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Late secession from the  
Church of Scotland





THE LATE SECESSION

FROM

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THE  
LATE SECESSION

FROM THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

BY THE

REV. JAMES ✓ MACFARLANE, A.M.

MINISTER OF DUBDINGSTONE.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS,  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON.

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# THE LATE SECESSION

## FROM THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

IN submitting to the Public, as I now do most respectfully, a few observations on the history of the late Secession from the Church of Scotland, which has assumed to itself the title of the Free Church, it were worse than affectation in me to say that I discharge my task without prejudice or bias of any description. Assuredly it were presumption in any man to affirm, that in any age, however unruffled the current of its history has been, he can exercise an absolutely impartial judgment on the events which are from month to month transpiring. Such serene elevation, such philosophic abstraction, and, let me add, such Christian equanimity, are of rare attainment, if indeed they

have ever been reached. And far less are they to be expected in those periods, whether of civil or ecclesiastical commotion, when a new order of things is supplanting the old, and unlooked-for vicissitudes are disturbing the thoughts like a convulsion of nature. That at such seasons, when ancient landmarks are removed, and fresh ones attempted—when a year does the work of a century—and institutions long established are rudely assailed—institutions that have encircled a country with the veneration of ages, imparting to it a higher name, under the Providence of God, than the arbitress of the political destinies of nations : that then the mind of every spectator should vibrate to the shock which threatens a nation, or endangers a church, is not to be wondered at. When the whole atmosphere, civil or ecclesiastical, is so completely disturbed, tranquillity is not to be looked for ; and he must be more than man who claims it, whatever side he espouses, or to whatever party he belongs.

But if distance be necessary for the gravity of the historian, it is not so needful to the lighter work of the annalist. There are opportunities of information—there are facilities of reference—there are living men, and facts fortunately not yet dead, not unworthy of notice. Would it not be wrong to allow these to pass away unchronicled ; or to be hurried prematurely to their grave, and buried out of sight ? They<sup>\*</sup> are the life of history, as they are the food of philosophy ; and no one who values the prevalence of truth over error,

or of knowledge over delusion and ignorance, would seek to cover them with a funeral pall or a shroud. Why should he? May not facts shed their light upon principles? May not the occurrences of one year aid us in comprehending the mysteries of another? May not an open crevice in the council-room of ecclesiastical agitation, ere time has closed it, reveal its secrets, and betray its tones? Is there nothing to be gained by marking the footprints of the valiant men, and the leaders, and the captains? Does justice require that the oracle of to-day be implicitly heard, and that the dogmas of yesterday are of no more significance than the leaves which the Sybil scattered in the wind? Or where were the fault, if, without presuming to read the heart of a party whose pulse now beats so high, we venture to feel that pulse at the wrist, marking the rapidity of its movements, and the increasing velocity of its speed? At all events, against such an operation, complaint cannot be taken by those who have made so free with the scalping-knife, and, in their day and generation, short as it has been, have acquired the air and the arts of the familiars of the Inquisition. They cannot take exception to it. The Church of Scotland has maintained a silence the most dignified and becoming; and that in the face of the most unmerited obloquy. Amidst the most gratuitous insults, and the discouragements they are apt to engender, her church courts have been enabled to preserve the even tenor of their way. By the blessing of her great Head, whose glory she seeks,

and whose precious name she is unostentatiously, but in sincerity, labouring to commend, her breaches have been repaired. Her schemes of Christian benevolence, over whose supposed destruction the shout of triumph was so unfeelingly and prematurely raised, are holding on their course. And if I now venture, as an individual minister, to speak my mind boldly, and yet under a deep sense of responsibility, it is more to unburden my thoughts, than under any dread, by what is going on around us, of any permanent injury to the Establishment, and far less of its downfall.

We submit then, at the outset, that the Free Secession was not the growth of a day, or a month, or a year. It is not exclusively the work of 1834, or 1839; and much less of 1843. Conceiving, as we do, that it owes much of its intensity to the character of the times which preceded it, and, moreover, was in some degree shaped by the complexion of the times which gave it birth, a review of these seems all but indispensable. These were, in many respects, peculiar. Scarcely had the present century opened on the religious circles of Scotland, when a marked change began to exhibit itself. That it was in material points a change for the better, no one, we imagine, will gainsay, who considers the epoch that preceded it. *That* might be fairly pronounced at once a time of religious depression and of religious inaction. That the doctrines of the Cross, to which all other topics in the ministrations of the pulpit ought to be subsidiary, did not obtain that

prominence to which they were entitled, it were vain to deny. Empty and unmeaning essays on the beauties of virtue; cold and formal harangues, which savoured as much of the school of Plato as of Christ; a strange and most unphilosophical, not to say unscriptural, reluctance to lay broad and wide the foundations of morality, on the only rock on which it could rest—were, we fear, but too prevalently felt. If the theology of the old worthies, whose works praised them in the gates, had not altogether disappeared, at all events it was but feebly recognised. Among the clergy its unction became less and less palatable; its nervous and scriptural exposition of gospel truth proved more and more uncongenial to a vitiated taste; and, but for the fact that no combination of circumstances, no ecclesiastical confederacy, however extensive, could banish it from the homes and from the hearth-sides of the common people, it might have laboured under a permanent eclipse. The prevailing literature of the day—under what might be called its Augustan age in Scotland—did not tend to repress these tendencies, and if in the remote rural parishes, where its influence was least felt, it still operated in no small degree to perpetuate the reign of religious indifference, what could be expected in the metropolis, where its rule was paramount and its mandates most obsequiously obeyed? In fact, the theology of Blair's Sermons, if theology it can be called, was but a type of the age. Correct, elegant, spiritless; polished in their diction, but defi-

cient in religious sentiment ; perfect in their symmetry, but without the fire of gospel truth to give them life ; they formed the theme of all but universal attraction ; and he who ventured to whisper dissent would have been pronounced an outlaw from the religious commonwealth. No wonder that the piety of the Church languished under so scanty and meagre a diet. We look in vain for the symptoms of a vigorous and healthy Christianity. Necessarily cut off from subjects most adapted to touch the heart and to determine the hand, the disciples of this school were not likely to exhaust themselves on any foreign service ; and hence, in the highest walks of religious philanthropy—in the recognition of gospel privilege, and the responsibility it entails—in the inventive zeal of religious enterprise, acknowledging no limits but those of the globe, and no narrower temple than the earth and the sky—we are presented with little but a dreary and melancholy blank. But, by and by, a new order of things arose. As the nineteenth century was running its course, the waters of the sanctuary were stirred. Evangelical preaching, hitherto superciliously treated as the effusion of an excited imagination, if not as the indication of a weak mind, was beginning to assume its proper place in the services of the pulpit. Slighted elsewhere, it had long found an asylum among the Dissenters of Scotland ; and now, without abandoning them, its reviving influence was once more felt in the bosom of the Establishment. A love of gospel truth spread rapidly



among all classes of the community. It was no longer a solitary pastor here and there who appeared before the people in the spirit of Paul, determined to know nothing among them save Jesus Christ and him crucified. The leaven spread. In the chief cities especially, the ministrations of such were widely welcomed; and almost every successive vacancy gave an additional impulse to the feeling which was now melting down the sympathies of the people into one mass, and urging them in one channel. Nor can it be forgotten, that with an increasing sense of the importance of gospel truth, there came an increasing sense of the importance of gospel privilege. The spirit of religious achievement was not allowed to slumber; it sought to plant the tree of life in the remotest countries, and to announce the gospel of peace to the most savage tribes. Through the whole body of the people the impressive consideration of Christian responsibility began to circulate, quickening into vigour all their dormant energies. The exertions of the solitary Christian swelled into the resources of the extended society; and the desultory efforts of the few were thrown into the shade by the powerful operations of the many who combined for the diffusion of truth. In the history of missions, as in the history of nations, the reproach of Scotland was wiped out; and, as though eager to compensate for the past, and impatient to share in the honours and triumphs of the Christian world, she was seen, not so much holding out a single cup of water to the

passing pilgrim, as opening up a fountain in the desert, to which myriads might repair.

The spectacle was at once most pleasing and promising to the Christian; and I am old enough to remember that many devout and serious men, pastors and people, within and without the pale of the Establishment, hailed it as the dawn of a bright and glorious day. Whether their anticipations were realized, I must not now pause to enquire. It is sufficient for my present purpose to remark, that this season of reaction was not unmingled with evil. Unalloyed good, perhaps, was scarcely to be looked for; and in saying so, I would certainly shrink from the sin of inflicting a wound on the cause of evangelical religion. Fortunately for the Church of God in every age, the gospel in all its high and holy mysteries—in all its sublime and distinguishing doctrines—in all its bright and blessed promises—is not at our disposal. “In the view of an intelligent and honest mind,” says the acute Mr Foster, “the religion of Christ stands as clear of all connexion with the corruptions of men, and churches, and ages, as when it was first revealed. It retains its purity like Moses in Egypt, or Daniel in Babylon, or the Saviour of the world himself while he mingled with Scribes and Pharisees, or Publicans and sinners. But though it thus instantly and totally separates itself from all appearance of relation to the vices of bad men, a degree of effort may be required in order to display it, or to view it, in an equally

perfect separation from the weakness of good ones." Such an effort, however, is at no time improper, and can never disserve the cause of evangelical religion. There may be indications given—there may be symptoms apparent—there may be excesses evolved—even in seasons, comparatively at least, of much advancement in the Christian world, which it were culpable leniency to overlook. In their anxiety to shun one extreme, not a few whose personal religion it were worse than uncharitable to doubt, may touch the limits of another; and in their recoil from what may be called the frigid zone of Christianity, where there is no heat in those beams that convey light to the eye, may pant after higher ardours in religion, and a higher temperature in the Christian life, than can well be borne. Nor can we forbear saying that this was largely felt in the Church of Scotland about 1830, and for some years previously. A tendency among many to run into excess—a morbid love of excitement, which gathered its nutriment from meetings, and schemes, and platforms, to the neglect sometimes of the everyday food of the gospel, became one of the marked features of the time. It was but too plainly visible in the Metropolis; for one in Glasgow there were twenty in Edinburgh whose minds were ever on the strain. Unmindful of the truth, that soberness is an essential ingredient in godliness, and that zeal without knowledge is vain; they did not steadily weigh their plans in the golden balances of the sanctuary. The nice

proportions of Christian duty were not always maintained. Primary obligations were often jostled by secondary ones. The family became subsidiary to the committee-room or the public hall; and the homestead of the heart, with the incessant and prayerful culture of its affections and desires, was not so attractive as the ample range of nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues. And in their pulpit attachments there were multitudes not more staid. May I not appeal confidently to many of the clergy, when I say that this was a time of the utmost fickleness? Many there were who seemed unable to settle down to any one church, or to profit by any fixed ministry. The newest intransigent became, for the time, the most popular man; and in circles which arrogated to themselves almost exclusively the character of religious, serious conversation bore no other meaning than a criticism of this sermon, or of that minister—a useless panegyric on the merits of one preacher, or a studied attempt to depreciate those of another. The poor earthen vessel in which the treasure was deposited was so often handled as to be confounded with the pearl of great price; and, as a necessary consequence, there arose an idolatry of men—a worshipping of names—the pernicious fruits of which we have lived to reap in an abundant harvest. Indeed, in reading these words of Mr Jay, we feel as though the capital of Scotland, about 1830, sat for its portrait,—“Many are unsteady in their attendance and fickle in their attachment. Such

hearers frequently attempt to justify themselves by accusing the preacher: *they* are not capricious, but can no longer profit under his ministry. After, perhaps, hearing a new preacher every Sabbath, and five sermons a-week, and acquiring a fastidiousness and vagrancy of mind that nothing can satisfy or fix, they impute to him the effect of a change which has only taken place in themselves. It is not an unusual thing for those who were once ready to pull out their eyes for his sake, to leave his labours, and to pass him unnoticed in the street."

Were particularity necessary in such a topic as this, we might readily cite many other points illustrative of the excitability which prevailed. Various were the shapes it assumed; its existence was felt in almost every circle; and not a few ministers, who had not the courage publicly to rebuke it, were known by their friends privately to condemn it. It might be, that in the public service of the sanctuary, it was not, at least in this respect, the province of any man to separate the chaff from the wheat; or, that it was no easy task to dissect the noxious growth, without touching the vitals of religion; or, that it was more than could be expected of frail humanity, even at the altar, that it should be nice in analysing the quality of the incense with which the air of a crowded church was then so densely impregnated. Be it so. There it was—ripe for change, ready for every topic of agitation; and, with strength enough, if unrepressed, to set the whole

course of the ecclesiastical world on fire. Without, for instance, dwelling on the Row heresy, into which not a little of this excitability rushed, and through which it partially found vent, who has forgotten, even at earlier date, the agitation of the Apocryphal controversy? Is it not fresh in our recollection, with what vehemence it burned, and with what vivacity it was maintained? Can we fail to recall the feuds it created, and the estrangements it produced? Was it not true, that many who hurried to the Assembly-Rooms, from one meeting to another, would have gone away rather disappointed had they not been refreshed with some new aberration of the Earl Street Board? Or, have we not proof still, that when tongues were exhausted, and even charity failed, so broad-cast was it on the face of society, that the pencil of the caricaturist took it up? In this, I am not animadverting on the controversy itself—its merits are independent of the excitement it produced, or, we should rather say, of the irritability it entailed. And, far less is reflection cast on the distinguished name with which that important contest was so closely associated. There is no grave in Scotland—and I say it most mournfully—next to that of my kindred, by the side of which I would at this moment more softly tread. Dr Thomson was undoubtedly a great man; and if the compact and stately ship afloat upon the seas, cleaving the water under the ample canopy of heaven, is not to be identified with every living thing that streams in its wake, I am free to confess that

his memory is not to be burdened with all the heart-burning, and turmoil, and agitation of the day. But, most assuredly, the shock of the controversy was not confined to the Bible boards of the country. If it was felt at London, as well it might, Edinburgh did not preserve its tranquillity. The great sea in which leviathan moved, was not the only one stirred. The agitation spread—the most quiet waters were troubled—academic seclusion and domestic retirement were alike disturbed. Bold and unmeasured language, keen and unbending controversy, acrimonious and uncharitable censure—which as little magnified the cause, as they could promote the interests, of religion—became the fashion, we had almost said the rage, of the day. Even on female lips, which should ever bear the olive-branch of peace, controversy alighted as a bird of ill omen, not speedily to take its flight again; and though the waters were afterwards assuaged, it was not till they had left behind them, in the most secluded circles, many melancholy proofs of the wreck of the charities of the Christian life.

Nor, if we pursue our investigations into what may be strictly called the ecclesiastical world, will we find matters at this period in a much more settled state. The Church had been for many years divided, by the conventional notions of the day, into two great parties. What were the distinctive features of each it is not our province to determine. Perhaps, in their separate spheres, they were not more fixed in their articles

of polity than were parties in the state, carrying with them their characteristic appellations—aye, and glorying in them—with scarcely a fragment left of their original creed. But whatever the abstract merits of the two conflicting parties might be, it is beyond all dispute, that, as this century rolled on, their relations to each other became more and more disturbed. The ascendancy of Robertson, which was all but paramount, had been succeeded by the leadership of Hill—and that too was waning. Other influences had sprung up—the times were altered—a change had come over the spirit of the age, and the courts of the Church could claim no exemption. The Leslie controversy gave the first decided indication of it. It was followed up by minor contests from time to time, till, after the death of Sir Henry Moncreiff and Dr Thomson, it was felt on all hands, that, transferred from one of the scales of the ecclesiastical balance, the increasing suffrages of the clergy were rapidly giving preponderance to the other. Nor were other influences wanting to prove that the rule of the dominant party could not now be maintained. Without giving credence to the *Characteristics of Witherspoon*, which have more of the breadth of caricature than of the veracity of history, it is not to be denied, that in popular apprehension, their ascendancy had been associated with days of coldness and religious deadness. Under this dynasty, adorned though it had been by much that was weighty in talent and graceful in literature, Dissent had sprung



up and taken deep root in the country. The sympathies of the public, if not slighted and contemned in the general course of their policy, at all events had not been consulted ; and when the era of reaction came on, and the voice of the people came to be heard, it was not to be thought it should exhaust itself in their defence. Accordingly, as their opponents could not but see their advantage, they were not slow to improve it. Especially by the younger and more fiery members of the party was the opportunity seized ; and, henceforth, the term “ Moderate,” did something more for them than adorn a pamphlet or grace a debate. Arrogating to themselves the name of Evangelical, they hurled it at their antagonists as a term of reproach. As the conflict thickened, it became their shield, and their sword, and their buckler. The students of theology were scared by it, so frequently did it flash upon their eyesight ; and, with it abroad upon the land, the probationers of the Church could scarcely venture to peep, or mutter, or move the wing. The rust was not allowed to gather on it—it was none the worse for the wear—it showed bright and clear on every platform ; and if urged by an array of constitutional names, or assailed by a phalanx of ecclesiastical authorities whose steady pressure was far from agreeable, they who could use no other weapons might soon wield this, putting to flight the collected wisdom of ages, amidst the plaudits of an admiring crowd. It mattered not that the gospel was preached as purely, and not

less sincerely, by many of those whom they sought to stigmatize, as by themselves. It mattered not that the ecclesiastical questions on which they were ready to stake their existence were as little essentially connected with the vital doctrines of religion as they themselves were. Nay, it mattered not that the plans of Christian benevolence, for the continued prosperity of which the Church has so much reason to be thankful, owed, under God in the majority of them, their origin to those to whom they were opposed. To Principal Baird we owe the Education Scheme in all its national import—a scheme which, in every part of Scotland, and more especially in the Highlands and Islands, has perpetuated his name as one of the most indefatigable and most benevolent benefactors of his race. To Principal Macfarlan we owe the Colonial Scheme of the Church—second to none in its importance, for its enlightened and Christian patriotism, and over whose extended and still increasing usefulness we may express the hope, that this revered father may be long spared to watch with parental solicitude. And we have not forgotten the scheme for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, especially in India. The name of Dr Inglis can never be overlooked. In himself he was a host. His fine analysis of the evidences of Christianity is perfect in its kind. His defence of ecclesiastical establishments will remain at once a monument of his intellect and a model of controversial discussion, bequeathed as a legacy to the Church in

troublesome times. In the business of ecclesiastical courts, as of the public institutions of the city, he took a deep interest. The resources of his acute and most comprehensive mind were invaluable. And what man, we would ask, even in the Secession, can forget his connexion with the Indian mission? We would quote the language of Dr Duff—language which, perhaps, had he now to utter it, he would shrink to use, but which, we beg to say, is most valuable to our present purpose; and in doing so we appeal from the reverend gentleman without the church to the reverend gentleman within the church, and in his best days, when, appointed as he was by Dr Inglis, he submitted himself to his guidance. He says, in his account of the origin of the Indian mission:—

“What now seemed wanting was, that some one of weight, authority, and influence, should arise, who could embody the growing spirit at home and abroad in an intelligible form, and clothe it in adequate and appropriate expression. Such an organ of the widely prevailing wants and wishes of the pious members of the Church of Scotland, it pleased the God of providence to raise up in the person of the late Dr Inglis—a man of lofty and commanding intellect, who seldom failed to carry conviction by the marvellous ease wherewith he disembarassed the most mazy theme of its intricacies, not less than by the transparent clearness of his statements, and the argumentative force of his reasonings—a man, whose sagacity, acuteness, and comprehensive business habits, were

universally acknowledged to be unrivalled—a man, whose personal honour and high moral integrity were held to be so unimpeached and unimpeachable, that in almost all difficult cases of Church policy, he was consulted with like freedom and confidence by opponents as by friends—a man, finally, whose unobtrusive but ripening piety threw a halo of mellowed lustre over his latter days, irradiated his passage through the dark valley, and ceased not to brighten onwards till eclipsed by the more glorious sunshine of Jehovah's presence."

But we must not enlarge. Suffice it to say, that though Dr Thomson was gone, he had left behind him a crop of Generals. They sprang up armed from the soil—and armed to the teeth. A passion for debate, a love of mere intellectual display—which nowhere, not even in the Senate-house, can command respect, if cultivated to the neglect of every other quality—and which is, or should be, much more at fault in the Church—a wholesale and uncomprising partizanship, carefully fenced in by prejudice and nourished by misrepresentation, became prevalent. You could not enter the library of a divinity hall, or cross the threshold of a presbytery, or mingle in clerical society, without finding that the high-pressure system had commenced. Students—mere babes in theology—could lisp the phrases of the day; and, without obtaining licence to preach the gospel, could use the freedom to misrepresent it. And then all conventional etiquette

was at an end. The good old rule, that a man should keep the peace in his first Assembly, was at once exploded. The term of the ecclesiastical novitiate was abridged. The old men held back, and what could the young men do? It was not for them to tarry at Jericho. At once they rushed into the arena. To break a lance with one, or to measure arms with another; above all, to draw some blood, however little, from a waning party staggering under blows which they deemed irremediable—what other laurels could they covet, what greater honours could they reap? These “gentle passages-at-arms,” were not without their heralds. The trumpets sounded, and they were of brass—the ladies scattered their favours—the students’ gallery could not repress its applause. The notes of triumph were prolonged in the coteries of the party, till the distant Kirkwall sent back the sound. In sober earnest, what with overheated assemblies within, and multitudes of an excited temperament without; what with partisan badges and party cries filling every synod and every presbytery; what with a restless craving for something new, of which the countless overtures which crowded the tables of the Supreme Court were pregnant witnesses—giving sure indication that the age of the executive had gone by, and that the age of legislation had come on; it required no prophetic eye to see that the Church of Scotland was on the eve of a momentous change. It might have been a change for the better. Guided with wisdom,

and managed with discretion, our beloved Zion might have emerged from a season of comparative inaction into one of growing and most extended usefulness. Her borders might have been enlarged; her resources might have been multiplied; her influence might have been felt, and more amply recognised, among other Christian communities. The zeal and energy so profusely expended on many a petty and intestine war, would have found their scope in a nobler field. Extending to the Dissenters of Scotland the right hand of fellowship, and gratefully owning their services rendered to the spread of the truth in many districts, where but for them it would have continued to drag out a miserable existence, the Church might have hailed them, not as the antagonists of her usefulness, but as fellow-workers in the Lord. But what could be expected of councils where violence predominated over wisdom, and youth over age; where dogmatic assertion had the currency of argument, and ingenuity passed for genius; in the keeping of those, who, when exhausted at home, refreshed themselves by hurling thunderbolts at their dissenting brethren, the deep gashes of which, though curiously and wondrously cicatrized, are not yet healed; of those whose special element was war and confusion, and who, with studied neglect of all the amênities of public life, fancied themselves undaunted presbyters, only because they were intolerant men? Time will show.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE CHAPEL ACT, 1834.

