of too liberal dissenters. But while we hold this doctrine, explained in a proper manner, and bounded with certain limitations, we are equally decided in condemning persecution, not only for religious opinions, but for opinions on any other subject whatever. Any attempt to suppress speculative errors, or propagate revealed doctrines, by compulsory measures, we would view with mingled feelings of regret, indignation, and alarm. A more frightful spectacle could not possibly present itself to our sight, than that of a magistrate marching through his territories with the Bible in one hand, and the sword in the other, prosecuting a sanguinary crusade against every class of opinions that differs from his own, and making all whose minds refuse assent to the strength of his arguments, tremble at the infliction of his punishment. However anxious we are to see revelation diffused over all countries, received by all ranks, exalted to its rightful supremacy over all minds, and imparting its spiritual blessings, no less than its temporal benefits, to all the tribes of our perishing fellow-men, we *will* not consent to the use of any other than spiritual weapons in this sacred warfare—*argument, eloquence, and prayer*. Let these weapons be wielded, with an energy inspired by the very excellence of our cause,—let *truth* have an open field where her opponents cannot take any undue advantage,—let the minds on which we would operate expand under improved systems of education, and sounder modes of thinking,—let the objections of infidelity and scepticism and vice be subjected to the freest examination, and sifted with a minute scrutiny before which they must vanish into air, and the result will be answerable to our wishes without the aid either of military force or civil coercion. “Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.”\*

Is it further alleged against us, that *our predecessors, before the revolution*, maintained the propriety of punishing with death all classes who differed from them in religious matters? I deny the allegation. It is utterly unfounded, having no support either from their avowed writings, or from their actual conduct. That they were exceedingly anxious for the universal prevalence over these countries of the scriptural creed to which they themselves maintained promised adherence, and for the total abolition of those unscriptural systems which were not more opposed to the solemn engagements of the kingdom, than they were hurtful to the best interests of civil and ecclesiastic society, is most readily granted, and forms, surely, matter rather of unmingled eulogy than of severe reprehension. But that they avowed the propriety of inflicting death on all others who differed from them *on account of their opinions*, is a base slander, which their uniform practice repels, and their acknowledged writings refute. In a powerful document, published in 1681,† they expressly declare, “that our mind may be the more clearly understood, and for preventing further mistakes ancient our purposes, we do hereby jointly and unanimously testify, and declare that, as we utterly detest and abhor that *hellish principle of killing all who differ in judgment or persuasion from us*, it having no bottom on the word of God or right reason; so we look upon it as a duty binding upon us, to publish

\* 2 Cor. x. 3, 4, 5.

† Admonitory Vindication, inserted in the Informatory Vindication, p. 186.

openly to the world, that we are firmly and really purposed not to injure or offend any whomsoever, but to pursue the ends of our covenants, in standing to the defence of our glorious work of reformation, and of our own lives." Some time afterwards, in a larger publication, they use still stronger language.\* "We positively disown as horrid murder, the killing of any, because of a different persuasion and opinion from us; albeit, some have invidiously cast this odious calumny upon us."

Or is the ignorant reproach thrown out against us that, *our fathers immediately after the revolution*, blamed the lenity of the new government to a multitude of the episcopalians who had been very active in supporting the abolished despotism? I admit the truth of the statement, without conceding that they deserve censure. I would ask, upon *what ground* did they condemn such lenity in the new sovereign they had done so much to establish on his throne, or, in other words, the refusal to visit the numerous individuals in question with adequate punishment? Not because they had avowed different *views* in religion—or preferred the episcopal hierarchy that was now abrogated—or published such extravagant notions regarding the prerogatives of the crown as justly exposed them to the derision of all independent minds—but, simply, because they had been guilty of crimes against the liberties, the goods, and the lives of thousands, for which they had never been called to any account; and, because, according to the principles of national justice, and even the provisions of the existing constitution, they deserved various punishments. Do they not avow this as their motive at a "General Meeting," held the 18th of July 1689? "Upon the consideration that there had been much precious blood of the Lord's people shed in this land, in the time of the late persecution; and now a door being opened, in holy providence, whereby access was given, and some hopes of getting justice executed on the murderers, they concluded it was their duty to seek, and cry for justice on the murderers of their brethren, and that the parliament should be petitioned for the same."† Do not the regiment,‡ in the petition they addressed, at the same time, to the Parliament, avow precisely the same views? Being," say they, "to march to the Highlands, further from all access to your honours, and nearer the enemy, with whom we look for daily conflicts, none of us knowing who may first enter into eternity, we request that we, and our brethren in the country, be admitted to represent our grievances sustained these years bygone, under the late tyranny, and impeach, according to course of law and justice, the instruments and executioners of that bloody cruelty exercised on us and on our brethren, especially such notorious criminals as have without, and against, all colour of law, without any trial or sentence, murdered many honest and innocent persons, whose blood cries for vengeance, and he to whom it belongs craves it of your Honours to execute it; as being the only way revealed in his word, whereby the land may be cleansed from the blood shed therein."§ Now, looking at these extracts from their own minutes, will any man have the effrontery to say that it was a *spirit of persecution* that governed them? Was it not the love of justice,—the impartial execution of which has ever been found indispensable to the stability of kingdoms and the satisfaction of all virtuous men,—that dictated their speeches,

\* Informatory Vindication, p. 68.

† Faithful Contendings, p. 407.

‡ I mean the regiment that was raised by the party, at the revolution, without any expense to government, and that performed such important services in crushing the adherents of the exiled king.—See *Instructor for May*, 315, 316.

§ Faithful Contendings, p. 409.



their resolutions, their petitions? Surely if, in these happier days in which *our* lot has been cast, the voice of public indignation calls aloud for vengeance on the *single* murderer who has lifted his arm against a single fellow, and is echoed back by the prompt proceedings of our sheriffs, our juries, and our judges, was it right that a *band* of murderers, whose hands were yet reeking with the blood of unoffending thousands, should have been screened, on any principle of expediency, from the justice their crimes had provoked, either by the royal orders under which they had acted, by the coronets which some of them had so foully disgraced, or by the sacred robes in which others had impiously dared to officiate, while they were abetting the blackest offences? \* Listen to the judicious remarks of an author in the national church, from whom I have already borrowed some important extracts.

“ In making this latter request—that the more notorious of their late persecutors might be legally impeached and punished—they were not actuated by any vindictive desire of shedding blood. They considered themselves as called upon to demand justice on their oppressors; and that, without being guilty of any criminal intentions, they might pray the vengeance of government to overtake those, who, though not arraigned before any human tribunal, were condemned to the punishment of murderers, by the laws of God and the justice of all nations. They were provoked and scandalized to see them, not only indemnified, but continued in authority, and crowded into the ranks of the army; for many, they alleged, had sought a sanctuary under the royal standard, not from any love to the cause, but to screen themselves from the consequences of their past crimes. *These sentiments of the Cameronians were certainly just.* The extreme leniency of William in not calling to some account the authors of the cruelties and extortions of the preceding reign, is unparalleled in the history of revolutions, and may be said to have left a political stain on his administration. Perhaps it may be attributed, more to the unexpected difficulties with which the government had at first to contend, than to any extraordinary clemency or culpable indifference in the crown; but assuredly, the abettors of tyranny, who, by their flagitious counsels, had brought church and state to the brink of ruin, ought to have felt the weight of his resentment. It would have been no trespass against the rules of equity had mercy been meted out to them according to their own measure. This was only what the wrongs of the nation and the injured honour of the laws demanded. The blood of Russel and of Sidney required expiation; the oppressions of Lauderdale called aloud for retribution; the atrocities of Dalzell and Claverhouse demanded investigation and redress; the tears of many widows and orphans,—the blood of martyrs that perished on fields and scaffolds,—the miseries of those who languished in banishment or slavery in foreign plantations—should have prevailed with the government to make some retaliatory sacrifices to the public justice of the country.” †

6 The only other accusation which I shall at present wait to repel, is, the unfounded reproach, that *we never pray for the civil rulers.* “ That prayers for civil rulers is a duty, was never denied,” said Mr. Steven, long since, “ so far as I know, either by the Reformed Presbyterian or their followers. If they are any more contracted in their prayers,

\* “ I may repeat the remark I have once and again made, that a great part of the persecution and informations against suffering presbyterians, came from the episcopal clergy, who, upon all occasions, laid themselves out to get notice of the wanderers, and to hound out the soldiers upon them.”—*Wodrow*, vol. ii. 135, 244.

† *Life of Lieutenant-Colonel Blackader*, p. 87, 88.

and do not express themselves with zeal for the coming of the Redeemer's kingdom, and with Christian benevolence and generosity, pleading for grace to their fellow-men, of all ranks and degrees, high or low, prince or peasant, kings or subjects, the noble or the ignoble, and for them that wear crowns or that walk on crutches, equal to seceders, let them that hear both judge. And if they cannot, in conscience, submit to prescribed forms by human authority, or habitually repeat dry parades of royal epithets, or express themselves with such formality about the present complex Erastian constitution, partly spiritual, partly temporal, partly civil, partly ecclesiastic, as some others do, they might charitably be excused, especially by those who, upon matters of conscience, as they profess, have been obliged to step out of the national establishment."\*

Many excellent persons—neither incurable bigots to episcopacy, nor servile supporters of arbitrary power—have thought that our pious ancestors, prior to the revolution, were *too scrupulous* when they refused to say, at the bidding of their civil superiors, *God save the king*. Without due consideration of the grounds on which the refusal was made, they argue, "Why should they have provoked such atrocious cruelties, and incurred such violent deaths, when they could have averted both by the simple utterance of these few words?" No doubt the utterance of these few words with the lips was a very simple matter, viewed as a *physical act*. It requires but a slight exertion of the vocal organs during little more than a single second; but these organs, like all the other members of the body, have been put under the direction of the mind, which, of course, lies under a moral obligation to regulate them in the exercise of their peculiar functions, and is responsible to God for all the words they utter during this introductory state. The tongue is a mere material instrument, having no consciousness whatever either of virtue or vice in its movements, and loses, the moment that the vital spark flies, all capacity either of happiness or of suffering, till the general resurrection. But the mind is a rational substance, endowed with moral feeling, bound to keep under due control all the bodily organs, and accountable for all the physical actions they perform. The individual who, by a single stroke of his arm, plunges the dagger into the breast of his victim, and takes away life, cannot repel the charge of guilt, nor arrest the course of justice, on the ground that the stroke was a very simple affair. It is the *murderous intent* that forms the essence of his crime, the reason of his punishment, and the sting of those bitter reflections and dreadful forebodings that afflict his mind. In like manner, the person who would, by any words, however few, express approbation of a system that deserves, from all virtuous men, unmingled abhorrence, and desire prosperity to a murderer, who has associated with himself, in a guilty confederacy, other murderers, that they might offer to his insatiable vengeance whole hecatombs of human victims, would certainly commit a moral offence, worthy of severe reprehension from his own mind, and of sharp reproaches from all around him.

It is worse than puerile to allege, that the condition on which they might have saved their lives—saying, *God save the king*—was the easiest possible. This reminds me of the celebrated argument for suicide, that it is no great matter in man diverting the current of his blood from its usual channel into another somewhat different. The daring invasion of

\* Answers to Twelve Queries, 14, 15, 16.

a divine right, the voluntary destruction of his own life, and the abrupt introduction of his soul, charged with a foul offence, of which he has no opportunity of repenting, into the immediate presence of his Judge, are circumstances of no moment, according to the bearing of this sophistical and superficial argument. With equal impropriety is it alleged, that the mere utterance of the prayer in question was an exceedingly simple matter. If this included unqualified submission to the king, now guilty of political offences for which he was soon afterwards deposed,—if it “imported an owning his person and government, and the laws and present actings,”\* as the administration themselves acknowledged,—if it implied a desire for the Divine blessing on measures by which the best laws of the constitution were overturned, and the noblest privileges of religion were trampled in the dust,—how was it possible for men of piety, integrity, and patriotism to repeat, in any situation, even this brief prayer, when it was the appointed symbol of feelings they could not entertain, and the prescribed vehicle of desires they durst not breathe?