THIS may be fairly described as the first act in that ecclesiastical drama which was soon to develop itself in Scotland. It may be divided into two parts: 1st, the admission of the ministers of chapels-of-ease (as they were then called) into church courts; and 2dly, a *quoad sacra* division of the districts with which they were connected—disjoining these from the original parishes, and, so far as ecclesiastical discipline was concerned, giving them sessions for the independent exercise of ecclesiastical authority—and allowing these sessions their representatives in Presbyteries, and Synods, and in General Assemblies. Now, in regard to the first of these, no man who looks at the subsisting connexion of the Church with the State, can seriously maintain that the privilege was at any time reserved to the church courts of admitting whom they pleased to their number. Was there a contract, or was there not? Is there an act at all on the subject; and if so, does it give the Church an unlimited and irresponsible power of *inclusion* or of *exclusion*? Could the

General Assembly admit to its roll either one or more of the Synod of Ulster?—though this was more than once hinted at; or to take a case that was frequently in committee, did even Mr Dunlop venture to say that co-operation might in this respect be incorporation; and that the Presbytery of London might be represented in the Assembly as well as the Presbytery of Edinburgh? If he and his friends resisted such a claim, and steadily disallowed it, then is it plain there was a limit somewhere. But perhaps Scotland was the boundary, and within this territory the Church was irresponsible? Is this maintained? We should imagine not; at least it has not been affirmed in so many words, though, if we may judge by speeches, and by the “Claim of Right,” nothing less would have satisfied its advocates. That is to say, above all law, and beyond all law, (except what is reserved to sovereignty or claimed by the popedom,) they grasped at the power of creating; and it is not an unpleasing one. To make or to unmake by a word, has always been an agreeable function. To infuse a little new blood into an old and effete system—to have the power of the privilege of counteracting one vote by two—to keep a house in trim order by the introduction of a few new brooms which you have plucked with your own hands, or whose projecting points you have previously and privately tried,—why not? It is, certainly, deeply to be regretted there should be any check on this, and that the ministry of the country have not



the power which the ministers of the Free Secession claim; and in the concession of which they have graciously signified they will alone return to office :\* that the legislature will set them, once and for ever, above King, and Lords, and Commons. A convenient privilege it would have been at many a crisis; and, did we believe the empiricism of the day, it might, on more occasions than one, have renovated the constitution both in Church and in State.

Now, it is not to be forgotten in the review of this part of the act, that the competency of such a proceeding on the part of the church courts, so far from being acknowledged at the time, was expressly denied. No small portion of the debate with which it was prefaced, hinged on this very point. And, whether we look at the argument by which the incompetency was urged by Dr Cook in his calm and discriminating speech, or the support it received in the after proceedings of the civil courts, where the legality of the act has been so narrowly scrutinized, the conclusion appears all but irresistible. With a clearness and precision, the value of which cannot be disputed, when we consider his profound knowledge of constitutional law, Dr Cook said—“ After calm consideration, I am decidedly of opinion that it is *ultra vires* of the Assembly, to place chapels on the same footing as parish churches. The whole system of parish arrangements is the effect

\* See Dr Robert Buchanan's speech at the Inverness Assembly.

of the legislature of the country. There are certain civil privileges connected with them ; and ministers inducted to parishes have, in consequence of such induction, certain civil privileges which it is altogether out of the question to suppose that an ecclesiastical court could bestow upon them. As members of presbytery, we have certain temporal acts to perform which no man out of the Church can perform, and which we would not have been warranted to perform, had not the acts of legislature made us the established church of the country. These are familiar to all ; but I may mention the act of induction, in consequence of which a right is given to the temporalities of our benefices ; and if that induction were to be refused, we should be answerable, not only to the ecclesiastical, but to the supreme civil courts. Presbyteries are a civil as well as an ecclesiastical court ; and I ask, how it is possible for us, *brevi manu*, without interposition from another quarter, to extend civil privileges to any set of men whatever ? It is well known, that, partial as I am to the Highland churches, I stood alone last year in opposing that part of the enactment which introduced them into presbyteries, and craved leave, without formally dissenting, to state that opinion on any future occasion." Nor is this weighty opinion met by the fact (and we say it with the utmost respect for the gentleman whose name we use) that Mr Dunlop—not a very old lawyer, and who had just appeared on the arena of ecclesiastical politics, where he was afterwards

destined to act so conspicuous a part—that he assumed a different position, and embraced a different view. An attentive perusal of his elaborate speech, in which all that could be urged in favour of the act was carefully gleaned from the law and from the practice of the Church, leaves us in any thing but a satisfied mood. His premises are too wide, and his conclusions wholesale. From first to last, zeal predominates over knowledge. Its advocate, by permission of the supreme court of the Church, at its bar in 1833, he has not abandoned, as a member, his special pleading in '34. And as his argument is not improved by the circumstance, that he had no sooner risen than he launched at his opponent the opprobrious title of Erastian, (forthwith to be stereotyped by his party, as a word too good to be lost, having much of the ponderous significance of sound without sense—and of which hundreds have lived to say, as Dr Cook did on the occasion referred to—“the learned gentleman is at perfect liberty to use any terms he chooses,”) so, in its conclusion, it is not magnified by the admission—“Even supposing it were found by the civil courts that the chapel ministers had no vote in civil matters, where would be the monstrous evil sufficient to prevent our admitting them to the ecclesiastical privileges of their office?” And so, after all, there might be doubt of the legality of the admission of ministers of chapels-of-ease; and the spectacle might be realised, of men sitting in common to-day, and anon severed to-morrow—of use

in the Church this month, but not to appear on the sederunt of next month, as they would not vitiate its proceedings and endanger its decrees. Rather a curious specimen this of any court, whether supreme or subordinate, of a church *as by law* established!

When we come to what may be called the second part of the act—the annexing of parishes *quoad sacra*, and the disjoining of these from their original parishes, difficulties not less unsurmountable were not only hinted at, but most anxiously urged. From time immemorial there had been but one way of doing this—through the Court of Teinds, or rather through the court for the plantation of kirks. Not, and we admit it, that this court had been practically of much use in the country. Fettered by rules, which it was next to impossible to implement, it had hitherto existed more as a thing of theory than of life; and even in parishes where the urgency of division was felt in the overwhelming magnitude of its importance—for example, in the barony of Glasgow, and in the West Church of Edinburgh—redress, though anxiously desired, could not be obtained. The preliminary amount of consent on the part of the heritors, which the statute required, was scarcely to be expected, especially at a season when the ecclesiastical world was so much divided; and we do not hesitate to say, that without some modification of the statute, and some supplemental aid from the public resources, even beyond the amount of unexhausted teinds, and much more in the absence of

these, the facilities of division could not have been great. But, whatever the value of the Court of Plantation had been, or might be expected to be, the theory of the constitution was easily read. That where an act of parliament did not intervene, to this court alone belonged the power of erection ; that without an application duly lodged and formally sanctioned, no portion of a parish could be disjoined from another, were points of law on which, we believe, but few authorities of any eminence were understood to differ. Nor did it militate against this view, to say, that the division proposed was only *quoad sacra*, and not *quoad civilia*. For whatever purpose contemplated, the disjunction inferred certain consequences, and involved certain results, for which the Church was established. These were not barely civil in their character, apart from what is strictly ecclesiastical. Discipline as well as doctrine, was the guaranteed provision of the State ; and for any one to say, that within the pale of an established church, where statute has provided certain modes of division, the ecclesiastical courts were at liberty to adopt one of their own : to erect parishes, and to give these parishes, apart from their original, a distinct name and existence ; authorising them to administer discipline within their bounds, and connecting them by representation with the presbytery, and synod, and General Assembly ; and then to meet every objection with the cry—“ Oh, it is only *quoad sacra* all this,”—is a condition of things with which our notions

of an establishment do not cohere. Indeed, the impotency of this arrangement was more than once felt by the Assembly itself, long before the question was raised in the civil courts. Could they always expiscate their own act, and vindicate the jurisdiction of the *quoad sacra* minister within his appointed territory? Did not cases occur of ecclesiastical discipline in which the new and the original session came into direct collision, and in the determination of which the General Assembly found it prudent to utter an uncertain sound? Did they venture to say, that even for ecclesiastical ends, there was no more difference between the original parishes of A and B, than between C major and D minor—the latter being the mere creature of the Chapel Act? If they could not, (and on more than one occasion the awkwardness and uncertainty of their procedure was sufficiently manifest,) we may be pardoned for saying, that this was an act by no means fitted to bear that weight of responsibility which has since been attached to it. And what of its expediency, in an age when Scotland was rife with what has been commonly called the Voluntary Controversy? The efficacy of example in the formation of public opinion, as in private life, cannot be overrated. Though men justify their conduct by reason, and sometimes bring their sentiments to the touchstone of abstraction, yet they principally act from example. It is most contagious in its influence; and for the Church of Scotland to furnish, as she did at this time, the spec-

tacle of unendowed ministers filling her church courts; discharging the work of parochial ministers with no other or higher security than the Voluntary clergy of the day, was, we apprehend, but a poor auxiliary to the multiplicity of her platforms, and the multitude of her harangues on the utter impotency of the Voluntary system. If some innovations are dangerous, they are not all equally so. There is a wide difference between one that favours the spirit of a constitution, and another that contradicts it. The former may be compared to the natural growth of the human body; the latter, to the violent dismemberment of its parts. The former completes an imperfect analogy; the latter destroys just proportions. The former is the removal of an obstruction which prevents the equable motion of the machine; the latter occasions the collision of interfering principles. A little more patience and a little more harmony; a little more of the caution of age, and a little less of the headstrong impetuosity of youth, and the anomalies, admitted on all hands to exist in chapels-of-ease, might have been rectified in a way at once constitutional and safe. Where local resources were exhausted by a continued effect, public aid might have been secured. The facilities for subdivision might have been increased, and that to a greater extent than even by the well-directed bill of Sir James Graham—now the act of the legislature. The energies of the Church might have been kept at one point, and urged in one direction. The “Re-

ligious Instruction Commission," though drawn from a reluctant government, would have answered other ends than in enriching a printer, or employing a few commissioners. Under a better advised system than that which obtained the ascendancy, the constitution of the Church might have been preserved inviolate, the law courts avoided, and adequate provision for the religious instruction of the people secured.

It is painful to follow this Act through the controversies it originated, and the evils it entailed. One divergence readily paves the way for another. In 1839, the Assembly authorised presbyteries to admit ministers of the Original Burgher Associate Synod as ministers of the Church, and members of the church courts, in the same way as ministers of chapels-of-ease—which, among other peculiarities had this, that it admitted to the status of parish ministers those who had not taken the oath of allegiance—a statutory provision complied with by every minister of the Church, and by every clergyman in a chapel-of-ease. Accordingly, the presbytery of Irvine, in terms of those acts, admitted Mr Clelland, minister of an Original Burgher congregation in Stewarton, as a member of that presbytery, and were about to divide the parish and to assign him a district thereof, as a parish *quoad sacra*; whereupon the heritors, on the ground that this was *ultra vires* of the church courts, brought the proceedings under the review of the Court of Session, and applied for an interdict, which that court granted on



the 13th of March 1841. On the 23d of January 1843, this interdict was made perpetual; and though an appeal to the House of Lords was taken at the time, it was afterwards withdrawn. On the same grounds as those maintained by the suspenders in the Stewarton case, various parties who had causes depending before different judicatories of the Church, applied for interdicts to the civil courts against those judicatories proceeding with their causes, or giving effect to their sentences, so long as ministers or elders of parishes *quoad sacra tantum* sat as members. These interdicts were granted; and at the very time when the hands of the Church were full with other matters not less onerous, as we shall afterwards see, she had, on the grounds and merits of the Chapels Act, to wage a war with the civil courts. Was this, I ask, indispensable to her existence? Did this necessarily flow from her position as an established church? Was there aught to prevent her retracing her steps, and that without any infringement of her independence? Or could it be, that if for one man to confess an error when opinion has been pledged and policy formed, be a difficult task, it were scarcely to be expected where thousands have been staked, and the whole policy of a party is concerned? Most assuredly I have no wish to extenuate the list of the parties seeking redress in the civil courts. I am not their apologist, and my argument does not require it. One man might be charged with theft, another with drunkenness, and another with

what has out of doors been called swindling. Take it as you will, enlarge upon it as you please, we have still this to say—it was the doing of the Church. The civil courts were not to blame; in not one instance did they touch what may be called the substance of the case. No. They were not the abettors of sins, disgraceful in any profession, and much more in the office of the holy ministry. With the evidence taken they did not intromit. They did not say, or pretend to say—*this* proof for the prosecution is inconclusive, and *that* in exculpation, good. The form of the libel was not challenged, except in the names of the libellers, nor the particular mode in which the sentence happened to be passed. This was admitted on all hands to be the property of the Church—its unalienable property. But this they said—and where the fault?—You are not entitled to cut and carve at parishes as you please. You are not entitled to constitute presbyteries according to your own fancy. There have always been *two* to a bargain. With your acknowledged independent jurisdiction we do not interfere. We do not say—and we are not entitled to do it—whether the petitioner who has come to our bar has been truly guilty of fraud, or drunkenness, or theft;—that is your business, not ours. But we are entitled to say, that the sederunt of your court on a particular day, and that fraught with the most important civil consequences, was not a legal one. You admitted those to your roll, and gave them a voice,

who had no right to it. The presbytery is not exclusively your presbytery,—the synod is not exclusively your synod,—the General Assembly is not exclusively your General Assembly: they are the courts of the *Church as by law established*; and if you will purge them of obnoxious members, (and the sooner you do it the better,) purge your roll first, and then pronounce your will.

I ask, what could be more fair—what more discriminating than this? What more conclusive than the admirable Note appended to an interlocutor of Lord Cunningham,\* on one of the causes brought under his cognizance, and in which the argument now used is urged with the calmest and yet the most urgent precision? And yet this is the act, in the disallowing of which so many thousands have been taught to believe that the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ in his own kingdom has been outraged, and his authority set at nought! Is there meaning in this outcry? Is there the shadow of justice in the statement, that the crown rights of the Redeemer have been violated, and his holy government trampled under foot? That there is no invasion of the sole prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ in the compact formed between Church and State; that acts of parliament should be welcome to intermeddle, as well with the doctrine which a Church preaches, as with the discipline it maintains; that it should be prescribed

\* See Appendix, A.

in the Confession of Faith, that the civil magistrate "hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church; that the truth of God be kept pure and entire; that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed; all corruptions in worship or discipline prevented or reformed; and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed; for the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God"—that all this, entering as it does into the essence of a church as by law established, should not only escape all remark, but should form the subject of the loudest panegyric—so very loud, that had you yielded a few years ago to the strain of exaggeration which prevailed, you might have almost concluded, that without state support Christianity could not have existed—even under its Divine head—in any country or in any age; and yet that, when decisions were given affecting the mere sederunt of a presbytery, and the division of a parish, the indignant reproach burst from their lips, that the Redeemer had been hurled from his throne;—furnishes an anomaly which the ecclesiastical world, we are bold enough to say, never witnessed before. The only extenuation, if it be one, is, that the charge wants a tone of sincerity to give it force. We cannot suppose it is really entertained, at least by those who first gave it currency. They must know better than

not to see through their own indiscriminate use of most holy phrases and most sacred themes. We must compliment their heads at the expense of their hearts. But what of the common people of Scotland, who have been left a prey to their gifts and graces—to the sophistry of Dr Candlish, and the broad staring wit of Mr Guthrie? Verily, they have not escaped; and could we paraphrase their reading of the interference of the civil courts with the merits of the Chapel Act, they, in all fidelity to their masters, would echo the cry—that the Lord Jesus Christ had been dethroned. Nay, it is more than likely, that the inhabitants of Ross-shire, and other regions still more remote, have, from all they have heard on this point, gathered the inference, that the glorious diadem of the Omnipotent—the regalia of the Great King—the insignia of Christ's spiritual dominion—outlined in all worlds, and reflected in the waters of every Christian sanctuary wherever a Saviour's name is preached, and a gospel message heard—have been consigned, as by a hand let down from heaven, to the sole and undivided custody of a special commission of the Free Secession.

Our astonishment is not abated by certain facts, which must not be overlooked. To say nothing of the opinions of Sir Henry Moncreiff, whose profound knowledge of church law must always command respect, and which is most appropriately referred to in the civil proceedings\*—we have to state this:—

\* See Appendix, B.

In 1834 Dr Chalmers disapproved of the Chapel Act.

In 1834 Dr Gordon disapproved of the Chapel Act.

In 1834 Dr Patrick Macfarlane, the moderator of the Assembly for the year, said in his closing address, that he “as *strongly condemned that act,*” as he approved of another, (meaning the Veto.)

In 1834 Mr Michael Stirling, of Cargill, voted with Dr Cook against it.

In 1834 Dr Clason, one of the clerks of the Free Assembly, appeared at the bar of the General Assembly, along with Mr Runciman and myself, to oppose the act. He was most hostile to it, and there echoed the sentiments he had previously published in 1833, when he said—“For myself I will say, that highly as I would esteem the honour of sitting once more in this ecclesiastical court, as I did when the minister of a country parish, I would rather consent to forfeit that privilege for life, than witness such a hazardous innovation on the comely fabric of our establishment.” And what of the other, and, as we understand, the *first* or principal clerk of the Free Assembly, Mr Pitcairn? Not satisfied with voting with Dr Cook in May, he must needs enter his protest against it a month or two afterwards, in the presbytery of Dalkeith, when, in terms of the act, Mr Brown of Roslin claimed admission to the presbytery. One of the reasons of his protest is this—“Because, in our opinion, the admis-

sion of ministers of chapels-of-ease to be members of the presbytery, without some permanent endowment being secured to them, *is unconstitutional.*” To this, as appears from the records of the presbytery of Dalkeith, Mr Bannerman adhered. He also voted with Dr Cook in '34; and has lived to condemn, with more than ordinary violence, in a violent age, his own sentiments, at the expense of his neighbours.

There was one point, however, we had almost forgotten, and it is not to be overlooked. In a heated Assembly where party has unfortunately so often spoken more than principle, the vague and undefined argument of Presbyterian *parity* did more, perhaps, than any thing else to hurry on the catastrophe. The argument, certainly, was specious. That men ordained to the office of the holy ministry should not be admitted to the government of the Church—that they who, in virtue of the pastoral tie, were appointed overseers of the flock, should not be clothed with all the functions which other pastors possessed—was admitted on all hands to be an anomaly. But, then, it was argued, there was only one way of curing this evil. It was maintained that *parity* in an established church could not be secure, unless, in every case, the platform of an establishment was preserved inviolate. For the free exercise of discipline, for the unfettered and faithful superintendence of a parish, it was felt and maintained that something more was necessary than a seat in the

church courts. Parity, by all means, we were ready to hail ; but then our argument was, we could not have it in an established church, without an endowment. In the removal of one evil we apprehended the introduction of a greater. At all events, thus many of us felt—so some of us said ; and, had we ever hesitated in our opinions, we were not permitted to remain long without proof of the correctness of our reasoning, and of the propriety of our views.

You must suppose, then, the interval of a few weeks. The Chapel Act has just been passed. The battle has been fought and the victory won ; and Dr Cunningham is abroad in all the flush of conquest. Accessions are made to many presbyteries, and, among others, to the presbytery of Edinburgh. About the month of July, an ordination and admission is fixed to take place in Roxburgh church. Dr Cunningham, the great advocate of Presbyterian parity, is appointed to preside. He ascends the pulpit. The preliminary services are completed ; the reverend gentleman is ordained ; and then comes the address. It is rather of a novel description to a young brother standing on the threshold of his ministry. Nevertheless, here it is—“ Allow me to congratulate you on the passing of that act under which you are this day to be admitted to a seat in the church courts. It has entailed upon you great responsibilities. *Not that you are altogether such as we are. At all events, you are a little better than the*



*Dissenters ; and I trust that, by the blessing of God, you will strive to prove it.*" Incredible as it may be, such was the funeral oration of Presbyterian parity. It had served its end ; and now, without ceremony, it is buried out of sight.

*Requiescat in pace.*

## CHAPTER III.

## THE VETO ACT.

THE year 1834 was signalised in the calendar of the Church by the passing of another act, destined, like the former, to form the subject of a painful and protracted controversy. It runs in these words—"The General Assembly declare that it is a fundamental law of this church, that no pastor shall be intruded on any congregation contrary to the will of the people; and, in order that this principle may be carried into full effect, the General Assembly, with the consent of a majority of the presbyteries of this Church, do declare, enact, and ordain, that it shall be an instruction to presbyteries, that, if in the moderating in a call to a vacant pastoral charge, the major part of the male heads of families, members of the vacant congregation, and in full communion with the Church, shall disapprove of the person in whose favour the call is proposed to be moderated in, such disapproval shall be deemed sufficient ground for the presbytery rejecting such person, and he shall be rejected accordingly, and due notice thereof forthwith given to all concerned. But

that, if the major part of the said heads of families shall not disapprove of such person to be their pastor, the presbytery shall proceed with the settlement according to the rules of the Church. And further declare, that no person shall be held entitled to disprove, as aforesaid, who shall refuse, if required, solemnly to declare in presence of the presbytery, that he is actuated by no factious or malicious motive, but solely by a conscientious regard to the spiritual interests of himself or the congregation." \*

Such was the legacy of many years of party strife and contention; and, as it demonstrated the weakness of one section in the Church, it plainly announced the ascendancy of another. That it is a measure of most extensive import, is obvious in the due consideration of it; and that it vests in the male heads of families an irresponsible power, no one can doubt. Their will is evidently made paramount, and that, too, unaccompanied with reasons by which its soundness may be canvassed or its value ascertained. Now, I need scarcely say, that the Bible gives no countenance to the conclusion, that the mere will of the professors of Christianity forms the standard of divine truth. It by no means warrants the inference, that the gospel of Christ, involving, as it does, deep views of our own sinfulness and insufficiency, will always commend itself

\* I quote from the Acts of the Assembly, '35, when the interim act of '34 was converted into a standing law of the Church.

even to the professing followers of the Lamb. Men are not naturally brought to realise the condition into which sin has brought them—that the curse of the law goes out and comes in with the unconverted sinner, and that the day cannot be far distant from every one of us, when, unless we can say of a Saviour's blood it has cleansed me, and of a Redeemer's justifying righteousness it is mine, every iniquity will add to our condemnation, and every transgression will have its sting. These soul-abasing views may, even within the precincts of the Church, draw forth the exclamation, "I hate him, for he always prophesieth evil of me, and not good;" and still may require the reproof, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased in goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and naked." And then, can we forget the whole style of the prophetic ministry? Did Moses, the servant of the Most High, earn the approbation of his brethren by the attempt to cherish their national arrogance or religious rancour? Did Elijah, when he appeared on the stage of sacred history, win the approval of those whom he sought to warn of approaching judgment? Was Isaiah likely, in that hour when the people had learned to bow their ear to religious flatterers, saying, "Speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceit,"—was he likely then to be welcomed by a degenerate race? Did not Jeremiah exclaim—"Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast born me a man of strife, and a man of contention

to the whole earth?" Or do any of the prophets, from Moses to Malachi, use the language that commended itself to a stiff-necked and rebellious race? No; we cast our eyes over the illustrious train; we listen to their voice, whether heard by the shores of the Red Sea or on the borders of Canaan; and what is it that forces itself so vividly on the mind? Not the richness or energy of their expression, or the fascinating simplicity of their historic narrative, or the inimitable point of their didactic admonitions, or the tender and affecting pathos of their elegiac odes, or the seraphic ardour of their eucharistic, and the deep-toned impressiveness of their penitential hymns, or the elevated and glowing strains of their triumphal songs, whether heard by the margin of the sea or under the arch of the temple. It is the tone of rebuke, and warning, and reproof, forced upon the ears of a reluctant people; the voice of one crying in the wilderness—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Neither does that voice die away upon the ear, when a new and better dispensation occupies its place, and Christ himself appears the living messenger of heavenly love. The ministry of Sion, any more than the ministry of Sinai, is not to be shaped or determined by the hosannas of the multitude. In short, Christianity has thrown around all its servants the shield of its authority; and never, but when the truth as it is in Jesus is superseded or marred by human device, are men at liberty to turn a deaf ear to the ministrations of the

pulpit. "He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me," is the defensive armour of the Christian priesthood; and before now it has stood it in good stead, in many a season of backsliding and of sin.\*

We think, then, that these truths, when duly realised, will serve, at least in some degree, to modify the unmitigated tenor of what has been commonly called the Veto Act. Nor will they lose aught of their effect, when we take them in connexion with the government and discipline of the church. That such a government has been established in the kingdom of Christ, no Presbyterian will deny; and as little will it be denied, that there is authority connected with it.

\* In thus cursorily glancing at the argument from scripture on this question, I am only availing myself of some observations which I have made elsewhere, and which appear to me conclusive. The argument I consider a most important one; and it may be seen faithfully and amply illustrated in the Pastoral Letter of Dr Muir to the congregation of St Stephen's. Never was letter more opportune. It was published at a time when multitudes had imagined, that if the law of the land was in one way, the gospel was quite in another; and it demonstrated this, that in maintaining unimpaired the constitution of the Church, other quotations could be given than from Acts of the Parliament or the Assembly. The scriptural analysis is complete; the tone of the letter truly affectionate; and in laying his own congregation under deep obligation by it, he has not less benefited the Church, of which he continues to be one of the brightest ornaments, as in the hour of her trial he has proved himself, under God, one of her best props. We would also desire, under this head, to refer to the valuable Letter of the Rev. Adam Tait; a letter, characterised at once by the most fervent piety and the most conclusive scriptural reasoning. A reply was attempted by the Rev. James Buchanan.

“Remember them that have the rule over you,” said Paul to the Hebrews, “obey them that have the rule over you,”—“submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls,”—“they addicted themselves to the ministry; submit yourselves to such.” These inspired injunctions plainly indicate the existence of authority in the office-bearers of the Church; and though the appeal to their testimony may be considered in some quarters as savouring too much of arrogance in a Protestant Church—though it may not coincide with the favourite maxims of the day—nay, may be called Popish; we dare not disavow it. We believe it to be the will of Him who is head over all things to his body, the Church, that such a government should be upheld in every age; and that though not legislative or coercive, but simply declarative and executive, the more vigorously it is administered, the more valuable it will prove, as the bulwark of Christian morals and of Christian truth. What then, I would ask, becomes of that government, vested in the office-bearers of the Church, when in the discharge of a duty the most solemn, a duty than which there can be none more tender, even the judicial trial of a man’s fitness for the work of the holy ministry in any particular parish; I ask, what becomes of it when the will of the people is raised to the supremacy? Where is there a vestige of that authority, when, in the discharge of a duty so momentous—from the responsibility of which they cannot relieve themselves—they meet and separate as a mere

court of registration? Where is the ruling, or if you will have it, the guiding hand of the Church visible, in checking the eccentricities of popular feeling, or in giving encouragement to the faintest breathing of Christian piety and of Christian worth? Let the Veto Act but hold good, in all its unmodified sternness, and this control is at an end. The elevation of one class will not be purchased without the depression of another. The rulers will be supplanted by the ruled—the landmarks of authority will be removed; and, with no reclaiming voice left *them*, to which they can give utterance, the office-bearers in the ecclesiastical court will be impelled to discharge a duty for which they alone are responsible, at the bidding of others—of whose opposition they may perhaps most conscientiously disapprove. Or are we sure, that in thus magnifying the will of the people, in giving it an operation so free and unfettered, untouched by the discipline of the Church, and emancipated from its control, we shall always subserve the interests of evangelical religion? Is there no danger to be apprehended from men—members, it may be, of the Christian community—and yet unimpressed with the love of the truth? Is there no jealousy to be felt, lest, in the unchecked and unquestioned evolutions of this maxim, strange fire may sometimes be kindled on the altar, and the ark of the Lord be sometimes touched by unworthy hands? For ourselves, we must confess, that in our estimation the prevalence of such doctrines is fraught with danger to



all that is vital in Christianity itself. Partisans might give currency to them; they might, as vacancies occurred, convene presbytery after presbytery on the moderation day—a day which, in some parishes at least, drew on apace in unseemly contention and unwarranted prejudice; they might issue the mandate to the elders and ministers in convocation assembled, that “if the presbytery shall find that there is not a majority of persons on the roll dissenting, and if no special objections be stated, they *shall* sustain the call, and proceed to the trials and settlement, according to the rules of the Church; but if the presbytery shall find that there is a major part of the persons on the roll dissenting, they *shall* reject the person presented, so far as regards the particular presentation, and the occasion of that vacancy in the parish; and shall, within two days thereafter, intimate this their determination to the patron, the presentee, and the elders of the parish”—but not thus do I see the government of our Sion maintained, or expect its orthodoxy to be revived and extended. I would have every court within its bounds listen to the voice of a few, as well as of the many. I would not have the religion of a parish determined by the majority, whatever complexion it may bear. I would not have a presbytery compelled to admit, on their own responsibility, a man as fit for a parish, because there are no dissents. I would not have them necessarily forced to reject a man, because the major party have been declaring

against him. The principle of Non-intrusion would then, in my apprehension, come to its true interpretation. It would be distinguished alike from popular oppression on the one hand, and priestly domination and tyranny on the other; the balance of the sanctuary would be maintained, the cord of sympathy that bound the rulers and the ruled, would not be left to disport itself in every wind that blows; and, placed upon one platform, and distinguished by one aim, it might be that more than heretofore the hearts of pastor and people might be united.

This is, in my opinion, no mere picture of fancy, but a fundamental principle in our ecclesiastical polity, and one worthy of being maintained. That polity, if I have read it aright, proceeds upon the principle, that whatever relates to the spiritual interest of the people should be cared for by the church courts, and be superintended by their control. In nothing is this so anxiously displayed, as in what relates to the functions of the holy ministry. Innumerable acts of Assembly regulate this; and in law, if not in practice—in the constitution, if not in the history of the Church, the utmost solicitude on this point has been displayed. But in vindication of our view, we need only refer to the First Book of Discipline—at all times a favourite book of reference with our opponents. It is there said—“But violent intrusion we call it not when the council of the Church, in the fear of God, and for the salvation of the people, offereth unto them a sufficient

man to instruct, whom they shall not be forced to admit before just examination, as before is said." Does this countenance the Veto? Does this give umbrage to the motley group of the Non-intrusionists, who, though fighting under one banner, were yet distinguished by the most diverse sentiments? Does this invest with all the formality of a fundamental principle, the mere expressed volition of the major part of male heads of families? And if I do not thus read the Bible—if I do not thus read the Books of Discipline—if I do not thus interpret the statutes of the Church, what shall I say, in the words of the inimitable pamphlet of Sir William Hamilton, "of the proof drawn from the authority of Calvin and Beza, and the analogy of Presbyterian churches other than our own?" It is the smallest tribute of that most seasonable treatise, that it came from the occupant of the chair of logic in the University of Edinburgh. Correct almost to an axiom, it is irresistible in its scholarship. After years of conflict it comes upon us with the most intense freshness. The exhausted mind is brought back to first principles. The springs of the controversy are touched, and they are made to retrograde. With what nice and articulate point is the word "voluntas" analysed! Place alongside of it the full-blown and luxuriant pamphlets of full five revolving years—the laboured orations of Dr Chalmers; the twists and writhings of Dr Candlish; the jests of Mr Guthrie; or the arrogant assumption of Dr Cunningham—and where are they? They are

blighted and blasted in a night. The frost has evidently set in. The long stagnant atmosphere is cleared, and the learned Baronet, with a vigour of intellect unsurpassed in a protracted and most wayworn controversy, fresh from the paternal tents of Calvin and Beza, where he had not been unmindful of the "footsteps of the flock," goes forth to look upon the enemy, and with his sling in his hand, inflicts a blow more deadly far than a thousand arrows. As there is precision in the aim, so is there mortality in the wound. It needs no repetition. The proof is irrefragable. The step is measured—the aim is precise; and should any one doubt it, he may go to the battle-field, and there, with the stone deeply infixing in its forehead, he will see the prostration of a cause, which, with prouder challenges on its lips than Goliath ever uttered—"exalted itself as an eagle, and set its nest above the stars."\*

How different from the Veto is the act under which the procedure of presbyteries is now regulated in the induction and admission of ministers! How thoroughly does it harmonise at once with the dictates of reason, and the principles of all church government! How fully does it develope the constitution of our national establishment, in its nice adaptation to the reasonable will of its members! Equally removed from the overriding influence of popular clamour on the one hand, and the not less dangerous tyranny of ecclesiastical

\* The title of Sir William Hamilton's Pamphlet is—"Be not Schismatics, be not Martyrs, by Mistake."

power on the other ; giving to the intelligent mind of all interested, the freest utterance ; so that no objection may be repressed, no statement disregarded, which reason may dictate, or language express ; while at the same time, it leaves the platform of Presbyterian government, unimpaired, in the keeping of its office-bearers ;—the Scotch Benefice Act must sooner or later command the approval of all who would preserve in their proper places, the patron and the people, the presbytery and the presentee. To read it calmly and dispassionately, must be to commend it. There is nothing jarring, nothing inconsistent in its regulations. The privileges of the people are secured not less when “*jure devoluto*” the presbytery nominates, than when *ipso facto* the patron presents.\* A fundamental rule is not suspended when the church court comes into the exercise of the power. There is no such unaccountable tampering with principles, for which the highest of all authority is arrogated—no such trafficking in Lord

\* It is, certainly, not a little remarkable, that for several years the regulations of the Veto Act included this one—“That cases of settlement by the Presbyteries, *jure devoluto*, shall not fall under the operation of the regulations in this and the relative act of Assembly, but shall be proceeded in according to the general law of the Church applicable to such cases.” “*The general law of the Church affecting such cases,*” is a most convenient phrase, and, if meaning any thing, intimates this, that the will of the people was not to be consulted when the presentation of a presbytery was concerned, as in the case of the presentation of a patron. What rule could be more glaringly inconsistent with the principle on which the Veto was framed ? It was at last erased, when the retaining of it was no longer either decent or safe.

Aberdeen's bill. Be it a noble patron with his host of presentations, or a reverend court to which but one has lapsed, the rule is the same. The privilege of objecting for any reason that may be competently urged, is preserved inviolate; and, that caprice may be checked in the decision pronounced, it is expressly stipulated, that, subject to the review of the superior courts, the judgment of the presbytery shall be accompanied with the grounds on which it is pronounced. What can be more discriminating, what more equitable than this? Emancipated alike from the rigours of an uncontrolled patronage, and the domination of the mere popular will, the ministers and elders of the Establishment now feel, for the first time for years, that, in the discharge of their judicial functions, they are breathing in a court of justice; nor can the day be very far distant, when, in the subsidence of that agitation which has so long disturbed the religious community and impaired its perceptions, it will be widely acknowledged, that, in the Benefice Act, the constitution of the Church of Scotland has come to its just and proper interpretation. And what of its working? If since the Secession an unexampled number of presentations have been issued, and vacancies supplied; if, in every corner of the land, whether in the cities or villages, in parishes more remote from the heart-burnings and contentions of the day, or in others placed in the very focus of agitation, one call after another has been moderated in, till now the breaches of our Zion have been repaired

and her walls rebuilt, even amidst the scoffings of the adversary—it is not to be overlooked, that the harmony of the Church has been maintained, and the efficiency of the clergy secured. Under the good providence of God, we cannot be too grateful for it. We cannot be too thankful for a measure which, without attempt at innovation, and professing to be nothing more than declaratory of the constitution of the Church, has carried us as through a tempest, to a renovated sky and a serener atmosphere.

Compare with this the first days of the Veto. How marked the contrast! Scarcely had it emerged from the mint, or, we should rather say, from the hot-blast of the Non-intrusionists, when its temper was put to the proof. The vacancies were, of course, not very numerous, and yet, with all the care which Lord Moncreiff could take of his own measure, how troublesome did it often prove to him! We have not forgotten the many causes it created, and the heavy judicial work it entailed. What a fund of humour did the roll of male heads of families excite, to the indignant exclusion of the bills of mortality! Through what lengthened sederunts did the author of the Veto work his way, lest some country brother in his simplicity should count the dead, in the assertion of a living and vital principle! In these days the gymnasium of the Church was most opportune to the Court of Session; for, though they were afterwards found inconveniently near, at that period they wrought most admirably.

There was the Dreghorn case. There was the Dron case. There was the Trinity Gask case. There was the Eskdale Muir case. There was the Lethendy case. There was the Logie Easter case. There was the Auchterarder case. And then we must not forget the case of Urr. One presentee after another was rejected. The contest was severe as well as protracted. For many months the neighbouring parishes were kept in a state of ferment; nor was a settlement effected till the waters of the Orr ran black with ink. Such were the palmy days of the Veto—and, in closing this Chapter, I would ask, what well-conditioned ecclesiastic would ask for their return?\*

\* In these observations, I do not refer to any point connected with the pure Anti-patronage views. These, it is well known, were not at issue in the Non-intrusion question; nay, were positively disclaimed, as might be shown by sundry manifestoes, as well as by a pamphlet of Dr M'Farlane, Greenock, entitled, "Thoughts on Popular Election," and Lord Moncreiff's evidence on the subject before the committee of the House of Commons. However, it should not be overlooked, that, in touching the Veto Act, the charge was here made, as under the Chapel Act, that the headship of Christ was assailed. It was reserved, we believe, to Dr James Buchanan, now a professor of theology in the Free Secession College, to make the discovery. The argument was peculiar. The assumption was, that the privilege of dissenting without reason assigned or required, was the inherent privilege of every church member; and the reasoning was, that to deprive him of this, was to touch Christ in the members of his body. Let it be conceded. What, then, under the Veto, became of the members of the Church—*not make heads of families; and what of the whole community of females? Are these branches to be lopped off from the vine?*



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE AUCHTERARDER CASE, AND

## THE ASSEMBLY 1839.

WE believe that we are not wrong in saying, that on the decision of this year depended, under Providence, much of the future welfare of the Church. The circumstances of the case were these:—In 1834, the Veto Act was passed by a majority in our Supreme Court, who acknowledged, (and it was the only acknowledgment which as honest men they could make,) that in the passing of that Act they did not mean to infringe on the existing law of Patronage. That it did so infringe, however, was the opinion of a very large minority; and, for some time before it became a matter of question in the Court of Session, it was handled variously—in various ways—in speeches and pamphlets, and in the accompanying comments of the periodical press. All, however, were agreed in this, that the Church had no title to pass that Act, whatever principle it asserted, and whatever regulations it contained, if these were inconsistent with the law of the land. The day of trial was impending. In the year

1835, a presentation was issued to the church and parish of Auchterarder ; and in due course the presentation was sustained, and a day fixed for the moderation of a call. Dissents were asked in terms of the Veto Act, and on a major part of the male heads of families in communion tendering these, the presbytery, on that ground, rejected the presentee. In this sentence, neither the patron nor the presentee acquiesced. Lord Kinnoul, conjunctly with Mr Young, instituted a process against the presbytery of Auchterarder in the Court of Session, to have it declared, that “ they were bound and astricted to make trial of the qualifications of the pursuer, and are still bound so to do ; and if in their judgment, after due trial and examination, the pursuer is found qualified, the said presbytery are bound and astricted to receive and admit the pursuer as minister of the church and parish of Auchterarder, according to law.” Accordingly, counsel on both sides were heard most largely ; the opinions of the Judges\* were given at unprecedented length, and on the 8th day of March, 1838, the Lords of the First Division

\* As by the assumption of the dominant party all the talent and worth of the Church were on their side, so, of course, were all the talent and wisdom of the Bench. On Lord Jeffrey, in particular, was their adulation profusely heaped. Not that their panegyrics at all affected this able and accomplished lawyer—the last of a race crowned with other laurels than those gathered from the barren floor of the Parliament House. If in 1838 he pronounced in favour of the Church, he was candid enough to intimate, but a short time before the Secession, that his opinions had been shaken. This he

found in favour of the pursuers. On the 3d April following, a memorial was presented by the pursuers to the presbytery, “to repair, so far, the injuries decreed to have been done by taking Mr Young on trial; and thereafter proceeding in his settlement as minister of the said church without any further delay,” which memorial was referred to the synod, and by the synod to the General Assembly, by whom the following deliverance was pronounced:—“The General Assembly sustains the references, approves of the conduct of the Presbytery of Auchterarder and the Synod of Perth and Stirling: authorises the Procurator for the Church to appeal the judgment of the Court of Session in the action at the instance of the Earl of Kinnoul and the Rev. Robert Young against the said presbytery, so soon as he and the other counsel for the presbytery in the said cause shall think it expedient to do so.” That was accordingly done; and on the 3d day of May, 1839, the House of Lords affirmed the judgment of the the Court of Session.

I think, then, that I may fairly pronounce this a

did most unequivocally, when, in giving judgment on a church cause, he read in court one of the most emphatic sections of Lord Brougham’s speech on the Auchterarder Case, and accompanied it with the remark, that he had to confess that there was much to be said for the argument there urged. I think it right to note this, as attempts have been made to cast doubts on this ingenuous statement. I myself heard it, and I may be allowed to add, so did Dr Candlish, who indicated sufficiently by his looks, that he did not misunderstand the graceful acknowledgment.

turning point in the history of the Church. I venture also to say, that the solution of the dilemma into which the Church had been brought, was not in itself a very difficult one. Divested of all ambiguity, the question might very naturally be put in this way—Does conscience compel me to maintain an act which I would not have passed, had I deemed it inconsistent with the law of the land? Does conscience compel me, as an office-bearer in an established church, which appeals the question from one civil court to another, to resist a decision which, at my own instance, has been pronounced? Is there nothing for it, but that in 1839 I should fight for the Veto Act *tanquam pro aris et focis*—if in 1834, and with my present knowledge, conscience must have prevented me from supporting it at all?

Premising, then, that we recognise, in this mode of dealing with the case, an enlightened perception of duty—a tone of thought not the less praiseworthy, that it may, in submission, have some little self-denial to be exercised, some little pride to be mortified—we would also recall the fact, that, in the providence of God, there was nothing that could force on a different result. No path could be more open than was the way of the Church in 1839. That, under a conviction of the competency of their proceedings, the majority of the Assembly in '34 had passed the Veto Act, we at once concede. To this acknowledgement they are entitled, not less from their own declarations, than

from the facts of the case. It is well known that the opinion of the crown lawyers of the day was taken, and that they pronounced it within the jurisdiction of the Church. It is also to be remembered, that Lord Moncreiff, whose opinion was entitled to much respect, and whose influence in the Church was most extensive, did, in placing this law on the statute-book of the Church, pledge all he knew, whether of law ecclesiastical or law civil, that there was no danger. And it cannot be disputed, that a change was needed in the administration of the policy of the Church. Too narrowly interpreted in the procedure of the church courts for a long term of years, the privileges of the people had been materially abridged—"Life, and literature, and doctrine," had, in the practice, though not in the constitution, of the Church, formed the limit within which all objections to the presentee ranged—and now, in the abandonment of the Veto, and with the consent of their opponents—to be gathered from the motion of Dr Cook in '34—a larger scope might have been given to the popular voice.

We are confirmed in this position by a reference to the terms in which the judgment of the civil court was given. A due regard to this must carry with it the conviction, that no serious impediment existed to the Church's falling back on the position she occupied in 1833, and from which the sentence of the civil court did not debar her. To what did that sentence amount? To nothing more than this, that the presbytery of

Auchterarder were bound and astricted to discharge their statutory duty, and to take the presentee on trial. Finding that that duty had not been discharged—that, in giving effect to the mere will of the people, and putting it on record as the ground of their rejection, they had placed his trials in other hands than those which the statutes provided—they were now recalled to their own responsibility in the admission and induction of ministers.

But did that decision impair, by one iota, the spiritual functions of the Church? Did it say—you shall in no instance moderate in a call, or in any way listen to the voice of the people? Did it cut off all retreat, by pronouncing Mr Young, in virtue of his presentation, minister of the church and parish of Auchterarder? Did it say any more than would have been said, and surely with justice, to any presbytery, which, in the predominance of anti-patronage views, had refused to receive a presentation from an undoubted patron, rejected his presentee, and handed over the appointment to the people? Or, moreover, we would ask, if the admission of the presentee to the parish of Auchterarder followed as a necessary sequence of the decision of the House of Peers. No one will maintain this. So, in all likelihood, it would have ended—but not of necessity. The presbytery had only to try him, and if, after trial—a trial in which the reclaiming voice of the people was not to be unheard, but most tenderly listened to in every objection it offered, or in any remonstrance it

urged—he was found not suited to the charge, they were free, in the emphatic language of Dr Muir, to “cast” him without mercy.