Permit me, Sir, with a little more particularity, to plead on behalf of our conscientious fathers, whose motives in this matter have been so grossly misrepresented by our chief historians, and so egregiously misunderstood by inconsiderate readers. There are various senses in which they could have uttered this prayer. 1st, Had the object proposed been his *personal salvation*, his enjoyment of spiritual blessings in time, and his acquisition of unmingled pleasures in eternity, there were none among their numerous cotemporaries who would have presented it with deeper fervour, truer sincerity, or greater frequency. Accordingly, even Hume acknowledges, that, when “their lives were offered them if they would say *God save the king*, they would only agree to pray for *his repentance*.”† Wodrow, too, introduces a correspondent, who declares, “I do not remember that ever I conversed with one of the sufferers, and I talked with most or all who suffered until August 1685, who scrupled to pray for the king in their own terms, viz. *for repentance and salvation to his soul*.”‡ And were they not his best friends in so doing? Surely to supplicate the fountain of mercy for his penitence and his pardon, his spiritual improvement and his immortal welfare, was to seek for him the choicest blessings and the purest pleasures he could enjoy on earth, and that everlasting kingdom and unfading crown he might realize in heaven, whilst the flattering parasites who offered only the prescribed form, looked no higher than the earthly crown of which his head was speedily stripped, and the temporal kingdom from which he was suddenly driven, an unhonoured and unpitied fugitive. Or, 2d, Had it been meant for the preservation of his natural life till he should repent of his crimes, obtain reconciliation to offended Deity, and make some reparation to the country which had suffered so many injuries from his past misrule, they would not have refused the benevolent desire. They were in the habit, both at their religious meetings, and on the scaffold, when persecution raised them to this honour, of praying for their enemies, *in this sense*; and it is not likely they would overlook him from whose positive orders or culpable negligence all their sufferings proceeded. To think of such a fellow creature, burdened with crime, and polluted with vice, the patron of unbridled licentiousness in his court, the instigator of unparalleled cruelties in his kingdom, and the usurper of the

\* Wodrow, vol. ii. 340.

† Vol. viii. 170.

‡ Vol. ii. 138.

inalienable prerogatives of the Redeemer, passing, in a state of impenitence, into the presence of his Judge, to receive the bitter fruits of his previous misdeeds, and to sink into the miserable society of accursed spirits, was enough to awaken their deepest commiseration, bury the remembrance of their past wrongs, and prompt them to incessant supplications for his effectual conversion by sovereign grace and his gratuitous forgiveness by divine mercy, before he might enter into an awful eternity.

But it is certain, this prayer was not meant in either of these senses, by the court that imposed it on the Presbyterians in this country. Such a court, I suspect, rioting in impure pleasures, low buffooneries, and selfish intrigues contrived without wisdom and executed without vigour, were not likely to trouble themselves about the religious interests of their *chief*. Theirs were "those days never to be recalled without a blush, the days of servitude without loyalty, and sensuality without love, of dwarfish talents and gigantic vices, the paradise of cold hearts and narrow minds, the golden age of the coward, the bigot, and the slave. The king cringed to his rival that he might trample on his people, sunk into a viceroiy of France, and pocketed, with complacent infamy, her degrading insults, and her more degrading gold. The carresses of harlots and the jests of buffoons, regulated the measures of a government which had just ability enough to deceive, and just religion enough to persecute."\* No, it was imposed as a *test*† of absolute submission to the existing government,—of unqualified approbation even of its very worst usurpations, among which *the supremacy* of the king over the church was notorious. The mere utterance of it, either on the scaffold or at the stake, was always regarded in this light by the public executioners of the law, and became a ground on which they were authorised to grant the prisoners their lives. Henceforth such persons were ranked among the approving subjects, the willing supporters, the warm friends of the government, whose proceedings they had before loudly condemned, and whose head they had before publicly disowned. This was an equivocal honour of which the consistent presbyterians in question were not, by any means ambitious,—a degrading attitude before the eyes of the whole kingdom, in which they were not, in the slightest degree, desirous of appearing. Rather would they incur the greatest perils, by refusing their approbation of a government which deserved, in their judgment, universal abhorrence, and by withholding unconditional submission from a prince who had forfeited, several years before, the title he once had to their affectionate allegiance. Rather would they retain the silent approval of their own minds, under the severest sufferings that might be inflicted on their bodies, and possess the unclouded prospect of incorruptible pleasures beyond the skies amid the greatest depredations that might be committed on their properties; just as the Hebrew worthies, whose names have been inserted in a record more honourable than the registers of heralds, "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance."

Almost all the friends of rational freedom have now admitted, that

\* Edin. Rev. 84, 337.

† Wodrow, vol. ii. 138, 267, 340. Hume, vol. viii. 174. Laing, vol. ii. 102.

‡ Heb. x. 34.

the king was, at that time, pursuing a series of tyrannical measures that merited unmingled reprobation,—that he was at the head of “a flagitious combination of ministerial hirelings conspired to erect the babel of despotism upon the ruins of the beautiful fabric of law.” Even Hume is constrained, by the force of evidence, to admit that the strict “Presbyterians were rendered frantic by oppression before they renounced allegiance to Charles Stuart, whom they called, as they for their parts had some reason to esteem him, a tyrant,” and that “any condition seemed preferable to their living in their native country, which, by the prevalence of persecution and violence, was become as insecure to them, as a den of robbers.”\* Now, was it possible for men who had the smallest claim to piety or virtue, to *feel* cordial approbation of such a despotic government, or to *desire* the divine blessing on the prosecution of such oppressive measures? Was it possible to offer the prescribed prayer, in the exact sense in which it was understood, at the time, by all parties, without being *accessory* to the crimes committed by the administration?† Were even the most absurd tory in existence carried off to a “den of robbers,” notwithstanding his vigorous resistance, and deprived of his purse, his clothes, and personal liberty, notwithstanding his urgent remonstrances, *could he*, with the approbation of his own mind, acknowledge the leader of the banditti as his lawful superior, and own *his* “present actings” as proper measures? Such a school in a very few weeks, I apprehend, would effectually *cure* him of that blind submission which he requires to any arbitrary rule exercised by any unprincipled rulers, and might impressively *teach* him that virtuous citizens, residing in a country which has become as insecure to them as “a den of robbers,” may, with the greatest propriety, refuse prayer for *their* leader even though he happened to wear a crown and inhabit a palace.