We apprehend that these circumstances, when duly considered, leave but little doubt, with the reflecting mind, as to the proper policy and duty of the Church when the judgment of the House of Lords was finally reported. And it is not to be forgotten, that the expectation of such views preponderating in the Assembly, over rasher councils, was largely and not unwarrantably entertained. This compels us at once to introduce the name of Dr Chalmers, who, for several weeks previous to the meeting of this eventful Assembly, encouraged hopes which he lived most effectually to blast. And, in saying so, we are far from charging him with intentional or premeditated deceit. The inconsistencies of a public life do not necessarily imply this; for it were a melancholy thought, did the changes which ever and anon come over the walk of the statesman and of the churchman—chequering sometimes, with a hue not less varied than the light and shade on the mountain brow, the history of his life—lead to nothing but the dreary conclusion, that there is nothing stable under the sun. There are few men so truly great as to have escaped the charge of inconsistency; and more especially may it be accounted for on other grounds than those of policy or contrivance, where it may without presumption be said, that impulse preponderates over discretion, and genius

sometimes takes the place of judgment. With men of this high-wrought temperament, the history of their public life often presents little else than a rope of sand, without continuity of parts or principle of union—though from day to day, in the secret chambers of imagery, they are spinning a gossamer thread of their own—invisible to all but themselves in its coherence and consistency. It is not that their heart does not beat high with the most enlarged and Christian philanthropy—it is not that they are insensible to motives and maxims the most elevated and ennobling—it is not that in the hour of a nation's or church's need, they would trifle away, in a game of caprice, the welfare of present and of coming generations. Exempt from all such obliquity, and willing to spend and be spent for the weal of the commonwealth, they may yet, by a peculiarity of temper, or an over facility of mind, have failed in purpose—and failed, too, at those seasons when the eyes of thousands were turned upon them in anxious expectation. By some unlooked-for evolution of their minds—by impressions adopted at the moment, and, with the rapidity of contagion, telling on every faculty and power—by fresh thoughts caught up in feeling, and at once transferred from the heart to the head, there to occupy the throne of judgment—by new turns of policy, starting like a torrent from their bed, and rushing on in a new channel as proudly as though they had scooped it out for themselves, while they are only obeying the guiding hand of others and following their pick-axe—their



fondest admirers have been perplexed, and their best friends rebuked—and the emphatic lesson has been enforced—“ it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man ; it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.” And as I can answer for myself, I can do it for many others, when I say, that never was disappointment more bitterly felt than in the appearance of Dr Chalmers in the Assembly '39. Up to this point, as he had made no secret of his sentiments, so did he declare himself prepared to act upon them. They were sentiments, not of resistance, but of submission—of acquiescence in a decision which the Church could bear without dereliction of duty or abandonment of principle. On this his mind was to all appearance most conclusively made up ; so much so, indeed, that the whole programme of his movements in the approaching meeting of the supreme court was known and canvassed, both by friend and foe. We have not forgotten how, to meet him and to oppose the policy which he suggested, the presbytery of Edinburgh was disturbed by a motion to break the old rule of rotation in the return of their clerical members to the Assembly. Dr Chalmers was not to have it all his own way, and every nerve was strained, especially by Dr Cunningham himself, that he should be returned that year to meet the influential pacificator in the tug of conflict. The same scene occurred in the presbytery of Glasgow, where a breach of the rotation system was also tried, on the understood ground that Dr Chalmers

might be defeated, and that the war party might prevail. The attempt was fruitless. The presbyteries remained firm—and, even with the help of their own votes, (which, in opposition to universal suffrage, may well be called particular)—Drs Cunningham of Edinburgh and Buchanan of Glasgow were left to take the back seats. But they were not behind in their policy. What faction is—and, we are constrained to add, what ecclesiastical party? It is the peculiarity of all such confederacies, that with the brand of the wandering Jew on their forehead, they have the cry on their lips of the venerable raven in the story—“Never say die.” Their tenacity of life is extreme; and when apparently dead, it is only by fiction—to gain a little more time—to gather their breath. Then up they spring at an unexpected hour. What open assault cannot accomplish, secret management may effect. Not to speak of well-trained spies, haunting the steps and gliding into the very homes of the adversary—not to dwell on the subtle device of female visitants, clad in fair robes, and under the shelter of their sex going out and in with immunity, doing the menial work of drudges at the bidding of their rude taskmasters, and carrying them home by night, not the honey of the bee, but something akin to the gall of asps under their tongue—not to enumerate the seductive approaches of emissaries of every rank and age, vending their wares and insinuating themselves into favour, till one stronghold after another has been whispered away, and gate

after gate unlocked, (for with all these feats of warlike intrigue the annals of Non-intrusion are familiar,) we have to record an achievement more wonderful still—*Dr Cunningham got round Dr Chalmers*. Up to Sabbath the 12th of May, and on Sabbath the 12th of May, the reverend doctor was firm as a rock. The Alps seemed not more insurmountable. But on Monday morning, and by ten o'clock, the step of a General was on them. The rocks underwent a strange and most unaccountable change, their hardness gave way—every formation, primary, secondary, and tertiary, was dissolved, doubtless by a copious effusion of vinegar from the breakfast table—the way was cleared—and by Thursday the 16th, the Non-intrusion forces, bag and baggage, passed over as on a beaten highway. The feat was next to miraculous. The victory was certain; and from his back seat, over which invisible laurels were hanging, the Hannibal of the day could enjoy all the luxury and the repose of his triumph.

To dip into the resolutions of Dr Chalmers, which were ultimately carried, or to consider his laboured and yet most energetic speech, is to feel disappointment at every step. There is nothing calm—nothing discreet—nothing measured—little that betokens the genius of the ecclesiastical statesman—while there is much that indicates the fire of the man. From first to last his argument is an assumption. With a mind which at no period dwelt on points of detail—on which, after

all, general principles so often turn for their settlement—with a native disregard he has never surmounted, of the necessary and wholesome connexion of forms with facts, and of facts with forms, interlacing each other and mutually imparting strength—with a neglect, almost supercilious, of statutes—treating them more as the playthings of imagination, than as the useful and homely tools by which theories should be constructed, and the policy of a Church or a State formed—his oration on this great day of the Assembly was a *discursus*. To say that it was powerfully spoken, and most eloquently too, were a useless tribute; and more especially, perhaps, when we are censuring it. But, having said this, we can add nothing more. Based as it was on the report of the Procurator, which conveyed nothing more to the Assembly than the judgment of the final court of appeal—the House of Lords—it yet travelled far beyond it. If it referred to it at all, it was in a very subsidiary way. Sufficient fuel was not there to be gathered for the flame. Other topics were dragged in; and, with a license to which, in discussing a judicial sentence, there are but few parallels—in a series of resolutions which go on hypothesis, and not on facts of which the Assembly was judicially apprised—in inferences drawn from certain statements in the speeches of Lords Cottenham, Brougham, and Campbell, *involving questions not yet raised, and not before the Peers in substantive shape*—in a storm of declamation which, in a popular as-

sembly, is so very apt to bewilder the mind and to carry all before it—the flag of resistance was unfurled, and the war party prevailed. There was to be no concession—no amity—no adjustment.\* The resolutions of Dr Cook and of Dr Muir were alike in vain; and, with a majority of forty-seven against the former, and of thirty-six against the latter, in a house, we should say, of upwards of three hundred and fifty—the position of the dominant party was taken, and its policy formed.†

To this result, the “Independence Resolution” of the Assembly '38 in no slight degree contributed. We would be doing injustice to the quick discernment of those who at that time led the councils of the Church,

\* See Appendix, C.

† No one knew better than Lord Dalhousie the changes in Dr Chalmers; and well might he say to the majority of the Assembly, the day after the deliverance was passed—“You have no doubt gained, by the assistance of my reverend and learned friend, a great victory. You owe him all gratulation for it. You should crown him with your praises—decree to him all the honours of an ancient triumph—carry him in procession to your capitol; but, among your arrangements, forget not to observe that peculiar form which ordained that, at the moment when the victorious general stood elate in his chariot, there should be placed near him one who, ever and anon, should whisper in his ear of the alloy that mingles with earthly glory. And so, when you have placed the reverend doctor in his triumphal car, let this monitor tell how the victory he has gained, though a brilliant, has not been, morally, a bloodless one—that, by the speeches of yesterday, which led to yesterday's vote, many of the firmest and fastest friends of the Church of Scotland—sir, I could name to you a score at this moment—have had their allegiance to her shaken, and felt that, in spite of themselves, their best services are dissevered from her side.”

did we say that the judgment of the House of Lords had come upon them unawares. As in March '38 they had, by the adverse decision of the Court of Session, a pretty strong premonition given of the probabilities of an appeal to the highest tribunal, they prepared themselves for the result. Every precaution was taken which skill could suggest, which, if it could not avert, might obviate the effects of the impending blow; and hence that wire-drawn resolution—which, with an adverse decision to the plea might ameliorate their condition, and with a friendly one could do no harm. And as it was well imagined, it was appropriately introduced by one who could enunciate it with becoming dignity, expound truths no one disputed, and receive his reward in being permitted to speak of the noble lords in the House of Peers. Dr Robert Buchanan was selected for the duty; and he performed it well. He set forth—"That the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, while they unqualifiedly acknowledge the exclusive jurisdiction of the civil courts in regard to the civil rights and emoluments secured by law to the Church and ministers thereof, and will ever give and inculcate implicit obedience to their decisions thereanent, do resolve, as is declared in the Confession of Faith of this National Established Church, 'the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hands of church officers distinct from the civil magistrate;' and that in all

matters touching the doctrine, government, and discipline of this Church, her judicatories possess an exclusive jurisdiction, founded on the Word of God, which power ecclesiastical, (in the words of the Second Book of Discipline,) flows immediately from God and the Mediator Jesus Christ, and is spiritual, not having a temporal head on earth, but only Christ, the only spiritual King and Governor of his Kirk; and they do further resolve, that this spiritual jurisdiction, and the supremacy and sole headship of the Lord Jesus Christ, on which it depends, they will assert, and at all hazards defend, by the help and blessing of that great God, who, in the days of old, enabled their fathers, amid manifold persecutions, to maintain a testimony, even to the death, for Christ's kingdom and crown; and finally, that they will firmly enforce submission to the same upon the office-bearers and members of this Church, by the execution of her laws, in the exercise of the ecclesiastical authority wherewith they are invested." And who disputes the tenor of this resolution? In '38 Dr Cook did not impugn it in its natural and obvious meaning. Or what right-minded Presbyterian has denied it since? That the Lord Jesus, as King and Head of his Church, has therein appointed a government in the hands of church officers apart from the civil magistrate—is an article of faith which, at all hazards, not only the Church of Scotland, but every Christian church, is bound to

maintain—and which, I must be allowed to add, our own Zion has never relinquished—no, not even when she stood as lately amidst the *debris* of actions and of interdicts, which nothing but obstinacy had generated, and a headstrong policy had provoked. But whatever the premises were, not so the conclusion. Why load the records of the Assembly with a mere excerpt from the Confession? The succeeding year shewed this. The application was made—the inferences were drawn—Auchterarder came into play—and the “Independence Resolution” was rendered available, despite reason and logic, in contravention of express statutes, and in the face of an admitted appeal to repel the decision of the House of Lords.

It were wrong, perhaps, in referring to this, to omit the argument it ultimately elicited. As the proceeding of '38 gave force to the deliverance of '39, they jointly contributed to raise an argument of a description rather peculiar. The theory of co-ordinate courts was evolved, and it was illustrated by the figures of parallel lines running on, and yet never meeting. For conveniency the illustration was perfect; for refuge, when hard pressed, invaluable. A church, established by law, co-ordinate and independent of the civil authorities in the kingdom, and yet, by successive acts of these authorities, denuded of all her benefices! Action is accumulated upon action, and interdict after interdict is disobeyed; one stipend after another is arrested



to fructify in the pockets of patrons, or to replenish the treasury of the Widows' Fund. And yet the Church of Scotland is co-ordinate still—the parallel lines are never meeting!

Nor can they now be permitted to point, in justification of this first and fatal act of resistance, to other and still more stringent decisions of the civil courts. As was only to be expected, the battle thickened as the day advanced. The judgment of the House of Lords led inevitably to all that followed; only that, if the Church had not resisted the law, nothing else would have followed. It was not to be supposed, where civil injury was inflicted, there should be no redress. The Auchterarder damages; the order of the court on the presbytery to discharge its statutory duty in the trials of Mr Young, which, by the law of the land, it was *bound and* astricted to do; the interdicts served on the commissioners to Strathbogie, who were expressly appointed by minute to declare vacant the parishes of ministers deposed on no other ground than their obedience to the declared law of the land—and which has been perversely termed an interdicting of the preaching of the gospel; these, and various other findings we need not enumerate, are reducible to the same point, and fall to be explained on the same ground. The fault lay at the door of the Church. Here was the provocation given, and most pertinaciously kept up; and, whether we believe or not in the prophetic gift of the author and promulgator of the

Independence Resolution, when he asserted, in the presbytery of Glasgow, that he and his friends had foreseen, and had grounds to foresee—in the principles adopted in the Auchterarder case sustaining the jurisdiction of the civil courts—all the subsequent decisions as direct and necessary consequences from it—there is no doubt whatever of the fact. It was too much to expect that the restraints of duty—the sanctions of statutory obligations—and the judgment of a tribunal at whose bar the Church had stood in the attitude of an appellant, should, by an abeyance of law, be suffered to be openly and systematically repelled.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE REIGN OF DIPLOMACY.

THE course of the dominant party once taken—the Rubicon passed—their game was high. It was plain, from the first, that to enter into a conflict with the courts of law, was neither more nor less than a war of extermination; and that, in refutation of the theory of co-ordinate courts, it could only end in one way, in the destruction of those who provoked it. Hence, it was not unnatural that every expedient should be tried, every remedy sought—that, pending the actions in the Court of Session, which were narrowly watched while they were publicly slighted, there should run on, consentaneously, a vein of diplomacy, that the legislature might be pacified and its good-will secured.

There are seasons, certainly, which sharpen men's wits, and this was one of them. Not that these are always of a salutary tendency. The nice polishing of the intellect in the collision of mind with mind, is not always beneficial to the churchman—especially in the history of ecclesiastical diplomacy. If this must be set a-going by interviews, and memorials, and

appeals—should all the apparatus, ready made to the hand of the politician, and by dint of which he accomplishes his work—systems of canvassing and caballing, intermeddling with elections and hawking of petitions, waylaying the member for the county, or browbeating the minister for the crown—should these be used without ceremony by those who minister at the altar; nay, receive consecration when the aggrandisement of a church is involved—all we can say is, it will not be the fault of the leaders of the Consistory that they are not wielded with the utmost adroitness. More than one page in history proves this. If London has only seen one Sharp from Scotland, it has sent back others sharper for their visit; improved in their gifts, whatever may be said of their graces. Give me a season in the history of any religious community, when political appliances come into free use: when Dissenters, taking advantage of some propitious era for the injury or the destruction of the establishment, throw themselves *en masse* into agitation; transmitting, with the shuttle's quickness, a thousand threads from platforms, and congregations, and synods, that the fabric of the constitution may be repaired, and a new web of their own thrown off;—or when Churchmen, under a self-created pressure, and from the effects of which they would fondly escape, leave no stone unturned, whether in Parliament or out of it, that their reign may be perpetuated, and their policy confirmed;—and I do not expect, at such a crisis, any

extensive enlargement of the graces of the Christian character, or of the charities of the Christian life. Or show me a time when negotiation upon negotiation is pending—show me on an open field, and under the broad sky, two classes of men in conference, the one the leaders of a church, and the other of a commonwealth, met to settle a point of difference, to adjust the balance disturbed by the dust of an ecclesiastical whirlwind—or, if you will, the equipoise broken by an alleged civil aggression—and I venture to say, that the minister for the Church's home department will not be behind the most diplomatic foreign minister for the Crown. The former possesses peculiar advantages. As ecclesiastical phrases come more fluently to his lips, the exclusiveness of his profession stamps them sometimes with a fictitious importance. And they are necessarily more vague. It is not a point of geography between two contending nations—it is not a question of disputed territory. The marches of the constitution are not so easily cleared, or its landmarks fixed. In consistency with the same theory, various interpretations may be adopted, and the most feasible propositions advanced. Hence the indefatigable nature of the struggle, and the various colours it assumes. There is much left to imagination, and not a little to exaggeration. Policy may do something, and time much. Nothing is overlooked—nothing which danger can suggest or ingenuity create; and if politicians may

not shift their ground with impunity, ecclesiastics may.\*

These thoughts are irrepressibly forced upon us when we recall the various shapes which, pending the actions in the civil courts, the assumed representatives of the Church gave to their negotiations in London. Not that these were at first very well defined, even to themselves. Under the first shock of the Auchterarder case, and the Assembly '39, we believe that we are not wrong in saying, that the plan of the movement party was not immediately fixed. The judgment of the House of Lords, though resisted, had not been unfelt; and it was not to be thought, that all at once, on the hostile ground which was now occupied at the imperious bidding of the leaders, the Non-intrusion forces, so widely scattered over the face of Scotland, should concentrate themselves in one point, or at once determine their line of action. Various calculations had to be made at the commencement of a campaign, which, promising as it did to be a protracted one, was also fraught with the most important results. The sympathies of the people had to be enlisted on their side, and every precaution taken which the emergency dictated, to prevent or to repair any defection from their ranks. But, if there was necessary caution, there was no un-

\* In proof of this, and as the best of all evidence, we give in the Appendix, D, a letter from Mr Hog of Newliston, addressed to the editors of the newspapers.

necessary delay. The policy of resistance once taken, the interests at stake were not to be trifled with ; and what the Parliament House in Edinburgh could not do for them, the Parliament of Great Britain might, by a well sustained application, be induced to confer.

And, verily, that same Parliament was well tried. It were a tedious task to pursue the Non-intrusion committee through all their diplomatic windings. These brought them into contact with two Ministries, and with every section and semi-section in the political world. Lord Melbourne and Lord John Russell, as well as Sir Robert Peel and Lord Aberdeen, whether off or on the Treasury benches, were alternately the subject of their flatteries and complaints—Whig and Conservative, ultra-Radical and ultra-Tory, were most impartially assailed. And perhaps, after all, the perfection of it was, that they had those in their ranks who, dissimilar in politics, were yet at one in the ecclesiastical movement. This, apparently, was a great advantage. To have, at the same moment, united in the same objects and prosecuting the same plans, Mr Buchan of Kelloc and Mr Crawford of Crawfordland, with Mr Alexander Dunlop and Mr Graham Speirs and Mr Earle Monteith—to see, as true yoke-fellows in the great cause of Non-intrusion, Dr Chalmers and Dr Gordon, not, it may be, in the same boat, but in the same steam-carriage with Dr Candlish and Dr Welsh; was a spectacle to which we were often pointed, as worthy of all admiration. The point of admiration.

however, we could never see. If some men call this the fusion of party politics in the intense action of religious feeling—for the solution of the anomaly I am reduced to no such dilemma. I decline touching its horns; and if I am not allowed to get quit of it with the old adage, that extremes often meet, I must content myself with giving its counterpart. I ask, then, what class of politicians saw it for the good of the state to support them, even in the infancy of their demands? In which of their errands, multifarious as they were, could they commend themselves to the intelligence of England, as seeking what, in the circumstances, was just, or what, under any political creed, was advisable? To talk of the Veto law being *confirmed* by an act of legislature, while it was retained pertinaciously on the statute-book of the Church, was out of the question—and yet it was tried. To talk of the Duke of Argyle's Bill, which, in point of fact, was neither more nor less than the Veto in disguise—and which, at last, abandoned by the chief of the Campbells in something like disgust at the parties with whom he had to deal, was taken up by Mr Campbell of Monzie—was not less out of the question; and yet it was tried. To talk of the *liberum arbitrium*, which, being interpreted, meant, that the Church should do as it pleased; that they should be vested with the statutory license of giving effect, *or not*, to the dissent of the people, as they saw fit; putting it in the power of the dominant party—not very scrupulous in their dealings, (as North Leith and



Dalkeith, and other vacancies shewed)—by the same instrumentality to extinguish one presentee and to carry through another; that this should be asked was not wonderful, but that it should be conceded, was a different thing. And what of that “Claim of Right,” which, based as it was on ‘grievances which they themselves had originated, and of which a little timely and well-conditioned concession would at once have rid them, threw all their former manifestoes into the shade? It is a most extraordinary document.\* For intrepidity of tone, for hardihood of assertion, for the breadth and arrogance of its demands, it must ever hold a distinct place on the rolls of Parliament, and in the records of the crown. It protests, that “all and whatsoever acts of the Parliaments of Great Britain passed *without the consent of this Church and nation*, in alteration of, or in derogation to the aforesaid government, discipline, rights, and privileges of the Church, are and shall be in themselves *void and null, and of no legal force or effect*”—so much for intrepidity of tone. It asserts, that “the Court of Session, a tribunal instituted by special act of Parliament for the specific and limited purpose of doing and administration of justice in all civil actions, not confining themselves to the determination of civil actions, have, in numerous and repeated instances, stepped beyond the province allotted to them

\* For a full exposition of it we refer to the admirable speech of David Milne, Esq., in the Commission of the Assembly, 31st January, 1843.

by the constitution—have invaded the jurisdiction of the courts of the Church—have subverted its government—have illegally attempted to coerce church courts in the exercise of their purely spiritual functions—have usurped the power of the keys”—this I call hardihood of assertion on the part of those who were themselves the aggressors, and who left no other alternative to the Court of Session than this :—that, having conscientiously decerned on an action which was not of their seeking, they were not at liberty to do any thing else than to follow it out to all its legitimate consequences. And, to pass over other points in the manifesto—their significant hint to the Queen about the breach of her oaths ; their bold appeal to all Christendom, that they were subjected to hardships for their adherence to the doctrine of the sole headship of the Lord Jesus Christ over his church ; their special pleading in the enumeration of grievances of which they complain—what, we would ask, is the amount of their claim ? It is neither more nor less than this : that there should be reserved to them, under the highest sanction of law, the sole right of determining for themselves what is ecclesiastical, without let or hindrance of any description. Was this a claim for any Protestant church to advance, or for any Protestant government to concede ? It is not to be wondered at that the right honourable baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department, shrunk at first from laying it before her Majesty ; and that, even in this age of political adventure, no

statesman of any note proposed to place it permanently on the statute-book of the land. It was most harmoniously cushioned. So, indeed, were all their manifestoes—falling by their own weight, and that, too, without leaving the negotiators of the Church the consolation of thinking that they had failed by any defect in their arrangements, or any very material apostasy in their ranks. As the Houses of Parliament were plied with their petitions, so were the private dwellings of the members open to their appeals. Protocol after protocol went forth from the committee, with its accompanying embassy; and faces but too little known at home in the streets and lanes of Edinburgh and Glasgow, were as familiar in London, at that period usually styled headquarters, as were the persons and faces of the officials of Downing Street.

If we turn to Lord Melbourne, we ask what support did the Non-intrusion party receive from him as Prime Minister? Had he been able to accommodate them in an easy and off-hand way, he would doubtless have done it. He was not of an intractable disposition; he was at the head of an administration, of which Lord John Russell, the professed advocate of civil and religious liberty, was a prominent member; and, surely, had an outrage been perpetuated by half so flagrant as the "Claim of Right" indicated, sympathy might have been looked for, and a remedy found. But no; Lord Melbourne, who could lounge very good-naturedly, hat in hand, listening to other deputations,

was a little more curt with them. He was not at his usual trouble to pass over the matter lightly, in half-assumed ignorance, but was at special pains to let them know he could and would do nothing for them. Lord John Russell steadily resisted them. Lord Dunfermline, Lord Campbell, Lord Cottenham, the Duke of Sutherland, the Duke of Richmond—and, to come to Scotland—Sir James Gibson-Craig and his friends, were all in the most intense state of opposition. This, of course, was greatly to the annoyance of Mr Earle Monteith, Mr Graham Spiers, Mr Alexander Dunlop, and others, who were seeking redress, and to whom it would have been much enhanced had it come through the intervention of their own political party. But no; Mr Fox Maule and Lord Breadalbane could not manage it. The Dissenters in Scotland—Dr Wardlaw, Dr Struthers, Dr Brown, Dr King, with all their adherents, lifted up their voice against it; (as well they might, for, had the lofty pretensions of the Church been conceded, no parties would have suffered more than they by the excess of power newly acquired;) and the ministry of Lord Melbourne stood firm. So, in truth, did the ministry of Sir Robert Peel; though, from peculiar circumstances, in a season of some little excitement, when the question of Church extension was largely agitated, they were brought more directly into friendly connexion with the Church. And of all the members of that Cabinet, there was no one who could, with better grace or more friendly intentions,

entertain the question, than Lord Aberdeen. Most frankly he did so ; and it is not to the disparagement of one of the most distinguished of statesmen, and of the most accomplished men, of whom this age can boast—it will always be in praise of the patriotism of a nobleman of whom Scotland has so much reason to be proud, that with the utmost simplicity of intention, and with the most untiring zeal, he sought to allay the agitation, and to restore the broken harmony of our beloved Zion. Nor is this acknowledgement impaired by the circumstance, that for his untiring efforts to please the dominant party, and to bring about a satisfactory adjustment, he got, in return, their choicest opprobrium. That was his recompense, as it was the reward of all, who, out of office or in it—without or within the Parliament—in presbytery, or synod, or General Assembly—did not place themselves at their disposal, and obsequiously obey their will.

In thus cursorily noticing, from '39 to '43, the movements of the Non-intrusion *corps diplomatique*, we would not have it supposed that they were never without their misgivings as to the prudence and policy of their procedure, or the special demands which they made. While the harmony was undoubtedly wonderful, it was not entirely unbroken. Sometimes, in the provinces, the subsidiary men had lost the old keynote, or had not got the new one in time, and there was a little discord—or Mr Bruce of Kennet refused to blow with sufficient violence, and Mr Hog of New-

liston sent forth a querulous note—or Mr Maitland Makgill was too high set, and Lord Breadalbane too low—or the wooden edifices that were talked of, were not the platform on which some of the company were very ambitious of exhibiting—or Dr Chalmers himself, who was the nominal leader, was now and then giving forth an uncertain sound. Indeed, at no period of their mutual engagement, was there implicit confidence placed in him; and, at one period in particular, he cost his friends no little trouble. At the time when Lord Aberdeen's bill was about to be introduced into Parliament, Dr Buchanan of Glasgow was in London. He was the residuary member of a deputation which had been there for some time previously, and who, unable to remain any longer, bequeathed to him, in parting, their best wishes and their advice. He was all but plenipotentiary; and he made use of his privilege. In conference with Lord Aberdeen, we have reason to believe that he expressed no dissatisfaction with the proposed measure; as we have also reason to believe, that, being present in the House of Peers on the night when his lordship introduced his bill in a lengthened speech, so much was the reverend gentleman pleased with it, that he declared to a friend near him at the bar, that he was off for Scotland, and hoped to obtain Dr Chalmers's concurrence. Accordingly, down he came; and, as I understand it, he came first to Edinburgh. Dr Chalmers was not there; he was across the Firth at his residence at Burntisland. But Drs Cun-

ningham and Candlish were ; and if Dr Buchanan was not allowed to cross the ferry, he was made to feel he had crossed his friends. They took him to task—they told him he was mistaken, and, like an obedient son of the Church, like a well-disciplined member of the band, he emptied his pockets, discharged himself of his London harp-strings, and betook himself (with a slight variation now and then, to give his music the air of independence) to his old well-poised cadences and monotonous tones. But Dr Chalmers was not so easily managed. As he was a much more important, he was also a much more difficult person to keep right. No pains, therefore, were to be spared that he might be retained, having brought them much more popularity—as since he has brought them much more money—than any one else. Accordingly, as there was some reason to fear that he might chime in with the overture of Lord Aberdeen, he was privileged, for about ten days, with a special coast-guard, or rather body-guard. Every morning, by the first boat, some friend or other paid him a visit ; he remained with him all day, and returned by the last boat at night, to make his report. Regularly as the evening came round, a small party assembled at 13 Queen Street, to hear progress. Mr Bruce, late of St Andrew's Church, was especially in request on the occasion. It was an anxious time ; and, it is proper to say, that their assiduity had its reward. While tides were ebbing and flowing, Dr Chalmers, if not the leader, yet the

great composer of the company, was kept in tune, and Lord Aberdeen's bill was condemned as not in their way.\*

\* As confirmatory of the statement, that for two or three days at least after the introduction of Lord Aberdeen's bill, there were men bold enough, or rather foolish enough, to think for themselves, we may mention the fact, that the first article of the *Scottish Guardian*, after the bill appeared, was not against it. While it acknowledged it was not such a bill as they would have sought—they yet thought it was such a bill as the Church could receive and act under. So said, for two or three days, the clergy of Glasgow, almost to a man. But their masters in Edinburgh thought otherwise. Having shaken Dr Buchanan into submission, Dr Cunningham made his appearance in Glasgow, and there performed the same piece of duty to others of the brethren. The bill was pronounced intolerable, and the *Scottish Guardian* resumed its grumblings.



## CHAPTER VI.

## THE REIGN OF INTIMIDATION.

WE do not wish to magnify this chapter by calling it the Reign of Terror. There was no revolution impending, though Dr Candlish and his adherents were abroad ; and, for the sake of effect, to make their enemies tremble and their female friends look pale, they were rather in the habit of hinting at it. It was a most self-flattering anticipation. That an institute like the Church of Scotland, whose roots were not of yesterday's growth, and under the shelter of which so many myriads have been refreshed in their passage to another world—which casts its shadow over the graves of their fathers, and which, we trust, will long smile in forgiveness over theirs—whose fibres were interwoven with the best periods of our national history, and the noblest institutions of the land—that this should be in their keeping, and might be unmade in a day, was unquestionably a topic of much self-gratulation. The Voluntary controversy in which they so boisterously indulged, whatever else it accomplished, had entailed the delusion, that the Church of

Scotland was part and parcel of themselves, so long and loudly did they speak of it, and, having come to the conclusion that as it had lived by them on the field, it would die with them in the senate-house, there was not an estate in the realm, the downfall of which they did not consequentially anticipate. The throne of the monarch, the hereditary rights of the peerage, the privileges and prerogatives of the aristocracy, were all scheduled off for destruction in the scheme of their direful forebodings. In such circumstances, so grave in import, and in their issue so portentous, every thing was to be done to avert the impending blow—their patriotism, not less than their religion, required it at their hands; and even though a little wholesome coercion had been brought into play, a little physical force been applied to control their opponents, we believe they would not have considered it very much mis-spent, as, in preserving themselves, they were only maintaining the Altar and the Throne.

But in the necessary and unavoidable absence of all those articulate monitors which tell upon the joints of the body, we must do them the justice to say, they were not slow in the inventions which tell upon the mind. It is a vulgar idea which limits all torture to the mere outward tabernacle. As the soul is the nobler part, there may be ways of getting at it, and which, for ingenuity of skill, throw to an immeasurable distance the coarser implements of the feudal times.

With a sufficiency of retainers beside them to do their behests—with an obsequious company of followers bred in the school of submission, and who, in token of faithful service have given their judgments in pledge to their ecclesiastical leaders, never perhaps to be redeemed again—it is not to be thought that the champions of a party such as that we are now reviewing, should brook contradiction to their arguments, or opposition to their will. In proportion to the pleasure they experience in numbering their friends by fifties, they feel aggrieved in being obliged to count their opponents by tens—and every successive proof of unlimited confidence from the one quarter makes them the less disposed to tolerate resistance from the other. Hence, by no unnatural process, they begin to vilify those they cannot conquer. Be it so that they are not to be gained over—that after an outpouring of vituperation, dignified it may be by the name of argument, they are not to be brow-beaten—that a small minority in a church court is lifting up its head unabashed—then out comes their spleen. Why trouble ourselves with men who are devoid of all intellectual power? Why waste our ammunition on mud-walls? Why blunt the edge of our fine weapons on the rock? Why level our battering-rams at a crazy edifice not worth the demolishing? Poor men! perhaps, after all, it is not so much their fault as their failing. It cannot be expected that they should be like us; and we must not blame them too much if Provi-

dence has not given them our gifts—though, in one or two cases, there is an appearance of those silly things called graces!

This, then, was the first contrivance in which they indulged, and how largely I need scarcely say. But it did not stop here. As men do not like to be told that they have not mind enough to comprehend an argument—Christian men should like less to be told they have not religion enough to comprehend the gospel. This was their next contrivance to scare their opponents; and I need not dilate on the unceremonious use which they made of it. At first some little reserve was shown. One of the narrowest questions of ecclesiastical policy that ever distracted a church—namely, the Veto Act—could not be expected all at once to assume very great magnitude and significance. It seemed all but acknowledged, up to '39, that men might differ about it as about other points of ecclesiastical government, without undervaluing the blessed gospel of Jesus, or trampling his crown in the dust. But after '39 all such tacit toleration was at an end. The existence of the party, not less than its success, required that the feelings of the public should be propitiated and secured—and what so likely to accomplish this, as in declaring the cause in which they were embarked the cause of religion—the cause of truth—the cause of God. Speedily, therefore, did these monopolisers of all the intellect of the Church let the world know they absorbed all its religion. Comprehending within their ranks the good as

well as the great, they were not only the props of the constitution but the defenders of the faith. The circles in which they moved were fragrant with piety—the names that adorned their roll were encircled with a halo of most saintly radiance—the standard around which they gathered was emblazoned with the names of patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles, and martyrs! And they did not leave it to others to sound their praises. Fearful, lest in that case they should wait too long, or that an unthinking world might be slow in making the discovery, they themselves announced it. From the house-tops they did it; and as it was not a solitary voice from their Sanhedrim which said, “Stand by—I am holier than thou”—it was not from a single presbytery or platform they hurled their fulminations at their opponents. The whole air was thick with them; and if, for several years, there was any rivalry in their ranks at all, it lay in the coinage of new terms of denunciation, and in the flippant use of fresh terms of abuse. Did any one venture to think that without any encroachment on the jurisdiction of the Church, the law of the land might be obeyed? he was denounced as an Erastian. Did a second maintain that the measure of Lord Aberdeen might be received by the Church as declaratory of its constitution? he incurred the anathemas so unsparingly hurled at his lordship, of denying the crown rights of the Redeemer, and of hurling him from his throne—as though that could be done, even by Dr Cunningham

or Dr Candlish, or any poor worm of the dust. Did a third reserve to himself the privilege of thinking that the ministers of Strathbogie were harshly used? he was pronounced "a traitor to his Lord and Master—a scion of Moderatism," otherwise described as "The very Babylon, the Assyrian, and the Antichrist of the Church of Scotland." Or did any maintain that the Church was wrong, and that the Veto Act had been better repealed? then did the Pope of the party seat himself on his throne, and declare, (we quote his bull,) "It is true, indeed, in one sense, we formed our decision originally under a mistaken apprehension of what the civil courts would determine to be the law of the land. *But we are under no mistake as to the law of Christ.* We thought that the law of the land allowed—we were sure that the law of Christ required—us to decide as we did. And whatsoever the law of the land may now be found, or may be made to say, the law of Christ is not changed. The question—should this man be pastor of Christ's flock in this parish? *has already been settled according to the mind of Christ.*" Most infallible man! so securely perched as you were on the very summit of Zion, you may be pardoned for playing so familiarly as you did with the lightnings and thunderings of Sinai.

But it was not merely a rescript now and then from their Pope, or a pamphlet from their press, or a platform speech, that sufficed. They required other and more frequent outlets for their indomitable zeal

and their unquenchable bigotry. And this brings us to their masterpiece. In '39 they had not a single newspaper, with the exception of the *Scottish Guardian*. This paper was started several years previously, chiefly in consequence of the Voluntary controversy; and, as it was in the pay of the party, it was at all times ready to do their work. But it was published in Glasgow, and that was not convenient. Edinburgh required an organ of its own, and one which in all parts of Scotland might be regarded as official; and the *Witness* was set a-going. We are not entitled to cavil at the arrangement—that was their business, not ours. But by this time we have had some knowledge of newspapers, by courtesy called religious; and we may be excused for doubting how far they have recommended the cause they professed to defend. As it has been frequently asserted, that under the “odium theologicum” clergymen have used liberties with each other that would have been barely tolerated in other society, we fear that the same immunity has been largely counted on by religious newspapers. At all events, we can answer for the *Witness*. Without denying the talent of its editorship, we may doubt its veracity—what cotemporary paper has not called it in question? Without presuming to analyse its files, now spread over a large space of territory, and a larger space of religious controversy, we may ask, what denomination of Christians, other than its own, has it not honoured with its abuse? Or, without pretending to comprehend its articles, carefully constructed

to magnify their author, and the vein of which, when we have stumbled on them, we cannot always penetrate for want of a geological hammer: we ask, what character of worth in the ranks of its opponents has it not either openly attacked or covertly assailed? We apprehend that there is no small danger with some minds, over-anxious in determining the first principles of creation, of losing their way in the process. Boring into the earth, they may lose sight of the sky—the clear heavens. Troubled about the crust of the globe, they may gather around them enough of its dust to obscure their vision; and, anxious to refer every thing to Chaos, they may bring their code of morals to the same dubious point. Only give them their way in the creation, or re-construction of the religious world, and their fiat goes forth. Under their plastic hand all contrarieties are blended—light is put for darkness, and darkness for light—primary things become secondary, and secondary things become primary; and while the waters and the dry land, the heavens and the earth, with all their tribes, are in a state of commotion, they repose complacently on their own infallible attributes and most original dogmas. And why stop here? If the *Witness*, with his coadjutors, has all but arrogated the omnipotence of creation, of re-casting the religion of Scotland, why not exercise, whenever he pleases, the omniscience of judging it? If his winged messengers find their way into every parish, why may they not vilify every parish minister? If his constituents be



the only men of the right stamp, why should they not deal as they list with the Samaritans? If the cause of Non-intrusion be the cause of truth against error, of God against Belial, of Christ against Cæsar, why deprive him of the privilege of action? The necessity is laid on him; and if a wholesale defence of their cause, when defence seemed impossible—if a catching up of every breeze, from whatever quarter, when the sail was flapping on the mast—if a smile this day to Dissenters, and next day a frown—above all, if a steady and well-sustained fire, which invited ammunition at all hands, against the clergy of the Church, wounding them in their feelings, and impeding them in their usefulness, and aiming at them in the ecclesiastical courts—if these be recommendations, the *Witness* will not go without its reward. From the first moment to the last, it has been the prime minister of intimidation. An organ for the mutterings of others, it has been the forger of its own thunders. Misrepresentation and abuse it has never spared, and it will doubtless continue to use them while there are weak men to be frightened, and timid men to be overawed.

In a hasty sketch like this, we do not pretend to follow the party through all their acts of intolerance, or deeds of coercion, from '39 to '43. It is enough to say, that their intolerance was no partial, no evanescent feature in the character of the system, but its most express and permanent image. We might refer to the reported debates of innumerable meetings

of the church courts, and especially of the presbytery of Edinburgh, where taunts and invectives were thrown about with unscrupulous freedom. We might refer to the incessant public meetings in all the large towns of the country, which, primarily intended to be the rallying ground of their friends, furnished the opportunity never to be overlooked, of misrepresenting or calumniating their opponents. We might refer to the societies they originated for the propagation of their opinions, and the plans they adopted, under the shelter of prayer-meetings, and addresses, and fast-days, of poisoning the public mind with the most uncharitable censures. We might refer to their mean attempts to obstruct the progress and to mar the views of every preacher who did not hand over his judgment and his conscience to their keeping. Or we might remind our readers of the assaults that were made on the divinity hall. Hitherto it had escaped the storm. The aspirants to the Church had been allowed to prosecute their avocations undisturbed, and while maturing themselves in their theological studies, had been permitted to form their own opinions on the ecclesiastical questions of the day. But now the reign of peace, as of toleration, was at an end: the divinity hall was invaded in all the universities. The adherence of the students was all but imperiously demanded, and woe be to those who refused. They were significantly told, that the names of all recusants would be retained on the black list; that they would not be forgotten when they applied

for license, and that if presented to a church due care should be taken to apprise the parishioners of the sort of men they had got. Alas! for the "classic shade, and the calm retreat." The vision was gone,—

"Est in secessu longo locus—insula portum  
Efficit objectu laterum, quibus omnis ab alto  
Frangitur inque sinus scindit sese unda reductos.  
————— hic fessas non vincula naves  
Ulla tenent, unco non alligat anchora morsu."

The case of Strathbogie, under this head, requires special notice. Shortly before the judgment in the Auchterarder case was pronounced, the presbytery of Strathbogie had, in obedience to the Veto law, made up a roll of communicants in the parish of Marnoch. The moderation of the call took place, and a majority of the male heads of families having dissented, the presentee was rejected by the presbytery. After the judgment of the House of Lords in the Auchterarder case, he raised an action in the Court of Session, to have it found, that the presbytery was still bound to take him on trial; and, in 1839, decret was pronounced to that effect. In these circumstances, as may be seen by their own statement, the presbytery thought themselves bound to make their choice either to abide by the Veto law, now declared illegal, or to give effect to their statutory obligations as declared by the civil court; and, accordingly, they resolved to take the presentee on trials. Now, we do not say that the presbytery were altogether right in this. We conceive that there was

unnecessary haste in the resolution to which they came ; and that, by a little forbearance, and without any undue provocation of the civil courts, their collision with their ecclesiastical superiors, if not ultimately avoided, might at all events have been greatly softened. But whether their resolution was called for in the precise circumstances, and at the precise time or not, it was avowedly taken on the ground of conscience and duty—in virtue of their solemn engagements as ministers of an established church, and in obedience to the statutes of the land. And how did the Commission of the Assembly act ? Did they make any allowance for the peculiar circumstances in which the presbytery was placed ? Did they seek to show them, by any process of reasoning, that they had unduly magnified their civil obligations ? Did they, in discharge of a Christian duty, from which there is no relief, in the first instance deal with the offending brotherhood ? No. They suspended them at once ; and, *as a sequel to this, they proposed a conference—the very idea of this communing not having entered their minds, but being borrowed from the motion of their opponents.* The mistake was, that they put it in the wrong place ; and as nothing could be expected from such an incongruous proceeding, reconciliation was out of the question, and the raid of Strathbogie commenced. It is an event never to be forgotten. With what alacrity of movement did the standing committee of agitation despatch their emissaries to the province — with what untiring zeal did they provide

supplies, that on every Sabbath day the tocsin of war might be sounded—with what assiduous attention did they penetrate every house and assail every parishioner, making up for the neglected duties at home by their faithful domiciliary visits in the distance! Every feeling of tenderness, every suggestion of charity, every idea of forbearance, was cast to the winds. The reign of intimidation elsewhere, deepened here into the reign of terror; and, as at all hazards, the suspended ministers were to be hunted down, the keenest and choicest agents of Non-intrusion, recalled from other quarters, were let slip here, to tear their character and mangle their good name. Nor have we forgotten how higher motives and considerations came to play a conspicuous part on this troubled theatre. It was not enough that they were finally deposed, and pronounced fugitives from discipline and outlaws from the Church. The discovery was made, they had never been ministers of the gospel at all. Severed from the Church of Scotland, they were denounced as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and their parishes treated as a heathen land. How self-complacently did one preacher after another publicly congratulate himself, that, in his mission there, a mighty door and effectual had been opened to the preaching of the gospel! How compassionately did they speak of the poor benighted people in whose behalf the interposition of Heaven had been manifested! How eloquently did they discourse, at more than one public meeting, of the wonders they

had accomplished—of their faithful preaching, and of their listening crowds! For a season the India Scheme was thrown into the shade—Dr Duff was forgotten—the raid of Strathbogie assumed the air of a great missionary enterprize; and, followed by the prayers, as they were laden with the monies, of not a few of their adherents who gave credit to their statements, the heralds of this cause waxed stronger and stronger in the proud anticipation, that, through their ministry, the wilderness and the solitary place might be made glad, and that the desert would rejoice and blossom as the rose. It is only to be lamented, for the sake of their consistency, that they should have ever thought of retracing their steps. It is too well known to be denied, that, in a negociation with the Lord Justice-Clerk, they were quite prepared, on certain terms of submission, to reponer the brethren at Strathbogie. The amount of submission required, we cannot specify; it is not material to our point. This much, however, we know, that *it was no condition of their reponement that they should now be required to preach the gospel.* No such stipulation was made. The old ministers were to occupy their old pulpits, and reign paramount in their old parishes as aforetime. The Non-intrusion forces were all to be withdrawn; and once more was this debateable land to be handed over to the uncovenanted mercies of the heathen. What a commentary this on their speeches, and professions, and prayers!