Upon such grounds as these may our calumniated forefathers be both defended against those who charge them with indulging unreasonable scruples,‡ and applauded for the pure conscientiousness and peculiar

\* Vol. viii. 173.

† “As to their refusing to pray for the king, some of them scrupled the terms *God save* as bidding him *God speed* in his persecution, and as a term demanded of, and dictated to them for that purpose.” Wod. vol. ii. 138.

‡ The following passage, written with characteristic judiciousness, derives additional value from the very name of the writer, William Macgavin, Esquire, author of *The Protestant*. “In the present state and circumstances of this kingdom, it is not easy with some persons to perceive the force of the causes which induced our persecuted forefathers to refuse obedience to this command, *pray for kings*. One thing, however, is very evident from their history, that they refused obedience not to divine, but only to arbitrary human authority, and when it was considered a test of their compliance with what was sinful. It is probable that the apostle Paul himself would have refused to pray for Nero as emperor, had he been commanded to do so at the point of the sword, as a test of his acknowledging him as head of the church. He would have prayed, like Stephen, for his enemies and murderers, but certainly he would not have acknowledged, nor would he have done any thing that so much as seemed to acknowledge the ecclesiastical supremacy of the emperor. Now this is the plain fact of the case with regard to our fathers in the reign of Charles II. Praying for the king was enforced at the point of the bayonet, and compliance was understood by both parties to be a renouncing of a fundamental principle of the Scottish Reformation, which incurred the guilt of both hypocrisy and perjury. Charles was not content with being acknowledged head of the state. He would be head of the church too; and James, his successor, would have resigned the headship of both to the Pope. But with their convictions, they could not even pray for Charles as head of the state without gross hypocrisy, for they believed that by his violation of his solemn engagements to the nation, he had forfeited all right to the sovereignty. This, it must be allowed, is a delicate question, and one at all times of

consistency with which they acted in this very matter. Indeed, it is perfectly astonishing that any who know that "prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God for things agreeable to his will," should have blamed them for refusing to ask from *Him* prosperity to a growing course of perfidy and oppression, robbery and murder. That fawning courtiers, cringing flatterers, all, in short, who consider religion as a political invention subjected to the absolute control of the prince, who prostitute the solemnities of religion to the prejudices, the pleasures, and the pageantries of the court, and who regard the ministers of religion as mere hirelings, useful only in cajoling the people into unquestioning submission to all laws however unjust, and in support of the propriety of all political measures by any administration, however corrupt,—that such should condemn them for the refusal of the loyal prayers on behalf of the worst rulers that ever appeared in this country, need not excite our surprise. But that Christians, who feel with what reverence we should approach the Deity in all our prayers, with what regard to *his will* we should crave all our blessings, and with what fidelity we should obey him rather than man, should blame this refusal in the circumstances in which it was made, does awaken at once our astonishment and our regret, and make us sigh for that period when all Christians, unbiassed by political prejudices, and governed by scriptural principles, shall agree not only in vindicating, but in revering the memory of those holy, devout, and disinterested men, who "through faith and patience are inheriting the promises."

But the question may still be proposed, "Do you of the present day pray for our civil rulers?" To this question my answer is, in some senses we do, in other senses we do not. Believing that prayer for civil rulers is a religious duty of the highest importance, a distinguished privilege, from the right observance of which precious benefits may accrue to themselves, their subjects, and even their allies, and persuaded also that its right observance depends on having our minds accurately informed; our desires correctly regulated, and our petitions judiciously accommodated to existing circumstances, we are anxious to perform this service in a rational form, dictated by the revealed will of heaven, and subservient to the best interests of the several parties for whom it has been appointed.

Accordingly, *our* prayers for our civil rulers, while they do not imply our approbation of any sinful conditions on which they have acquired office, of any unsound principles retained in the constitution which they administer, or of any immoral acts in the policy which they pursue, are made as *discriminating, particular, and explicit* as possible. These several qualities are, I hold, essential to the formation of every rational prayer,—of every acceptable supplication. Suppose, for example, I am

difficult application; but if the worthy men, whose conduct is the subject of this note, were wrong either in the conception or application of the principle, their error was adopted into practice by the whole nation a few years after, and this is now universally approved by Protestants of all denominations. The fact is, the strict Covenanters saw the cloven foot of Popery and arbitrary power in the administration of Charles II. almost from the beginning, and still more in that of his brother James. They refused to submit to it, or to come under any oath that should bind them to an approbation of Popery and tyranny, or even to utter a word in their prayers that could imply such a thing. Surely these were, at least, honest men, and they were more noble than those of their countrymen, who, after having made many compliances, and sworn many oaths to the reigning family, felt themselves compelled to throw them off. "Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiczer?" *Life of John Brown*, pp. 16, 17.