It is in the review of such scenes as these, that we

are ready, with David, to say, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, (for his mercies are great,) and let me not fall into the hand of men." There is much that is sickening in the contemplation of men, frail and fallible as ourselves, clothing themselves with infallibility as a garment. There is much more painful still, in the spectacle of the office-bearers of the same church, striving, in the neglect of their own duties, to disturb and annoy their neighbours in theirs. And yet how frequently was this done! In how many districts of the country were the parishes of the quiet and peaceable invaded, with no other apology than this—that if they would not hold meetings, and expound (not the gospel of Jesus,) but the current dogmas of the day, there were others ready who would do it for them. And, not to enlarge, with what serpent-like policy were some of the public institutions of the country entwined in their embrace, from the folds of which they are only now escaping. From first to last we look in vain for the repose of high and unbending principle. There is nothing like serenity in the movement—nothing that savours of Christian confidence in the men. There is more of the bustle of the camp, than the order of the sanctuary—more of tyranny than temper—more of a warlike crusade than of an evangelical enterprise. Such excesses, such exaggerations of mind, such partisan measures and despotic plans, are but bad apostles in any cause; and

in the inevitable retrospect of posterity, they will not commend that one which proudly appropriated to itself, when it was little more than writhing in its swaddling-bands, the entire intelligence and religion of the land.



## CHAPTER VII.

## THE CONFEDERACY.

IT is not to be denied that we are all indebted very much to each other for the warmth of our emotions, and, we may add, of our prejudices. This social instinct is not abandoned when we leave our home and enter the church, or when we pass from the church to the crowded assemblage. And certainly it is not less intently at work, when, by scowl and malediction, we have secluded ourselves from others. Repulsion in one quarter generates more intense attraction in another; and it is always labouring to keep itself warm: it longs for a numerous companionship. If it cannot make converts, it would at all events keep them. Its comfort, nay, we would say the steadfastness of its belief, depends not a little on the hundreds and thousands it has secured; so that if it loves to hurl thunderbolts at its adversaries, it would not less intently maintain the numerical strength, and prevent the defection, of its friends.

Hence it is, that a time of conciliation is not inconsistent with a time of intimidation; and that the face

big with nothing but frowns, may at a moment's warning clothe itself with the sunniest smiles. It depends on the fact, whether the face be turned to friend or foe; or by a combination by no means unnatural or rare, it may be so arranged, that what is fitted to scatter terror in the one quarter, may prove most attractive in the other. Take, for example, a day of tempest and gloom in the natural world. There is thunder in the air, and as its distant mutterings draw nearer, and at last break overhead, all nature cowers and quails under the shock. Every creature is more or less affected. But not in the same way. If the countenance of the wayfaring man is darkened, and his step unconsciously quickened—if in the remote wilderness the pilgrim is arrested by the lightning's flash, touching his heart as with a live coal from the altar, and reminding him of the distant sanctuary of his God, and the sepulchre of his fathers—if in the city, and at the hamlet, men instinctively seek their home, and when the tempest thickens stand more erectly there, on that sacred ground, as though they would ward off danger from beloved ones, as though they were vital conductors to communicate with heaven;—what shall we say of the hillside? The same storm which has attracted men to their homes has driven the sheep to their folds. They have responded to a different impulse. The instinct of fear—unmitigated fear—has been strong within them; their very bleatings have been hushed, and though innumerable but to the eye of the shepherd

who knows them, and has his mark on them, they are huddled together in one promiscuous mass. That thunder-storm on the hills has done more for him than a thousand keepers. It has called back some wayward wanderer, or given feet to some timid follower, or kept within manageable bounds a section of the flock that was looking wistfully to the adjoining hills, around which, perhaps, and against his remonstrances, the great Master Shepherd would not allow him to erect even an invisible fence. And so it has been with many a mimic thunder-scene on the theatre of the world, and of the Church. Passing in impotency over the heads of some, it has aroused an echo, deep and alarming, in the hearts of others. The timid have been awe-struck; the ranks of the wavering or discontented, every day more and more irregular, have once more become compact; the scattered company has been gathered within their tents; and though the sky again clears, and nature puts on a smile of repose, these menacing tones are prolonged in the memory—they haunt them like a ghost, giving significant warning of the fulminations stored in the treasury of thunders, for the enemy and alien, and much more for the fugitive and the apostate.

And as the value of these outbursts of ecclesiastical indignation is to be judged of, not less by their reflex influence at home, than by their direct influence abroad, maintaining, as they do, the discipline of a party, and preserving unbroken the continuity of its

ranks, the same may be said of the exaggerations in which the Non-intrusionists indulged. If it was no pleasing thought to the unfortunate disciple of an opposite school to theirs, that he was dissociated from the choir of the prophets, and from the company of the apostles, the reflection was a pleasing one, that they stood on sacred ground, over which heaven shed its selectest influence. If the names of Knox and Melville, and other champions of a reformed church—names that might have added lustre to any country, and must ever prove the glory of ours, were invoked to augment the vials of their indignation; they were well fitted to sweeten the cup of self-congratulation which circulated so freely from lip to lip, that they were intoxicated with the draught. If the goodly company of martyrs “of whom this world was not worthy” were seen in vision bending over the field of conflict, and frowning on the adversary, was not the thought an inspiring one, that they had caught up the mantle, and were following in the footsteps, of ascended saints? A magnificent dream certainly it was, for those who could lay their sober senses aside to admit it, that they were the representatives of patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles—the successors of the mighty dead; and that a voice from the tombs of the martyrs who had sealed their testimony with their blood, had sent them forth on their high career. There was much in all this to satisfy the morbid craving of the human mind, much to command the assent of those

who are ready to abandon what is real and substantial for whatever is novel and peculiar ; and he who contemplates the age in which we live, cannot but expect that such pretensions will come to their fruition. In fact, it is scarcely possible to over-rate the influence which such appliances had on multitudes of the laity. At little, or rather at no pains, to ascertain the merits of their position, either in the light of scripture or of ecclesiastical law, they yet gave it all the weight of a high-sounding testimony. Argument was superfluous ; reason was superseded by inspiration ; and numbers without number, who had little time and less inclination to ponder the question of the day, were content to take it with slavish submission from the mouths of their accredited teachers.

It was not, however, to the assumed sanctity of their position, or the fancied infallibility of their claims, that the clerical branch of the confederacy was mainly indebted for its compactness and strength. Other agencies were requisite to give consolidation to a movement which, originated at first in the mere effervescence of party spirit, could be maintained only by the same means. The church courts afforded a natural channel through which this might be accomplished. These church courts, as it is well known, are frequent in their meetings. In the more prominent places of the country the presbyteries assemble monthly, and, as occasion demands, more frequently. Such meetings give ample scope to continuity of effort ; and what with

the half-yearly meetings of synods, and the annual recurrence of the Assembly with the commissions attached to it, it is sufficiently clear that there was no lack of opportunities by which the movement of the parties might be systematised, and their harmony preserved. Hence it was, that in the leading presbyteries, which gave tone and determination to the others, scarcely a month elapsed without the application of the party-test. A motion of some sort or other, bearing on the question at issue, was introduced and discussed. The sense of the court was taken on it, and as they sought to escape censure, or to merit approbation, all the supporters of the party had to register their suffrages. Absenteeism was not suffered—there was no pairing off allowed, and far less any skulking—the slightest divergence of opinion was as little tolerated as the greatest departure from the accredited standard—the most wakeful jealousy was maintained—tracking every footstep and marking every vote. Escape was next to impossible; and if, by any necessary cause, and by leave of absence from head-quarters, the worn-out partisan was permitted to enjoy a temporary respite, it was only to find, on his return to the camp, his accoutrements ready for him, furbished and bright, with some new adminicles appended, increasing the irritation of his wounds, and aggravating the pressure of his yoke.

To pursue them closely through all the mazes of the labyrinth, from which so few emerged who had once

entered it, as little accords with our inclination as with our ability to do it. The plans they took to keep together their clerical associates, are beyond our enumeration. We would simply remark, that as the clergy lost no opportunity of securing the concurrence and co-operation of the people under their charge—now by Non-intrusion sermons on the Sabbath-day, and anon by courses of lectures and platform speeches on the week-day—now by associations, male and female, entering every house, and unceremoniously depositing their insidious tracts and addresses in every family—anon by monthly meetings for prayer and exhortation, garnished with alternate humiliations and thanksgivings, beginning with confessions of the sins of their forefathers, and ending covertly with lauding themselves for the great things they had done, under the specious guise of gratitude to God; we say, that as these practices were openly sanctioned and countenanced by the office-bearers of the Church, they themselves, in turn, had to submit to a surveillance not less incessant. At no period, from '39 to '43, was the junta in Edinburgh asleep; and with their special confidants in every presbytery and province, they could readily, at the warning of a few days, give a new shape and form, according to the exigency, to the whole front of their ecclesiastical array. Their tactics were beyond all praise; and of these the monster-meeting at the West Kirk, on the occasion of the Commission of the Assembly in August '41, gave ample

demonstration. Not that any thing new transpired from this great convention of the ministers and elders of the party. There was no new principle laid down in the "Claim of Right," to which the minds of all present had not already been familiarised. But it was the public attestation of their principles—it was the counterpart of the "Solemn League and Covenant" in the olden time; and to resile from a pledge so openly given, would not be deemed either honourable or safe.

Every thing, however, appertaining to the confederacy, must yield to the Convocation, the last and the master-stroke of the party—the boldness of whose conception is not to be measured by its want of success. It had a reference merely to the ministers, to the exclusion not only of the people but of the eldership; and as it was chiefly intended to tell upon the country, and especially upon the government, it was not unnaturally confined to this order in the Church. In a pecuniary point of view, they were the only parties who had any thing to lose, and hence the selection of them to the exclusion of others. The season was also pressing. The force of argument had been exhausted; and it might be, that the rulers of the land might grant to numbers what they had not conceded to manifestoes—hence the Convocation. It was not impossible that, by presenting a bold front, and especially in an age when no style of agitation had gone without its reward, the threatened repeal of the union between Church and State in Scotland, by such a large



body of ecclesiastics as might be convened, would not be unheeded. A reluctant Parliament might yet be overawed; Sir Robert Peel, not inaccessible to such modes of solicitation, might give way, and by the month of May the cause might succeed. This, we believe, was the great charm under whose potent agency so many were convoked from all parts of the country—not only proximate, but remote. It was not merely that every synod and presbytery had its representatives there,—there was a call of the whole party, and under circumstances and arrangements which left no alternative to any man who had not moral courage to resist. Distance was no excuse—they announced it in time for the most distant islands of the west. Inability to procure supply for their pulpits was no excuse—the church-doors might be shut. Want of means was no excuse—there were funds ready at their disposal, on which they were invited to draw. The want of accommodation in Edinburgh was no excuse—there were lodgings provided, within whose friendly circle nothing was likely to circulate that could impair the effect or frustrate the objects of the Convocation.

It met in St George's Church, Edinburgh, on Thursday the 17th November 1842; and, after sermon by Dr Chalmers, to which the public had access, it passed over to an obscure street in the Old Town. Was there meaning in this? It was composed entirely of the clergy, who—though summoned from

all quarters—were not unnecessarily to provoke observation or remark. Nothing but the result was to be published, and as the Convocation was to hold for several days, there might have been danger in any very prominent place of resort. It was not unnatural that a quiet retreat should be sought, devoid of all associations that could perplex or agitate the mind—a virgin soil, in which were to be deposited, for the first time, the seeds of a great ecclesiastical movement. And as there was nothing in the neighbourhood where they met to awaken the memories of the past, there was less, perhaps, if possible, in the chapel where they assembled. Like those who filled its pews, it stood on the very verge of the establishment—the fragment of an old secession and the precursor of a new. All but devoured by litigation, civil and ecclesiastical, it had formed the entrance by which one clergyman had entered the establishment, and now it formed the back door by which hundreds were preparing to leave it.

On the occasion in question, every meeting was held with closed doors—hermetically sealed to all but the initiated. A ticket formed the badge; and from these collected tokens of sympathy and brotherhood the roll was made up. The sederunt of the day bore the name of each new entrant. If late in joining, he was not allowed to escape. Whatever resolutions had been previously passed were put to him *coram* the Convocation; and in such formidable presence dissent was scarcely

to be thought of. Nor was much freedom of speech to be expected, when, on a closer view, we analyse the mode in which the business of every meeting was conducted. According to our information, it was in many respects peculiar. And there was one feature of it, in especial, not to be overlooked—the frequent, we had almost said the incessant, use of prayer—of prayer, that most precious of all our Christian privileges. A devout application to the Fountain of light and love was at once the duty and the privilege of all who were there assembled; nor, if in a right and becoming frame of mind, could they prostrate themselves too frequently, or too zealously implore the aid of Him who alone can bring light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. But as it is a high and a holy privilege, it must be guarded from perversion. It may be occasionally employed with very mixed feelings. It may indicate, sometimes, even in the most free use of it, other emotions than of reverential homage and humble waiting on the Spirit for the enlightening and sanctifying and guiding influences of his grace. We have the highest of all authority for saying, that men are not to be heard for their much speaking; and all experience proves, and especially in times of prevailing excitement, that there may be such a thing as an attempt to take heaven by storm: clothing our thoughts, and reasonings, and speculations, in prayer, with the infallibility of the Divine mind and the sovereignty of its decrees. And it is this which makes

an atmosphere charged with such supplications, an element of peculiar danger. Though heaven is not thus to be taken by storm, the mind of man—the citadel of the heart—may. When argument assumes the air of a high and holy fellowship with the skies, it looks like impiety to resist it, and when a difference of opinion—a lurking doubt—honestly and prayerfully cherished, and expressed in the company of the faithful, is not met by reasoning, but by a call for supplication—a call repeated at every first appearance of diversity of opinion, as though heaven were outraged, and God alone, by a direct intervention, could quell the rebellious thought; where the wonder, if, under the continued pressure of such a process, silence should be obtained, and outward harmony secured? Far be it from me to enlarge on this feature of the Convocation, with any unbecoming or unnecessary prolixity; the subject is too sacred for it. I leave it to the consideration of every devout and serious mind, with this observation, that if, even in apostolical times, and at the meeting of the Great Council in Jerusalem, where diversity of opinion prevailed, it does not appear that the statements of the early preachers of the faith were interspersed with supplications, the Convocation in Edinburgh might have used them less frequently *at the times and in the manner in which they did*. Surely, after the opening prayer—after a devout recognition of the High and the Holy One—there is space to be given to the free and unfettered expression of conscientious convictions—in the

very entertainment of which the opening prayer may have had its return. These should not be stifled. But when an infallible standard is erected at the outset, around which all thought, as well as all supplication, must rally itself—a standard never lost sight of, and ever more raised as the exigency arises—it is easy to see what must be the issue. In the first and best ages of the Church, it was “when the disciples were all of one accord in one place,” that the Spirit descended in the munificent communication of his power and love—how changed the scene, when, in these last days, the discord may be computed by the number of supplications that have been offered, and of interpositions that have been made!

There is another point to which we are constrained to advert, in considering the resolutions which were ultimately passed; and without saying how far it operated in securing adherence to these, we believe it mingled largely with their proceedings. It was the calculation of their success in Scotland, should this, their final appeal, fail; the probability of which, however, we are convinced, was not seriously entertained by the great mass of its members, even long after the Convocation. At the same time, as there was no harm in being prepared for the worst, the subject was entered on, and, in the language of the *Presbyterian Review*. “never, perhaps, was the scheme of a separate church depicted in more glowing colours, or the likelihood of its success invested with so much plausibility, as by Dr

Chalmers on the evening of Tuesday. Dr Paterson well remarked, at the close of this splendid exhibition, that really the life-boat looked much better than the ship." It is but fair to add the next sentence of this organ of the party—" Yet we do not believe that this address contributed, even in a single instance, to nerve the courage of weak and withdrawing spirits."

The history of the Convocation, however, or even a sketch of it, is not for us. It has yet to be written. The unveiling of those many secret springs by which it was managed—the exposure of influences that were brought to bear on the timid or the reluctant—the invention of a system which, at this eleventh hour of its existence, had to peril its all on a demonstration of strength as the only expedient to avert its destruction—these, and other topics connected with it, must be reserved for one familiar with its mysteries. Meanwhile, we consider that we have not exceeded the bounds of charity in treating it as we have done, even as we honestly say that we have not exceeded our convictions. I state it openly and unhesitatingly—that in my apprehension it was nothing else than a great ecclesiastico-political movement to intimidate at once the Cabinet and the Parliament. And if it failed, as it signally did, why should we express surprise? What convention of ecclesiastics with shut doors, has at any period of the Church's history accomplished any thing great? What genial change in the progress of mind has ever emerged from the precincts of an

ecclesiastical despotism? What stream of health, starting from its bed like a torrent, and bearing on its bosom "the chief things of the ancient mountain, and the precious things of the lasting hills," owns the Consistory as its fountainhead? Not thus do I read the history of the Church, from the days of Elijah the Tishbite even until now. Here and there I see a solitary man alone in his greatness. I hear the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord." In Germany it is Luther—the Reformation was not hatched in secret. In England it is Wickliffe, whose remains were not allowed to rest in the grave, but, by the decree of the Council of Constance, were dragged forth, burned, and scattered on the waters of a neighbouring brook. "The brook," says Fuller, "did convey his ashes into Avon—Avon into Severn—Severn into the narrow seas—they into the ocean." In England still—(once the bulwark of Protestantism, now so sadly dismantled by the foul inroads of Popery)—it is Whitefield or Wesley, twin brothers, abroad upon a field that is bathed in a flood of returning radiance. And what of Scotland, the birth-place of Knox, where the principles of the Reformation received an illustration inferior to that in no other kingdom? These things were not done in a corner. They sprang, not from the cloister with its loopholes, or the dim and fretted hall, where every crevice was closed, and reason and conscience were placed in the dark; and if, since that glorious era of our emancipa-

tion from the dominion of Antichrist, one ripple after another has swept over the waters of the sanctuary, so often stagnant in their course, it has been still the same. The fathers of the Secession were but as two or three pilgrims when they crossed the brook. Gillespie, the founder of the Relief, went out alone. In all, plans and policy are disregarded—concert is not sought. Dispensing with all intermediate agency, each man goes for himself to a throne of grace. If there is much of the closet—there is none of the conclave. If there is something akin to the free play of the electric fluid—there is nothing in it of animal magnetism. O for the mesmerised meeting, paralysed but not quickened—soothed by the action of mere animal heat—affected in all its sensibilities by influences as mysterious in their character as they are discernible in their effect, and, after the friction of a few days, leaving its subjects in possession of nothing but a dreamy existence and torpid powers! With such spell-bound associates you may do any thing—every thing perhaps, but give a new and generous impulse to the flagging history of a kingdom or of a church.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE SECESSION.

THE Convocation was scarcely over, when on all hands it became apparent that the crisis was impending. By the spring of '43, all the theories, not less than all the expedients, of the Non-intrusion party were exhausted; and having failed by numbers to intimidate the Government, and by their appeals to influence the Parliament, to whom alone, and not to the civil courts, they acknowledged themselves in any degree responsible, they had nothing left to screen them from the fast approaching Assembly. In one way alone could the catastrophe be delayed. If even then the policy of their procedure had been reviewed, and the principles on which it was based calmly and dispassionately scrutinised, they were not cut off from all opportunity of retracing their steps. A door of retreat was still open to them, and by a confession of error—provided of course they had felt it—and a laying down of their arms in an honest and well-principled capitulation, they might have remained within the precincts of a fortress, every pinnacle of which they

would now level with the dust. In all the circumstances of the case, however, this was not to be expected. For years they had looked at nothing but through a magnifying medium, and now that the glass of expectation, so long at their eye, and fixed on the distant hills, if perchance they could descry any friendly banner glimmering there, was for ever dashed to the ground, it was not to be thought it had left the vision unimpaired, and ready to adjust itself at once to the pressing realities which lay so near. And as it was not to be expected, perhaps it was as little to be desired. If it be a dubious point, how far the bulwarks of the Church would have been strengthened by retaining them, there is no doubt whatever that the cause of religion would have suffered. Seeing that the highest obligations of Christianity, as well as its most invaluable blessings—that the very Crown Rights of the Redeemer had, by an ecclesiastical fiction, been pledged in the controversy—they could not be allowed to go unredeemed. Christendom, so largely invoked as a witness of the pledge, would have resented the indignity of such a declination. At all events, it would not have passed unnoticed by the infidel and the profane. They would not have failed to characterise it in their own way; and better it was that the Church of Scotland should bear the weight of the separation, than that the universal religion of Jesus—the common property of the world—should be led forth by her friends, bleeding and dejected, to meet the enemy in the gate.

The only question, we believe, which, for several weeks prior to the meeting of the Assembly, occupied the attention of those who were likely to head the Secession, and to give it shape and coherence, was the way in which it should be gone about and managed with greatest effect. We say the attention of those who were likely to lead, for we have reason to believe, that with the great mass of the party the unavoidable-ness of the Secession was only realised when the event actually occurred. Taught all along to believe that Sir Robert Peel must yield; and, moreover, that the national church could not exist without them, they cherished hope even to the last; and as it was not the policy of their guides to undeceive them, they were allowed, so late as May, to repair to Edinburgh, under the floating expectation that the evil might yet be averted, and their status preserved. Indeed, it was well known that the members of the standing committee were not at one as to the necessity of the case; and that, more than once, their discussions on it had been far from harmonious. The decision, however, was come to by those who all along had given tone and movement to the party. Their separation from the Church was conclusively settled; and having prepared their voluminous Protest, the question was, when and how it should be presented. Their first plan was, to meet the Assembly—to have it constituted—to secure the appointment of a Moderator of their own—and at their own leisure, and on a day of their

choosing, under the eye of her Majesty's Commissioner to dissolve the Assembly, and to leave the Church. And had this scheme succeeded, it might, in popular apprehension, have much more magnified their position, and strengthened their cause. It cannot be doubted it would have increased the perplexities of an opposing minority, dragged for days at their chariot wheels—compelled to become witnesses of proceedings as unconstitutional as they were unfair; and at last the reluctant spectators of some well-arranged and august ceremonial. And it was not at variance with the conduct of men, who, for several months previously, had prepared themselves for the worst by the most unblushing and unjustifiable efforts to dismember a church they were solemnly bound to uphold. But in this arrangement they were not destined to succeed. Their majorities failed them at last, and it was found that the Assembly was not to be altogether of their moulding. This was a heavy blow and a sore discouragement—and, if falling out at an unexpected hour, and on men but ill prepared to put up with it, it had yet to be borne. Their struggles could not alleviate the calamity; nor all the breaches in the rotation system of return, sternly followed in every presbytery they commanded, alter the fact. There it was before them; and had they been rash enough to doubt it, the election of the Moderator, on the very threshold of the meeting, would have dispelled the illusion. But as they did not provoke that demonstration of the nume-

rical force of their opponents, they addressed themselves to the task of making the most of their own. This was their wisdom ; and, accordingly, as the wheels of time are not to be arrested, and far less rolled back in their course, the 18th of May '43—the opening day of the Assembly—did not pass, till the act of the Secession was accomplished. After sermon in the High Church in usual form, Dr Welsh, the Moderator of the previous year, repaired to St Andrew's Church, where the Assembly convened. He engaged in prayer, and when the prayer was ended, he said—"According to the usual form of procedure, this is the time for making up the roll ; but, in consequence of certain proceedings affecting our rights and privileges, I must protest against our proceeding further. The reasons that have led me to this conclusion are fully set forth in the document I hold in my hand, and which, with permission of the house, I now proceed to read." He then read the Protest ; and having laid it on the table, bowed towards the throne and withdrew, accompanied by all the members who were prepared to abide by the Protest.

Such was the consummation of an act long threatened, and at length completed, in which, if we cannot say, with one of the historians of the party, that "the pride of Scottish genius and the flower of Scottish piety disappeared,"—echoing his Ichabod, "the glory has departed," we have no wish to conceal it, that the hands of the Church were weakened and its efficiency

impaired. The numbers, both of the clergy and laity, who retired at the time, or ultimately signed the Protest, are well known—their names are given in all the chronicles of the party—and the list of parishes vacant, and of sessions dismembered, and of churches thinned, is not to be overlooked. In passing, however, I make this remark, and I do it under the deep conviction of its truth, that it were grievous misconception to suppose that all who seceded did so on the substantial merits of the question at issue. Of some of the clergy I can assert this—of not a few of the eldership I can assert it—and, above all, I assert it of thousands of the people, who, in retiring from the church of their fathers, gave no other indication than a wish to remain with the particular pastor to whose flock they belonged. But it is not so much with the statistics of the case I would occupy myself, as with its constitutional bearing on the character and position of the Church. And here we have a grave objection to take to the terms in which the recent Secession has been characterised—terms not less at variance with the whole theory of an establishment than with the elementary principles of common sense. That theory the veriest child may read. It is this. The State endows the Church—the emoluments of the Church are in its keeping and at its disposal, (I speak irrespective of the Articles of Union.) Is this granted? Is it admitted, in opposition to the ingenuity so freely used, that Episcopacy has not slipped in in place of

Popery, and Presbytery in place of both, by some conventional entail of the sanctuary, some piece of ecclesiastical legerdemain—but that the will of the State comes out, and that not merely in the constitution of the country, but in the necessity of the case—at every step and in every change? Is it so there is a compact, not a compact of entail—we again use the word—but a compact of pressing and everyday interest—dependant on the will, and to be cared for by the superintendance, of the civil magistrate, under all the responsibilities of his trust? If so, then we say, that not only would the constitutional voice of the magistrate, formally expressed, if not through the alleged nugatory and co-ordinate channels of the law courts, yet through the supreme voice of the legislature, be paramount in saying—“We do not recognise in you, the existing ministers of the Church, the doctrines you are bound to preach, and the discipline you are called to maintain;” but it might declare, “We are weary of Presbytery, and we will try Independency.” That might be said, and emphatically, without touching the principles on which an establishment is built. It might be foolish—it might be mis-timed—but it could not be illegal; nor could the party ejected turn themselves on the party preferred, and say—“We are the Church.” But our modern seceders have said so; and that on far lower ground than this—ground as untenable in theory as it is preposterous in application. The deriders of what is called, in the phraseology of the

day, "apostolical succession," they have claimed a succession of another description. The Church of Scotland is still their church; and, as if some outrage had been committed on the very theory of an establishment, when their "Claim" was disallowed, they have busied themselves in laying their hands on every parchment, and seal, and appendage that comes in their way—on deeds and titles, and household names of every age and of every grade—that, on some future day, they may produce their credentials, and serve themselves heirs to the inheritance and to the patrimony of the Church. They might be better employed. That triumph is not to be gained by the titles they appropriate, or the books they publish, or the historical fallacies in which they indulge. And if, by the theory of an establishment, not less certainly by the constitution of the Church of Scotland, are they precluded from saying, "We are the Church." Take it at the best. Admitting that they had forced a majority in the supreme court for the passing of the protest, did that infer that the Church was bound by it? Is there not such a thing as the Barrier Act? Is the Assembly of to-day to dictate to the whole Church? It was not for this that a fence was wisely set up against all hasty legislation—against rash and dangerous movements—against unconstitutional innovations. Often had that fence been strained, not unfrequently had it all but given way under the pressure which tried it; but on the 18th of May it



stood untouched. It was not put to the proof. All that could be said was, that certain ministers and elders separated themselves on that day from the establishment, leaving her weakened but not destroyed—the Church of the constitution—the same in character, though impaired in her numbers and in her strength.\*

On the same ground, we feel called upon to object to the word which has been so currently used to describe the secession, incautiously indeed by the friends of the Church, but not unwittingly by its enemies. It is the word “Disruption.” Johnson defines it—“the act of breaking asunder, a breach, a rent.” In none of these senses is it applicable to the event now under review. There was no breaking asunder of the Church of Scotland on the day when the protesters retired from it; nor, in its secondary sense, was there a breach or a rent. One section here, and another there, does not describe it—a fragment at Tanfield, and another at George Street, with the intervening gap which the Protest had made, is not a representation of the case. Accuracy of thought, not less than historical truth, requires the abandonment of a phrase which, at no time correct in its constitutional bearing on the Church, must be obviously faulty to

\* I have argued this on the lowest possible ground. Of course, I do not say that even a majority of the Church could dissolve a union which the State has sanctioned, and which the State alone can competently break.

the most indifferent onlooker, now that the temporary evils of the Secession have been obviated, and every vacancy filled up. As well talk of the disruption of a bee-hive, when, on a summer day, it is casting off its busy swarm, filling the air with their murmurs; or the disruption of a kingdom, when there are thousands leaving, either of choice or necessity, their native land, that they may breathe a freer air in the distance—or the disruption of an army, when disaffection has been busy in its ranks, and company after company has refused to fight under their old banner, and to answer to their old call. To the word “Eruption” we would not have demurred. It is a cognate epithet, and so far describes the catastrophe. We would not underrate the force of the volcano which on the 18th of May discharged its contents. For many months previously, we had been walking on hollow ground—“*cineres igni doloso suppositos.*” But it broke up at last. The fire, generated in the bowels of the earth, was too intense to be retained. It demanded egress, and it got it. The sweltering and molten flood rushed out, flinging its fires and its vapour to the clouds. And yet we are not without hope. Though the ashes are still hot under our feet, they must inevitably cool. The landmarks are still standing. The lava will spend its force: our pleasant things which have been laid waste will be repaired; and they who fondly and foolishly imagined that future generations, as they trode the soil over which the deluge of fire had passed, would recognise

in it nothing but the burying-place of a kingdom, or the sepulchre of a church, may live to find that the lava of destruction has proved the seed-bed of fertility, impregnating the mass it has quickened—but not overpowered—with increasing verdure, and beauty, and fruitfulness.

And as we object to the epithet hurriedly struck off, and but too currently used to characterise the secession, we must also take exception to the parallel employed to illustrate it. It was drawn from Scripture; not a few portions of which had already been pressed rather quaintly into the service. But Daniel in the lions' den would not now suffice. Moses was brought upon the foreground, and the company of the Israelites. Why so, is not at first sight very clear. True, the Jewish lawgiver and the attendant Hebrews did, under Divine appointment, and on a memorable occasion, make a great movement. If that, however, was the analogy, it might have been shown in other ways, without an unauthorised and spurious appropriation of Scripture history. There are nothing but movements around us on every side—movements political, and movements ecclesiastical—movements physical, and movements moral and social. There is no lack of these for illustration; and if, without trespassing on the Bible, the ample page of history sufficed not for the purpose, they might have drawn on the figure of an army, discomfited but not conquered, marching out with all the honours of war; or of a company of emi-

grants leaving their country, to which, by the aid of a very little mist, of which they had always at hand a copious supply, they might have imparted a certain dim and hazy interest. But, no; nothing would serve them but Moses and the land of Egypt. Not that they spoke of its plagues—that might have been dangerous—it might have provoked comparisons of rather an odious kind. They spoke of the departure from Egypt; it was in every mouth; and I have now before me a tract, thousands upon thousands of which have been scattered over the land, bearing this title, “Farewell to Egypt; or the departure of the Free Church of Scotland out of the Erastian Establishment.” Now, we are willing to concede much to the excitement of a great occasion, and to the inflation of mind it all but inevitably entails; but we were scarcely prepared for its taking this direction, or occupying this high ground. Where is the analogy? Are they the only representatives of the true religion—the only depositaries of the truth? Have they alone been commissioned to bear the ark of the living and true God through the wilderness? Are there reserved exclusively for them the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night, the heavenly manna to fall around their tents, and the waters of Horeb to gush at their feet? But perhaps it was not so much to make themselves the children of Abraham, as the Church of Scotland the land of Egypt, that the parallel has been canonized. If so, on this ground also we are as much in perplexity. Where,

we ask, are the implements of bondage of which they complained? We nowhere see them; they must have carried them off. We are put to no drudgery. There is no impediment in our way to the discharge of any duty by which Christianity may be honoured, and the name of the Saviour magnified. Our hands are free, our pulpits are free, our kirk-sessions are free, our presbyteries, and synods, and General Assemblies, are all free. In their departure, the iron rod of oppression has been broken; and, by and by, when a little further on in their journey, and on a closer inspection of their sacks, they may begin to find they have made a mistake—that they have left the jewels, and borrowed the fetters and the chains. Indeed, if report speaks true, there are some of their number who have already found it out, and are beginning to think of a second Exodus. Or when did our despots in Church and State refuse to let them go? Did we set a guard over them to keep them? Did we follow them when they left? Did we pursue them to the banks of the Water of Leith, where they had their first encampment? Did we strive to allure them back by bribes, or to drive them back by threatenings? No. If on that day the Church of Scotland was for a season weakened in her resources, and crippled in her energies—if, by a large secession, the amount and importance of which she has never depreciated, our national Zion was made to feel that under the visitation of God her hands were enfeebled, and not a few of her pleasant

things laid waste, she has this to say, that she followed them not. Quietly and unconstrainedly were they left to the freedom of their own will, and to the peculiarities of their own position. As rapidly and serenely as they pleased, were they allowed to say, "farewell." If their retirement was felt—and most tenderly too—the stern necessity under which they acted, and which they could not control, was too obvious to be misunderstood. If it created no sympathy among those who remained, it awoke no indignation, and provoked no taunt. No opprobrious words were hurled after them; and as they were not impeded by any missive from the Queen, they had not to complain of his Grace her Commissioner, that he enacted the part of Pharaoh, "and made ready his chariots and took his people with him and pursued after them." Indeed, if the parallel is to be kept up, we have ground of complaint that they did not treat us so much like Egypt as they should have done. Why did they not go out all at once? Why did some of them tarry so long among the flesh-pots? Why put the Egyptians to the trouble of reminding them of their brethren, and of showing them the way? Why did straggler after straggler hang on the outskirts of a land he was destined to leave, at last overtaking the main body, many days before him, only by a forced march and the most unnatural strides? We had always imagined, that, fenced in by the guardianship of Jehovah, "to whom belong the shields of the

earth," hid under the shadow of his wing, and kept as the apple of his eye—that mighty host with Moses at its head, though numerous as the sands of the sea, and rustling like the leaves of the forest, went out as one man on their heaven-directed pilgrimage.

Of these loiterers there were not a few of whom many most curious things might be told; but we must content ourselves with referring to two of them. And, first, we turn to a layman, Mr Hog of Newliston. It is well known among those to whom he now adheres, that for many months prior to the eventful meeting of the Assembly, he was in great difficulty of mind as to the propriety of their whole procedure. This he gave them good reason, on more than one occasion, to understand, in the Non-intrusion committee, of which he was a member; and so little did they sympathise with his doubts,—nay, so strongly did they resist them,—that on one occasion they prevented his return to the General Assembly from the presbytery of Linlithgow, which he frequently represented. Meanwhile, on came the meeting of the supreme court, and Mr Hog hung upon the outskirts, reclaiming against the proposed movement. The Secession took place, and Mr Hog was not in the procession; the Free Assembly held several meetings, and yet the name of Mr Hog did not appear on the fast swelling Protest,—where was he? The 27th of May showed. On that occasion, in presence of a crowded Assembly, a letter was read from Mr Hog, addressed to Dr Gordon, to be communicated,

which, among other things, says this—"If I have been tardy in declaring myself, it is because I felt it my duty to watch the last struggles of the Church as I would the death-bed of an expiring parent, not feeling at liberty to depart till the spirit was fled, and the work of corruption begun;" the *Presbyterian Review* adding this, that "*the reading of the letter elicited loud cheers.*" From this, it appears how well and how laudably Mr Hog had been employed. It would seem he had been by the bedside of an old lady—his mother. Tenderly attached to her, he had waited on her to the last, and only retired when the fast hastening corruption overpowered his nerves. What more could you expect? You could scarcely ask him, tortured with such an exquisite sense, to remain over the funeral; it might have been dangerous. Besides, his friends were far in advance, and their impatience was proverbial. His absence, sufficiently marked already, might, if further protracted, have excluded him for ever from their company. He decided at once; he quitted the death-bed scene, nor cast behind one lingering look till he found himself amidst the plaudits of his associates, attesting his sincerity by exhibiting neither symbol of mourning nor symptom of grief; no, not even a few crocodile's tears, with which the banks of the Nile are said to abound. And as it happened, it was just as well. Be it known to all, and especially to the fugitive, that the old lady was not gone. Faintish, indeed, she had been, as was only to be expected from



a copious bleeding to which she had been lately subjected ; but life was not extinct. The sombre light of the scene, especially with eyesight at no time good, had created the illusion of her son ; and it came to a climax, when the inflammatory matter of which her veins were relieved was allowed to remain so near him as to impregnate the air with its effluvia. Indeed, the mother had recovered herself ere her recreant son had gone ; she saw him retreating, and while we are commissioned to say she has got over his loss—that it has been more than compensated by the increasing attachment and attentions of other members of her numerous family—she by no means refuses him forgiveness. She is well aware that she cost him two or three sleepless nights. From the heart she pardons him. But that he should have departed with “ Egypt’s fine linen,” not applied to his eyes, but to another organ!—this has evidently rather annoyed the old lady ; it has sorely tried her equanimity ; and though her dispositions are most placable, she has it evidently in contemplation to entrust to other hands than his the custody of her bones to the land of promise.

But there is another loiterer of whom we must say something—the Reverend Mr Bruce. He also tarried, and under circumstances not less suspiciously symptomatic of defection from the Non-intrusion encampment. His reluctance, if not of older standing, was yet, if possible, of a more peculiar kind than that of his friend. It showed itself not long after the Convocation, and broke

out on several occasions. In the Non-intrusion committee his murmurings were not suppressed—they were loudly uttered, and formed the topic of anxious consideration among his friends. Dr Candlish favoured him with a special visit on the subject, remonstrating with him in no measured terms; and the indignant speech of Dr Gordon in the Waterloo Rooms, one of the very few which he spoke, while levelled at all who threatened an abandonment of their pledges and principles, was universally interpreted as having a special reference to Mr Bruce. Notwithstanding, his reluctance to leave increased rather than diminished. He did not conceal the fact, that the simple introduction of Lord Aberdeen's bill into Parliament before the sitting of the Assembly, would allow him to remain in the Church—though how that could have freed him from the Convocation resolutions no one saw. Such, however, was his reasoning, which had always a little of the peculiar about it. Even when known that no bill would be introduced till after the Assembly, he was still inclined to remain; and on the 18th, when by an irresistible attraction every ecclesiastic was drawn to the central point—to that very church of which he was the pastor, and within whose walls so many were that day to bid adieu to the establishment—Mr Bruce was nowhere visible. He did not join the procession on its way; nor till a day or two after did he signify his adherence to the Protest. But we must allow him to speak for himself, for so we are

convinced he is doing, when, in the funeral sermon preached on the occasion of the death of the late Dr Abercrombie, he uses these words—"It is known that he was most unwilling to quit the establishment, and that, most intimately associated as we were together then, as we continued to be to the last, I should be well able to explain both what that was which so long suspended his decision, and why, when the crisis came, he was seen so resolute as well as ready. Now his first apprehension was, that we should never be able, without the pecuniary aid of the Government, to provide at all adequately for religious ordinances throughout the land; and his next apprehension was, that, by protest and separation, such animosities would be engendered as he must strive to the very uttermost, and to the last hour, to prevent. It was thus, that, with all prompt and profound sagacity, his deep concern for the religious character of the land, and his almost unequalled love of charity and peace, did make him seem for a time to hang back, and hesitate, as one who could not decide. *But the instant he saw a settlement decreed, which he believed would inevitably extinguish that vitality in the Church for which he valued her, and, in the leaving only of deceitful and most miserably wretched forms, destroy utterly the power of godliness—the instant he saw this, he resolved for himself to come out from her and be separate.*"

Such is the statement, half apologetical and half explanatory, in which Mr Bruce takes notice of the

decision of his departed friend. Other representations, of a different kind, have been as universally circulated, as they have been generally believed. It is confidently stated, that Dr Abercrombie did not leave the Church *on any other ground than that of sympathy with Mr Bruce, to whose ministry he was attached*, and that he had no hesitation in saying so on various occasions. But, be that as it may, we may be permitted to say, that the explanation given is any thing but intelligible. It is not to be forgotten, that no other settlement of the question had been spoken of than that embodied in Lord Aberdeen's bill, to which Mr Bruce was not unpropitious. Of what other settlement, then, does he speak? It was known, on the 18th, that nothing else was coming; and yet, neither on that day, nor for two or three days after, was the discovery made, that the *vitality* of the Church was gone. The fact was, we believe, that had he remained much longer, his own vitality would have seceded from his body. The throes and agonies to which he was subjected, were, we understand, more than flesh could bear. Daily beset by the importunities of Tanfield, which were copiously administered, he was not less haunted by the terrors of the *Witness*. He gave way at last—and then comes out the announcement, that on the instant of his departure, there departed also the life of the Church, leaving only some deceitful and most miserably wretched forms. With

the exit of the Rev. John Bruce, *the power of godliness* departed. Language like this requires no comment. It will be rightly interpreted, and duly appreciated, both by friend and foe. Of little benefit to the church he has joined, it can as little injure the church he has left. Our Zion is not to be annihilated by it. His old church of St Andrew's does not miss him; its pews are filled with an auditory much larger than he could command; and there, from Sabbath to Sabbath, is the gospel preached, if not in the same way, yet not less faithfully, and certainly not less intelligibly, than under his ministry. Perhaps, after all, he might have been passed by unnoticed. It is in the nature of things, that they who have walked slowly should talk largely—by the volubility of their tongue they must make up for the tardiness of their step. But a short while before, and in his own estimation Mr Bruce was the very pattern of meekness. Now, how changed! He is no longer the Moses of the Non-intrusionists. Not in this character does he come out on the great day of the Secession—and if now, since his own little day, he has not scrupled, by unkind and most unjustifiable language, to injure the feelings of the living, and to trample on the memory of the dead, he can scarcely qualify it with the famous declaration, at the close of his pamphlet on the Moderatorship controversy—“ I have endeavoured to do it, though at no small sacrifice of my personal comfort, and well knowing that it may provoke, for a

time, some unpleasant coldness towards me on the part of several whom I greatly esteem. Nor can I think this resolute discharge of duty uncongenial with the exercise of the gentler virtues, when I read how it is written of the meekest of all the men that ever lived upon earth, that when he spied an Egyptian smiting a Hebrew, he slew the Egyptian and buried him in the sand."

And now we must bid adieu to the 18th of May, and to the "Farewell to Egypt." It is a day not to be forgotten in the annals of the Church. There were friendships broken on that day, and ties the most endearing snapped—churches were stripped of their ministers, and almost every pastor, at least in the cities and towns, lost some of his flock. The worst of it was, that houses were divided—and that, on the future Sabbath-days of not a few families in the land, there was nothing but the melancholy prospect, but too sadly realised, of parents and children, and sisters and brothers, dwelling under the same roof, but not meeting at the same sacramental table, nor frequenting the same church. Verily, there is lying somewhere a fearful responsibility! Let us say, meanwhile, in parting with our brethren, that if they had grave cause of offence with us, they have taken a strange way of showing it. Have they not carried Egypt wholesale with them into the wilderness? Its calendar is theirs—they have no month Abib—they

count by Pharoah—witness the meetings of their General Assemblies. Its nomenclature is theirs—they have carried with them the key to the hieroglyphics—witness the pyramids of their own erection, covered with the same symbols, and grotesquely marked with the same names. Its rites are theirs—they have no “beginning of months,” no “first month of the year”—as witness their new moons and solemn feasts. This may suit the memory—it may be convenient for the almanac—but it is very trying to the judgment. If “farewell” was to be the word, it might have been pronounced in a better temper, as it should have been certainly said in a firmer tone. And where is the authority under which they acted their anomalous part? One man, for instance, scourging his glebe; and another cutting down its trees with sacrilegious axe; and a third applying his whetted knife closely to the root of the rose-bush which hung so gracefully by the manse door. Perhaps, after all, these, and a variety of other acts far more flagrant, were quite becoming—they were only the spoiling of the Egyptians. Directly in communication with heaven, it is not to be questioned they had its authority for all they did—even in pilfering the emblem of “the bush burning but not consumed.” Time, however, will show *that*. As it is not a woodcut that makes an emblem, it is not an emblem that makes a Church. Our appeal must lie elsewhere, far beyond the modern fires of Horeb, and

the croaking voice which says, "Come and see this great sight."