invited to pray with a particular patient afflicted with temporary illness, or approaching his final dissolution. Would it be enough to run over any series of vague petitions that might most readily occur, without the smallest reference to the present state of his mind, and the peculiar circumstances of his condition? Would it not be indispensable to the right discharge of this very important duty, *first*, to ascertain, as far as prudent inquiry can discover, his peculiar situation, mental and corporeal, and *then* to offer special addresses adapted to his case at the throne of grace on his behalf. If, on the one hand, there are painful evidences drawn from his general behaviour, that his mind has received no genuine impressions of religion, the spiritual blessings I must first implore for him are regeneration, illumination, pardon, and the other *initial* blessings of salvation. If, on the other hand, gratifying proofs present themselves that his soul has undergone a gracious change, and obtained the initial blessings, my object must be to seek for him advancement in the ways of God, comfort under the ills of life, increased devotion to the duties of religion, should providence restore him to his usual health, and a peaceful entrance into heaven, should his Saviour prolong the present affliction to his dying hour. Now, with equal discrimination, particularity, and explicitness, should we accommodate our prayers for our rulers, to the state of their private character, and of their public procedure. If *their* lives, even after due allowance for the temptations arising from rank, office, and opulence, has been made, furnish palpable evidences of irreligion, profligacy in private conduct, and corruption in official proceedings, what more appropriate blessings can we seek for them than genuine repentance, a lasting conviction of the sins to which they have hitherto been addicted, a speedy restoration to the Christian virtues which they have never cultivated in the high stations to which they have been raised, and immediate turning to the Lord, under whose superintendance alone they can enjoy either private happiness or public usefulness? Or if their deportment affords delightful proofs that they have imbibed the spirit of genuine piety, and are obeying the impulses of pure patriotism,—that they are “able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness, provided out of all the people,”\*—that they are endowed with an ordinary measure of those particular qualifications which revelation has expressly required in the magistrates of every evangelised country, and against which no Christian will ever speak *with derisive levity*, who does not wish either the sanity of his understanding or the piety of his heart brought into suspicion,—then ought we to implore a very different order of blessings for them,—progress in their spiritual graces, consolation under their respective trials, prosperity in their official duties, success to their counsels in the cabinet, and their deliberations in the senate, the gradual prostration before them of all the passions and prejudices that have hitherto retarded the march of sound government, and the ultimate triumph, under their auspices, of those great moral principles, from the faithful execution of which alone states can derive a lasting prosperity, and statesmen an immortal renown.

I have said, there are several senses in which we do not offer prayer for our present rulers. These I shall now state, with the same particularity I shall afterwards observe, in mentioning the various senses in which we do pray for them.

\* Exod. xviii. 21.

*First*, we do not pray for civil rulers in such a manner as to admit the validity of the claim they have assumed, to *dictate* to national churches, *the prayers that ministers shall present on their behalf*. Such a claim they may, no doubt, support, by quoting a number of crown lawyers, whose interpretations have, in past ages, been usually favourable to the royal prerogatives, and a multitude of servile divines, whose opinions on such subjects have generally been accommodated to the wishes of their temporal master. It is a claim, however, for which they cannot bring any argument from the Bible which has, very obviously, placed the church under the supremacy of the Redeemer, to the entire exclusion of civil magistrates, and committed the regulation of her devotional services to her spiritual courts, uncontrolled by any temporal jurisdiction. It is a claim which our intrepid ancestors resisted with undaunted firmness, during many years of bloody persecution, against which they fought with those spiritual weapons *their Master had given them* in requisite abundance—argument, learning, and eloquence, and to which they would not submit, even though they were promised, as the reward of their submission, perfect exemption from all the sufferings to which they were exposed. It is a claim which an intelligent minority in the General Assembly of the national church have firmly resisted on various occasions since she was founded, and never, with more learning, argument, and spirit, than a few years since, when “an order of his Majesty in Council, directing the necessary alterations to be made in the prayers for the Royal Family, so far as relates to Scotland,” was made the subject of formal discussion in that ecclesiastical court.\* It is, in short, a claim which all good men should oppose by all constitutional means in their power; because it encroaches on the inherent liberties of the church, secularizes the highest offices of devotion, fosters a spirit of crouching servility in ministers, licentiates, and people, and may prove a prolific source of innumerable troubles to the country, of which we cannot witness a more powerful example than that which was furnished during the last persecution. On these and similar grounds, we cannot acknowledge this unscriptural claim of the present king—this inherent privilege of the British crown; nor can we pray for him in such a form as to make others believe that we have surrendered to our rulers a right of the church, which the Mediator has bequeathed in her imperishable charter, and our ancestors have redeemed by their invaluable struggles.

Nor, in the *second* place, do we pray for our rulers in such a way as implies our approbation of the *whole* government. There are, no doubt, many principles in the present constitution, and many measures in every successive administration, of which we cordially approve, and for which we should be truly grateful. Still there is so much to blame in the conduct of our rulers, when tried by the *test of revelation*,—they betray such indifference, if not enmity occasionally, to those political statutes that have been addressed to them, in this sacred record, by the supreme Lawgiver,—they sacrifice at times, with so little scruple, the dictates of sound principle to the suggestions of political expediency,—they contribute, whenever the alleged balance of power requires, so much to the support of papal thrones, which have shed, in past ages, the blood of innumerable Protestants, and which still uphold the very worst parts of that pernicious superstition,—they squander such immense sums from the treasury on useless sinecurists, and unneces-

\* Christian Instructor, vol. xix. 368—396.



sary appendages, while thousands of industrious citizens are without the means of adequate subsistence, and thousands of ignorant children cannot reach the benefits of elementary education,—they perpetuate such gross abuses in the Episcopal hierarchy, by the frequent union of its parochial livings, the unequal distribution of its ample revenues, and the defective state of its peculiar courts,—and they set such an injurious example before the country, of irreligion, especially by transacting public business in their offices on Sabbath, whenever *expediency dictates*,\* by allowing military reviews during those hours not deemed canonical by the church, though sacred in the sight of God, and by spending it often in rural pleasures and festive entertainments, instead of attending on the ordinances of religion in the house of God,†—they are so guilty of these and similar sins, too notorious to be denied, that we cannot offer unqualified prayers for them without becoming partakers of their evil deeds. We would tremble to express approbation of any practices upon which God looks down necessarily with unmixed abhorrence, or to seek support to any systems which he has promised ultimately to “consume with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming.”‡ We must, therefore, discriminate, distinguish, particularize. Nor let any one insinuate, that this discrimination in our prayers seems very indecorous towards the personage who occupies the throne. We will yield to none in *rational* respect for any moral excellence he possesses, or enlightened ap-

\* The practice of deciding every moral question on the *principle of expediency*, appears to me one of the worst features of a government having access to the light of revelation. By disregarding the distinctions between right and wrong, the moral sentiments of the mind, and the fixed principles of the Bible, it introduces a new criterion, which will tolerate any wickedness, provided the results are beneficial. “The fashion of reducing every moral question to a calculation of expedience, is,” says Hall, “a most important innovation. A callous indifference to all moral distinctions is an almost inseparable effect of the familiar application of this theory. Crimes and virtues are equally *candidates* for approbation; nor must the heart betray the least preference, which would be to pre-judge the cause, but must maintain a sacred neutrality, till *expediency*, whose hand never trembles in the midst of the greatest horrors, has weighed in her impartial balance their consequences and effects. I cannot help expressing my apprehension that this desecration of virtue, this incessant dominion of physical over moral ideas, of ideas of expedience over those of right, having already dethroned religion, and displaced virtue from her ancient basis, will, if it is suffered to proceed, ere long shake the foundation of states, and endanger the existence of the civilized world.”—Sentiments proper to the present Crisis, pp. 49-51.

† However much irreligious politicians may be disposed to treat with derision such views, it is capable of the fullest demonstration, that the habitual profanation of the Sabbath in a country is one of the chief causes that provoke public judgments from heaven,—that this sin, when exemplified by the highest rulers of the state to so notorious a height, rapidly spreads through all the inferior orders; nor do I hesitate to say, that this national offence, with the moral evils that have followed in its train, is a principal occasion of those physical troubles with which God is, at this moment, punishing our guilty land. Were the same spirit that animated the Scottish reformers, who rebuked with becoming fidelity the vices of their haughtiest sovereigns, or that governed the Hebrew prophets, who reprov'd, even with greater boldness, the iniquities of their proudest monarchs, to enter into the chaplains and clergymen resident in the capital—the grand fountain from which so many noxious streams flow over the whole country,—they could not pass over in silence such a flagrant iniquity in the conduct of our present rulers, from the lowest subaltern up to the chief magistrate. Will the reader, who has patience to read these pages, have the goodness, before he passes a judgment on this *note*, to look into the following passages of his Bible? Nchem. xiii. 11, 15—22; Isaiah lviii. 13, 14; Jeremiah xvii. 19—27.

‡ 2 Thes. ii 8.

probation of any virtuous measures he sanctions. We can hear, with pleasure, of his dignified manners, his elegant acquirements, his private charities, his princely donations to benevolent institutions, his manly independence, by which he can frown from his presence cringing sycophants who would raise themselves into royal favour on the ruins of superior men. We can appreciate, with gratitude, the protection thrown around our lives, our liberties, and our property, the defence of our national independence against the violence of foreign aggression and intestine dissension,—the endeavours to open up new channels through which all the fruits of national industry, capital, and genius may flow to the ends of the earth,—the occasional sympathies extended to the exiled patriots whom the jealousy of their own governments has forced to seek a temporary refuge on our shores,—and the generous efforts employed, in golden moments, to assist weaker states either in recovering the political rights of which they have been deprived by their powerful neighbours, or in defending their social privileges against the attacks of those whom they are unable, with all their internal resources, successfully to oppose. All such things we can reflect upon with gratitude, satisfaction, and pride, yet when we apply the high test of political morality inculcated in the word of God, we detect in every department of the administration which we are competent to examine, a variety of evils that cannot fail to afflict our minds with grief, alarm, and shame, and on which we dare not, as we value the peace of our own minds, the prosperity of our country, and the approbation of our Redeemer, implore the divine blessing.

Nor do we pray for our rulers in *the express words* of any of the formularies that have been prescribed by royal authority. Without a single exception, all these formularies that I have been able to procure before writing these remarks, appear in some respects exceedingly meagre, inappropriate, and defective. Even the Collects used in the Church of England, though distinguished for the piety of their sentiments, the beauty of their diction, and the simplicity of their structure, want several things which revelation makes essential to prayer, and contain other things which are utterly irreconcilable with the intrinsic rights of the Christian church. That formula, too, which was sent down from Whitehall a few years ago, for the ministers and preachers of the Scottish church, and which was so successfully opposed by an intrepid minority on grounds so constitutional, appears to me as objectionable as almost any other that has proceeded from the same source. We object to all these formularies on the following grounds,—1st, Because it is our decided conviction, that no political council on earth has any authority to prescribe the prayers that ministers shall offer for civil rulers. This seems to us one of those interferences with the devotional duties of religion, and the inalienable privileges of the church, which it is an act of the purest virtue to resist, by scriptural argument, by patient suffering, and by every other constitutional method. Rather than submit to this interference, several hundreds of faithful ministers, soon after the Restoration, willingly gave up their churches, endured great privations, and when the storm of persecution grew loud, fled, some to the sequestered dells of their native land, and some to the quiet asylum offered in foreign countries. It was ungrateful, undutiful, pusillanimous, in any of their privileged successors, to surrender the important right of expressing their prayers according to their own judgment, and to submit to the degradation of *importing* their loyal prayers from the south, even though they

have been written by archiepiscopal hands in obedience to royal orders. 2. We object to these formularies, because the very utterance of them involves approbation of the *headship* assumed by the king over the church. This dangerous usurpation is implied in the single word, "Sacred," prefixed to the imposing name, "Majesty." Did that word mean merely either that he has been set apart, by the national will, to the regal office, or that there are special securities protecting him from external violence, it might, without any impropriety, be tolerated. But it expresses, in this connexion, a very different idea, to which we cannot for a single moment assent, and of which we cannot, in the slightest degree, approve. It expresses his *supremacy over all ecclesiastical matters*. "Our lawyers," says Pinkerton, "pronounce that the king of England unites in his person the dignity of chief magistrate with the sanctity of a priest, and the title of SACRED *Majesty* appears to have commenced when he assumed the function of head of the church." Now we *will not*, we *cannot*, adopt language expressive of an infringement on our spiritual liberties so abhorrent to our best feelings, and of homage which no temporal sovereign has any right in equity to demand,—homage which is due exclusively to that "blessed potentate" who has been made, by divine appointment, the head over all things to the church, and which we dare not give to any mortal, however elevated the rank which he occupies, or powerful the sceptre which he wields. 3. We object to these formularies, because they are exceedingly defective. According to theological writers, who have drawn their divinity from the word of God rather than from the volume of nature, *confession* forms an essential and important branch of prayer. Indeed our prayers should be criminally deficient, if we did not enter into a particular confession of our sins, by which the divine displeasure has been provoked, and our highest interests have been injured. But where, in all the loyal prayers that have emanated from the Privy Council, is there the most distant approach to *confession*? One might imagine, judging from them alone, that our kings, our princes, our judges, and our senators, are beings of a different race from the human, of immaculate innocence in private life, of unimpeachable rectitude in official business, of spotless virtue, approaching, if not equalling, that of those bright spirits who have "never fallen." Not a single word occurs implying that they have *any sins* of which particular confession should be made, and on account of which pardoning mercy should be implored. Now we cannot approve of this false delicacy. We are fully persuaded, on scriptural grounds, (which the reader will find referred to at the foot of the page\*) that a considerable part of every prayer offered for our civil rulers ought to be *confession of their sins*, with due particularity as well as with becoming prudence. Forgetting, in the presence of God, the factitious distinctions of rank, we should remember them in the humbling character of fellow-sinners; and, anxious chiefly about the everlasting welfare of their souls, bear them on our minds before that throne in heaven from which *even they* must look for mercy, and grace, and peace.

Though, however, we refuse prayer for our civil rulers, in those senses that have now been mentioned, we must say, for ourselves, that we are not altogether unmindful of this duty. In various forms, regulated according to the discretion of individuals and the complexion of the times,

\* EZRA ix. 5—7; Nehemiah ix. 32—35; Daniel ix. 5—8.

we do "offer up our desires to God" on their behalf "for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ."

*We desire their spiritual welfare.* Penetrating the dazzling splendours with which they are continually surrounded, and forgetting the extravagant epithets by which they are usually distinguished, we regard them, in prayer, as fellow-mortals. We are concerned for their scriptural illumination, their religious improvement, their future happiness,—their cordial subjection to the reign of free grace during their brief residence on earth, and their immediate exaltation at death to an everlasting kingdom in the heavens. Nor is there, in our view, a single order of men in the country who have a stronger claim on our Christian sympathy and our earnest prayers. When we think on the number of their official duties, the importance of the national affairs over which they preside, and the magnitude of the peculiar difficulties with which they have to contend,—when we reflect on the powerful hindrances to *religious living* that arise from their rank, their riches, and their employments, and the painful distractions they must often suffer, from the bustle of public business, the balancing of conflicting interests, and the arrangement of hostile parties,—when we figure them to ourselves tottering on the summits of society, amid the political storms that blow upon them from all quarters undiminished by any intervening barrier, and whirling round the vortex of fashionable amusements, in which custom, that imperious mistress, almost compels them to mingle,—ought not our hearts to feel an unusual degree of compassion for them in their dangerous circumstances, and send up peculiarly ardent desires for grace to help them in time of need? "I exhort, therefore," says Paul, "that *first of all*, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."\*

*We desire that their official proceedings may be overruled, for the advancement of the public good.* That the good of the whole community over which they have been called to preside, is the great end of civil government, almost all will now readily admit. Do not the dictates of reason and the precepts of revelation equally prove, that this divine institution has been appointed in the exercise of infinite benevolence, and is to be administered for the promotion of the general happiness? Who that has any respect for himself will ~~deny~~, at this period of the nineteenth century, that the millions scattered over these countries have been created only for the pleasure of a few, who are not naturally better than themselves, excepting a few "dangling courtiers," who still sigh after the sweets of absolute power, and utter the soft nothings that fashion has rendered familiar to royal ears? Happily this monstrous dogma—this contemptible absurdity, has been consigned, at least in this country, to eternal oblivion; and speedily may all the other political absurdities that were brought forth during the dark ages, pass, unhonoured with a tear, into the same grave. Happily the great truth has at length gone forth to the remotest shores of our land, that government has been instituted for the benefit of the people, from whom its revenues are exacted, and that all its officers, from the poorest clerk up to the monarch himself, fulfil their duties only when they are concentrating their separate efforts on this one object. Such, accordingly, is a leading object for

\* 2 Timothy ii. 1, 2, 3, 4.

which we offer prayers on their behalf. That the country, under its occasional sufferings, may enjoy much order, prosperity, and happiness,—that the inhabitants of all ranks “may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty,”—that the various vices and crimes that stain our annals may be purged away by the diffusion of religion and the progress of education,—that the kingdom may become a great school, from which well educated men may go forth into other countries with all our civilization, improvements, and good tidings, and a spacious nursery from which myriads, trained under the superintendance of their heavenly father, may ascend to all the glories, and pleasures, and employments of heaven,—these are among the chief objects of our public prayers offered up, every Sabbath, by our assembled congregations. What need have all to study variety, fulness, appropriateness, in their prayers that God would “balance the counsels and overrule the operations”\* of the king. Always to repeat the same prayer on his behalf, whatever be his condition, whether in health or in sickness, dreading danger from the violence of political faction, or reposing in tranquil security on the affections of his peaceable subjects, is not less absurd than would be the practice of his physicians who, whatever might be the complaint of the royal patient, whether a dislocated shoulder or a fractured limb, a cataract on the eye, or an obstruction in the ear, should have, at all times, *one unvarying remedy*.

In performing this service, *we wish to have our minds governed by a religious spirit, rather than to pay an “adulatory compliment.”* We would not, it is true, withhold from the chief magistrate any expression of respect that is due to him, though we may suspect that he is deficient in several important qualities which should be conspicuous in his character. We would cheerfully pay him all those offices of external respect which are due to those invested with high stations,—offices which mankind usually pay, without any very nice analysis of the obligations upon which they rest, which it is of very great importance to social order and public tranquillity, that they should pay, without any unreasonable scruples, and which even the purest followers of the Saviour may offer without the dereliction of any just principle, or the sacrifice of any moral duty; just as the three Hebrew youths in Babylon, during the captivity, were courteous to the king in a very eminent degree, even at the same moment that they resisted, with noble intrepidity, his arbitrary orders, and braved, with heroic fortitude, his ferocious threats. But we would choose a proper place for showing our respect. We would not convert the pulpit into a stage, on which our devotion to the sovereign might be displayed before the eyes of religious worshippers, or prayer into a mere channel, through which we may pour forth our loyal sentiments into the ears of perishing sinners. We would not insult our Maker to his face, by such solemn mockery, that we might give an occasional compliment to a feeble mortal; nor degrade the ministry we have received from our Lord, that we might acquire an extraordinary reputation for loyalty by the multiplication of royal epithets, and the weekly repetition of fulsome panegyrics. We would remember in whose presence we stand, and to whose tribunal we are accountable, when we “take upon us to speak unto the Lord.” Impressed with *his* spiritual presence and glorious majesty,—recollecting that he “is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart,”—and fully aware that no religi-

\* See a “Sermon on Civil Government,” by James R. Wilson, D. D. Minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Coldenham, p. 27—30.

ous service can prove either profitable to our own minds or consonant to the will of God, unless our hearts are engaged, we would always perform that exercise, with those pure sentiments, and those benevolent desires, of which we should not feel ashamed were they laid bare before the eyes of the whole world. We know who has said, "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." "Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the *precept of men*, therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongst this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid."\*

We study also to have our prayers for civil rulers *as comprehensive as revelation requires*. No doubt, when, besides offering adorations, thanksgivings, and petitions on their behalf, we proceed to *confess their sins*, our conduct may appear to some, unused to such ministerial freedom, highly indecorous. It may be accounted an impertinent allusion to the vices of private life, or a disloyal reflection on the delinquencies committed in their official procedure. We cannot, however, change our plan, without being chargeable with a culpable omission. If we must offer prayers for those who are in authority over us, we must confess, with cordial sorrow, the sins with which they are, evidently, chargeable, and, thus, deprecate the national calamities which these sins, more than any other class of iniquities, have provoked from heaven. Have we not the highest authority for this mode of acting? Nehemiah, in a public prayer, exclaims—"Now, our God, let not all the trouble seem little before thee that hath come upon us, on *our kings*, on *our princes*, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. Howbeit, thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly; neither have *our kings*, *our princes*, our priests, nor our fathers kept thy law, nor hearkened unto thy commandments and thy testimonies, wherewith thou didst testify against them.—For *they* have not served thee in their kingdom, and in thy great goodness that thou gavest them, and in the large and fat land which thou gavest before them, neither turned they from their wicked works."† Daniel, in the same duty, introduces the following striking confession. "O Lord, we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments. Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, who spake in thy name to *our kings*, *our princes*, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to *our kings*, to *our princes*, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee."‡ David, too, has set an approved example on this subject. "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. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, the Lord shall have *them* in derision; thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."§

I shall only add, that *it is our habitual study to regulate our prayers*

\* John iv. 24. Isaiah xxix. 13, 14.

† Chap. ix. 32, 33, 34, 35.

‡ Chap. ix. 4, 5, 6, 8.

§ Psalm ii. 2, 3, 4, 9.

for civil rulers by the promises of Scripture concerning them. All religious readers will admit, that only those things which have been promised in the sacred Scriptures, either in express words, or by obvious implication, are legitimate objects of prayer. Such things as have not been promised in some form, or are not agreeable to the revealed will of God, it were the grossest presumption to ask. What then are the blessings promised respecting civil rulers under the Christian dispensation?—for these are the important objects for which our fervent prayers should ascend, rather than any others which our own minds, so easily blinded by prejudice and misled by passion, may recommend. Why, it is promised, that they shall be men of truth, piety, virtue, and great benevolence,\* that they shall yield a voluntary subjection to the Redeemer in their official no less than in their private character,†—that they will adopt the Bible as the supreme standard of their procedure in all affairs political, judicial, and ecclesiastical,‡—that they will promote the interests of true religion by the faithful application of their power, resources, and influence,§—that they will prefer the piety, virtue, and happiness of their people to all the luxuries, and pleasures, and splendours they themselves can enjoy,—that they will overturn, by rational means, the whole fabric of antichristianism in its various branches and civil supports||—that they will substitute in the room of the political systems that have derived their existence from “the dragon,” that which has been furnished by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,—that, in short, they will esteem themselves most highly honoured when they, with their crowns on their heads and their sceptres in their hands, shall be most diligently employed in the duties of patriot kings, and the devotion of genuine believers. These are some of the great events which have been clearly promised in connexion with temporal rulers, which shall certainly be realized to their fullest extent, and for which importunate supplications should ascend up every Sabbath from all the pulpits of our privileged land; and never shall the churches, until they shall agree to implore, with one mind, these distinguished blessings, act a part worthy the important position which they occupy in this country, commensurate with the peculiar obligations under which they have been brought by their unparalleled privileges, and productive of those purifying influences which flowing from them, as the typical water issued from the ancient sanctuary, should carry their potent virtue to all departments of the state, and to all ranks of the community.

When I commenced this article—an article which has been written entirely on my own responsibility—my intention was to have added to the two parts a third, which would have contained a brief exposition of our peculiar views on magistracy, and of the principal grounds upon which we support them. The discussion of this part, however, must be deferred to some future occasion, when perhaps I may be induced to bestow on it a few hours saved from professional duties; though I have too much distrust in my own resolutions about matters of this sort, to hazard at present any specific promise.

R. E.

E. January 12, 1830.

\* Exodus xviii. 21, 26; 2. Samuel xxiii. 2, 4; Prov. xvi. 12, 31, 4.

† Psalm ii. 10, 11, 12; lvii. 11; Prov. viii. 15; Rev. i. 5.

‡ Deut xvii. 18, 19, 20; Psalm cxxxviii. 4, 5; Isaiah lii. 15.

§ Psalm lxviii. 29, 30; lxxii. 10; Isaiah xlix. 23; lx. 3, 11, 12, 16, 17; Rev. 21, 24.

|| Rev. xvii. 16.









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