We close with the language of Dr Chalmers, and say : — "We hold, that by means of an endowed church, and a territorial division of the country into parishes, there is secured a greatly fuller and wider dispensation of the lessons of the gospel through the land, than by means of any such arrangement as might come spontaneously forth of all the zeal that exists for Christianity on the one hand, and of all the desire that exists for the reception of Christianity on the other. That this zeal should have its ebbs and its alternations, is no better argument for the destruction of an establishment, than is the fluctuating supply, by inundation of water from the Nile, for effacing or filling up those ducts of conveyance which serve for the irrigation of Egypt. Through it is the descent of living water from the upper sanctuary, which transforms the sons of nature into holy and heaven-born men ; this does not supersede an earthly tactics, and an earthly mechanism for the right distribution of it. Should the Nile cease from its overflows, there would be no fertilising influence conveyed over the land, through the dry and deserted channels by which it was intersected. And should the Spirit of God withdraw the showers of his grace from our nation, we have no such blind confidence in the virtue of frameworks, as to look for a sanctifying influence from the mechanism of pulpits



and parishes. Nevertheless, it is good to uphold the sluices, and reservoirs, and aqueducts of Egypt; for when the Nile shall again rise above its banks, that is the apparatus by which its water shall be most beneficially dispersed over the fields of the territory.”\*

\* Chalmers' Works, vol. xvii., p. 119.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE CHURCH OF THE SECESSION.

THIS Church has now existed for about three years, and has given ample proof of energy and zeal. Its plans have been conducted on a scale of unusual magnitude, and its success such as to throw into the shade the operations of any religious denomination that has yet existed on Scottish ground, prolific as it has been of dissent. It includes about 716 congregations,\* whereas the United Secession, which ranks next in numbers, has only about 360, and the Relief, about 115. This is doubtless a great fact in the ecclesiastical history of the day—sufficiently great, we would think, to put the adherents of the new sect beyond the temptation of absurdly magnifying their numbers, and grossly exaggerating their claims. Their numbers, certainly, combined with those of other Presbyterian Dissenters, do not overpower the Establishment—to say nothing of the outcast multitudes whom nothing but an establishment can overtake—nor, in

\* Many of these are nothing more than what are commonly known by the name of “Stations.”

point of territorial occupancy, is theirs the position of the national Church. They have not accomplished the erection of an edifice in every parish, though, in the absence of the necessary funds, or, we should rather say, of the necessary adherents, they have made the most of appearances. For example, they plant a church on the verge of one parish, to accommodate the stragglers from two or three; and in asking their supporters to what parish it belongs, they will say the parish of A, or B, or C, according to the particular person they address, or the spot on which they happen to stand, and on whose behalf they wish to make demonstration. Or they call that a church which is so in nothing but the name—having no pastor, perhaps, and but a handful of people. Or they designate the congregation which has met for the last three years in the Music Hall, Edinburgh, in the centre of the New Town, by the name of the High Church, which rears its venerable head in the heart of the Old. Or Dr Brown, Glasgow, has the Free “St John’s” gifted to him, with its profuse ornaments and little idolatrous niches, that from its lofty tower he may now and then take a distant glimpse of the “Old St John’s” in which he once lectured and preached. Or they accomplish an achievement more wonderful still; and within two or three acres of ground in the metropolis of the West, the “Tron Church,” and “St Andrew’s,” and “St David’s,” rear their heads, with the word “Free,” attached to them, blazing away like

united fires, and keeping each other warm—at once displaying their purity and their pride, in forsaking the contaminations of their old Erastian neighbourhoods, and the contagion of poverty in the humble dwellings with which they are surrounded. All this and much more have they done in support of their claim to the national supremacy—if to the admiration of their own followers, not a little to the surprise of the other Dissenters of Scotland, whom they once rebuked from the high places of the Establishment, for the love which Voluntaryism displayed for the wealthy districts of a city or country, to the neglect and abandonment of the poorer.

And yet, with every deduction from their pretensions which justice demands and common sense dictates, we are now met with the existence of a new and most formidable body of dissent in the existence of the Free Secession. And first we would look at its denominational peculiarities. These cannot be very well ascertained, and are rather to be gathered inferentially from statements than directly from documents. Saving the protest lodged with the Church on their retirement, they have issued no other manifesto from which any thing very authoritative is to be gleaned; and that, though carefully worded to give it a *doctrinal* air, cannot fairly be pronounced such, any more than the question of a church establishment. Ask a member of the United Secession if the headship of the Lord Jesus in his own house be violated in the esta-

blishment of any form of religion by the civil magistrate, and he will answer in the affirmative; ask a Free Seceder, and he will answer in the negative. Ask the latter if the supremacy of Jesus in his kingdom be infringed by the rejecting of the Claim of Right, he will vehemently say, Yes; ask the former and he will firmly say, No—if the principle of an establishment be a scriptural one. Again, ask the old Seceder if there be any value in the fundamental principle of Non-intrusion, as defined by the Veto law, without the recognition of the unscriptural nature of Patronage; and he will repudiate the dogma. Ask the Claim of Right, and the several authorised papers of the Non-intrusion committee, and these will tell you, that the affirming of the Veto law by no means requires the abolition of patronage; and that, whereas without the former they could not remain in the Church, they could manage to put up with the latter. And yet these are the minute distinctions through which we must pick our way in the thorny path of the new Secession. At one with the Church of Scotland, as with the leading Dissenters, in doctrine and discipline, there is but a slight divergence from either in circumstantialia. In their origin they are not anti-patronage, whatever they may become in their progress; even as in the outset they were not what is commonly termed “voluntary,” whatever opinions they may ultimately espouse.

But if their denominational peculiarities are not very well defined, nor distinguished much, if at all, from the Church from which they have retired, or the leading

Dissenters in Scotland with whom they are now mixed, they are not quite so invisible in another way. The absence of a creed, I mean differential and tangible, is amply compensated in a thoroughly organised and well sustained ecclesiastical confederacy. This, we would say, is the peculiar feature of the Free Secession, and marks them off, historically, from every other denomination and sect. It naturally springs from the circumstances which gave them birth. If measures and not men originated at least one secession in Scotland, men and not measures, we believe, created this last one. The fruit of a mistaken and most obstinate policy—the necessary sequence of a convocation studiously contrived by a few to gain the adherence of the many—it obeys the same laws and acknowledges the same rule. It is the few ruling the many—the sections in Edinburgh ruling the synods in Scotland;—Dr Candlish and a copartnery not very large managing all the doctors, and pastors, and preachers, in the land. The oligarchy still exists, and exists in a form that has but little in common with the freedom of Presbytery. Not that the framework of this system of church government has been abolished. On the contrary, it has been carefully preserved in every gradation of its church courts, and in all the outward apparatus necessary for its existence. There is the kirk-session, and the presbytery, and the synod, and the General Assembly—each in their own walk, and regulated by their own forms—legislative, ministerial, and judicial. But a closer inspection will show us that

these are maintained at the expense of all that is peculiar to the free and unbiassed exercise of Presbyterianial government. Scarcely had the first Free Assembly passed over—in the public deliberations of which but few took part, and these the prominent men of the Secession—when precautionary measures were taken to continue a harmony of sentiment, to which, at the outset, a common solicitude and common danger had in no slight measure contributed. As these receded from the view, the apprehension was not unnatural, that many who had passively aided in seeking the destruction of one Church, might not be so passive in the construction of another. Questions there were to be settled, in which diversity of opinion might naturally prevail; claims there were to be adjusted, of the utmost delicacy, bearing not less on their own independent position than on the relations to be established with other Dissenters in the country; arrangements there were to be made as to the disposal of their available force, and the disbursement of their available funds—all of which required harmony in their settlement, as on that alone depended their success. Besides, with the great body of their followers out of doors, unity was the secret of their strength; and at all hazards it was to be maintained. Accordingly, scarcely had the first Assembly passed over when the utmost jealousy of the ordinary method of conducting the business of the church courts began to exhibit itself. The secret conclave took the place of

the public court ; or, where it did not supersede it, it reduced it to nothing but a name. The public, excluded at eleven o'clock, were admitted at two ; or, excluded in the forenoon, were admitted freely to the evening pageant, to admire the harmony of its colour and the unity of its design. Before the court was constituted, the business was settled. The motion to be made, and the decision to be given, were properly adjusted. This and that member known to be refractory, were reduced to obedience. Every argument, whether springing from a common interest or a common danger, was doubtless used. The discontented and the dissentient were duly plied ; or, should every other remedy fail, a resolution was framed with all the ingenuity they had at command, under whose generalities every form of opinion on the point at issue might, with the utmost complacency, find its appropriate shelter. Nor has this been the whole amount of the infringement. Alien as this mode of management is to the free play of sentiment and opinion, there is another feature in it more adverse still. In the freemasonry of their party, they are not allowed even a provincial grand-master. Edinburgh absorbs all ; and if the provinces be consulted, it is not to judge, but to act ; not to decide, but to execute. Centralisation has come to its perfection. Not a movement in any district, however remote—not a question raised or discussed—not a vacancy filled, or preacher disposed of—but owns the imprimatur of the metropolitan conven-



tion. The *imperium in imperio* was never more thoroughly realised than in the Home Mission committee; and even there, narrow as it is compared with the church courts over which it exercises despotic sway in every corner of the land, might we find, on inspection, its cipher and telegraph in the keeping and in the cognisance of but few of its members.

That this is an anomaly, and of no small magnitude, in the history of the Free Secession, cannot well be disputed. That it is foreign to the spirit of that particular form of ecclesiastical government it has all but supplanted, will as little be doubted. And that, like all systems of despotism engrafted on a free constitution, and in which the springs of power and influence are kept contrary to their natural bent only by the utmost intensity of pressure, it may have its recoil, we may safely predict. Of this revulsion of feeling indications have already manifested themselves; and the existence of a tyranny, too marked to be overlooked by all beyond the pale of the Secession, has at length drawn forth the voice of complaint from within its own borders. Discontent has found utterance; and, in language not to be misunderstood, has urged its complaint.\* Not, however, that this comes with the best possible grace from the quarter from which it has emanated. If this oligarchy be oppressive, as it is said to be—so subversive of all Christian liberty among the members, and of

\* See "Prospects and Perils of the Free Church," by the Rev. Mr Lesley, one of its ministers.

freedom in thought or utterance among the ministers of the Secession, savouring more of Prelacy than Presbytery, and more of Popery than either—little have they to complain who have given it consolidation and strength. Seldom have men, in the retribution of Providence, more richly merited the chains they wear. Did not their own hands forge them? Did they not love them so well, that, in the name of “freedom,” they held them up to the gaze of the world as their triumph and boast? Did they not cry aloud, in the hearing of others, on the Convocation-day and the Secession-day, “Come, place yourselves under this gentle yoke?” Yes. Whoever else may complain of the liberties of a deliberative court violated, and the functions of presbytery reduced to nothing but a name, it is not for those to do so who, in self-immolation, bound themselves to the chariot wheels of an ecclesiastical despotism. They must submit to their lot. The time was when they might have made better terms for themselves; when, in consenting to leave the Church of their fathers, they might have stipulated for freedom of opinion—and, were it only for decency, for a very little freedom of speech. But they omitted to do it; or, if they longed for a privilege to which for years they had been strangers, they knew it would be refused. It will be refused them still. It is not the fashion for any despot in Church or State, and far less for a conclave of them, to resign, without a struggle, the mitre or the crown. Of voluntary abdi-

cations there are but few examples on the page of history, and the pith of a revolution is not to be extracted from a pamphlet or a speech.

II. The Free Secession have, without question, raised large sums of money—the amount of which we do not pretend to give. Their own organs have not of course understated it, and they must be referred to for the alleged amount. On their large collections, however, whether obtained at the church door or through the agency of the deacon's court, whose importunity is well known—whether in aid of schools or missions—whether for the support of the local minister or in aid of their great sustentation fund—we have one or two remarks to make. And we would say, in the first instance, do not forget that they are a new sect in the country. The zeal of such is proverbial, and money, in this commercial age, is the test of sincerity. Give a little, and the balance is struck, and you are pronounced wanting in principle—give much, be liberal in your gifts or in your alms, and you are forthwith pronounced a staunch Seceder, a well-principled man. In such circumstances, the brass key which unlocks the pew-door, is good—the silver one, better—but happy is he who can wield a gold key; the Free Church paradise flies open to him. Besides, it is not to be overlooked that the Free Secession assumed, what may be called, a very monied-like look from the beginning. What a noise was made about the sacrifices of the clergy! How incessantly were the public told of the

deprivations they underwent! How carefully were the abandoned livings, with the value of manse and glebe, counted up, and rated at a sum which, to say the least, was not borne out by the Instruction Commission! This was the vein into which the thoughts of their supporters were most sedulously turned; by those, too, who should have been the last to urge it—the clergy themselves; and it has been wrought like a mine. Much precious ore has it turned out. The man who once gave his pence for the propagation of the gospel at home and abroad, now gives his shillings—by the enlargement of the gift he *demonstrates* his sincerity. The man who once grudged a penny to the church-plate for the behoof of the poor, now puts in a pound for behoof of the minister, and that settles his character in the count and reckoning of the deacon's court. A little sacrifice, a little self-denial, a small abandonment of the perishing dross of the world, becomes the symbol and badge of the party. To this all must conform, as they would prove themselves worthy of the cause they support; and, above all, of the extruded pastor under whom they are placed.

We have another remark to make, that, as the contributions of the Free Secession became, in virtue of their dissent from the establishment, more intensely active, so have they become more intensely exclusive. In the circumstances, perhaps, this was only to be looked for. As it is a law in the history of mind, that one master principle of action in the ascendancy absorbs all others, leaving no scope for the play or

exercise of inferior motives—so are the impulses of the heart, not less than the movements of the hand, governed by the same rule and determined by the same guidance. A man's mind, at best, is finite, and so is his purse. Enlarged and capacious as both may be, there is a point where all further tension is at an end; and in proportion as you try their expansive power in one direction, you may look for contraction in another. And so it has been with the charities of the Free Seceders. Laid under a powerful arrest at home, they have, if not in the same proportion, yet to a great extent, resiled from all other foreign services. Of this proof might be given from the contribution list of most of those charitable institutions, whether in Edinburgh or in the provinces, through which their party influence cannot be propagated, or their party name magnified. But we would confine ourselves to one, certainly not the least important, in the Metropolis; one of the fairest ornaments of the city, and to which even the bigotry of irreligion can take no exception—I mean the Royal Infirmary. I find, by a statement which has just appeared in the public prints, that, on the occasion of the last collection in Edinburgh in behalf of this most beneficent hospital, there were contributed—by the

Established Church, . . . . .	£459
Episcopalians, . . . . .	375
Free Church, . . . . .	104
Dis-senters, . . . . .	101

By a reference to the Report of '43-'44, I have ascertained that the sum contributed at the church-doors was—

By the Establishment, . . . . .	£398
By the Free Church, . . . . .	183

In this year, the first after the Secession, it is worthy of note, that

Established St George's collected, . . . . .	£61	0	5	
Free St George's, . . . . .	£60	0	0	
Established St Stephen's, . . . . .	80	11	10	
Free St Stephen's, non-existent, . . . . .				
Established St Andrew's, . . . . .	58	0	8	
Free St Andrew's, . . . . .		0	0	0
Established St Mary's, . . . . .	27	9	0	
Free St Mary's, . . . . .		14	0	0

Last year these same churches ran thus—

Established St George's, . . . . .	£72	9	2	
Free St George's, . . . . .	£37	7	6	
Established St Stephen's, . . . . .	78	14	0	
Free St Stephen's, . . . . .		0	0	0
Established St Andrew's, . . . . .	76	0	0	
Free St Andrew's, . . . . .		10	0	0
Established St Mary's, . . . . .	38	19	0	
Free St Mary's, . . . . .		0	0	0

A reference to these two years will show our argument. With a decided increase of contributions in the Establishment, there is as decided a decrease in that of the Secession; still further confirmed by the fact, that whereas in the first year after the Secession, out

of twenty-one churches belonging to this denomination, ten collected; last year there were only seven. This, after all, we believe, gives but an inadequate view of the extent to which the abridgement has gone in the maintenance of institutions which could ill be spared. If the public collections have suffered, the private lists of contributions have still more rapidly deteriorated. Separated in their sympathies from the establishment, they are seceding perceptibly from the established institutions of the country. If the Church has been weakened, the stock of public charity and general tenderness has not escaped. The common pathway of humanity has been deserted. Free Churchism is filling the mind and emptying the pocket. Every thing must give way to this. The care of the poor, and the cure of the diseased, and the refuge of the destitute—all must yield to the overpowering influence of one predominant motive, which, full of little contrivances to catch applause on its own proper ground, will not take its chance of reaping its honours in the promiscuous fellowship of the world. This is no field for them; and as they are yet in their infancy, and fully alive to the danger of being lost in the crowd, perhaps the only way of securing their services would be by inviting them to erect a dispensary, and infirmary, and house of refuge of their own.

Or, another remark may be made on that great pecuniary reservoir unto which so many streams have been diverted, and by which not a few fountains and

rills have been dried up, to the manifest injury of cities, and families, and neighbourhoods. It is this :— If this large and capacious basin has been fed at the expense of others, it has been not less carefully nursed at the expense of the honour and credit of the Free Church itself. And in proof of this I need only refer to the well-known understanding under which the bond of the Convocation was framed, and the Secession completed. It is too well known to be denied, that the extent and compactness of the confederacy turned upon the arrangement that “all things were to be in common,”—at all events, such was the stipulated agreement. For the maintenance of himself and family, the pastor of the remotest rural parish was not to be worse off than the pastor of the richest congregation in the city ; and the provision of a church for him was to be regulated by the same rule. The edifices and the livings were to be all alike—share for share, and building for building ; and, should times prove propitious, ornament for ornament was to be the line and the plummet of all their ecclesiastical architecture. It was the basis of the contract signed at the Convocation, and it was publicly ratified but a few days after, when, amidst the applause of the multitudes who heard the details, speaker after speaker dwelt on the brotherhood they had established, and on the fair model of the primitive church about to be revived. Has that contract been fulfilled ? Has sameness of architecture been preserved ? Or, if that be unseemly, has a neces-



sary variety been obtained by a parity of expense? Has the simple and unadorned building in the strath of the Highlands, cost as much as the church in a town in the Lowlands? Or, to confine ourselves to a more limited space, what do we make of Glasgow? Are all the churches there modelled after Free St John's, or even after Free St Enoch's and Free St David's? Or what of Edinburgh? Has it been faithful to the contract, so largely quoted and so ostentatiously shown? No. As if in derision of all pledges, the city first to hear of them was the first to see them broken. The bankruptcy commenced there, and the very last man who should have broken the ranks was foremost in doing so. Dr Candlish for a brief period contented himself with a humble edifice. There, one would have imagined, lay at once his pride and his strength; the honest pride of some little self-denial, in entering, every Sabbath-day, a lowly fabric on Lothian Road, that through the surplus wealth which assembled there, his liberality might abound to the necessities of others—that all things might be equal; and his strength also, in the maintenance of his faith with his brethren, and in the public preservation of his honour. But, no. Other maxims and motives began to prevail. After a very short interval, the unadorned building was handed over to the Highlanders as good enough for them, and within a stone-cast another was erected. It cost as many thousands as the other cost hundreds; and there it stands, a

memorial of another disruption than that of the Establishment; and a stable monument to the name of Dr Candlish. Who can analyse the feelings of the far-travelled and churchless pastor, when at an Assembly-time he visits the spot, and in the glance of an eye sees the memorial of the pledges and promises of the Convocation, formed amidst the brickwork of Egypt, like the hearts of the master builders, now turned into stone!

“ 'Tis the last keystone  
That makes the arch : the rest that there were put  
Are nothing, till that comes to bind and shut ;  
Then stands it a triumphal mark ! Then men  
Observe the strength, the height, the why and when  
It was erected ; and still, walking under,  
Meet some new matter to look up and wonder.”

Or what of the equal living as well as the parallel church? Has that part of the agreement been fulfilled? Is there no one pining in poverty, while another is favoured with plenty? Are town and country, city and suburb, pensioned after the same rate, and graduated by the same scale? Methinks that was due to the recorded declarations of 1843; but how different the result! Not more unequal is the architecture of the Free Secession, than the annual disbursement of its resources. If the sustentation fund has its fixed data—say £120—each separate church has its sliding-scale, varying from £10 to £400. All things in common determine the one, every thing to myself determines the other. The local fund is but

partially general, and the general fund is but feebly local. There is no great harmony, and very little correspondence between them; so that, if the balance-sheet of a church which compasses sea and land to make proselytes to its cause, shows annually so well in the sums collected, and the donations given—whether to the building fund and the sustentation fund, or to the individual minister and the particular fabric—we can only say, that, in our apprehension, its bulk is in some degree to be attributed to the breach of the promise which served materially to give to the Secession, at the outset, its numbers and unity.

But, apart altogether from these incidental points connected with the income on which the Secession is built, and through which its pretensions have been so largely advanced, we have something to say as to the means by which it is secured. It has been generally held by those who advocate the scriptural character of an establishment, that there is no small advantage to be gained from a secure and permanent endowment for those who minister at the altar. On this much stress has been laid in the general course of argumentation to which, of late years, this most debatable of all subjects has been subjected, and nowhere more so than in the recorded opinions of those who have recently left us. The argument is, that in the external circumstances of the clergymen there should if possible be nothing existing which might tend, even remotely, to repress his energy or to damp his zeal;

and that he comes all the more freely to his work, and is not the less likely to be faithful in its discharge—in “warning, and encouraging, and reproof”—that in worldly circumstances he is independent of those among whom he preaches, and toils, and prays. But if this be true, what can we make of the case where the pastor is taxed to the extremest degree in his feelings, in drawing forth the contributions of his people? What of the case where ministerial fidelity is tested by the amount of monies collected or contributions received? What of the case where, to prove his success and to commend himself to an approving brotherhood, the zealous pastor must ply his people with all the importunities of a religious mendicant? What of the case where giving supersedes doing—and *that* is pronounced the highest walk of Christianity from which all but the opulent are debarred? Above all, what can we make of a system which, gigantic in its aims, is not less so in its demands—levying its contributions on a scale of largest dimensions—laying under tribute the poor man in his hovel, not less than the rich man in his mansion; multiplying its emissaries with scrupulous care, that no source of revenue may be untried; and scattering its missives with unwearied assiduity, that no congregation may fail in its charities—still accumulating but never satisfied—making the last exaction the apology for a new one much more arbitrary in its nature, and more excessive in its amount? “If we wish,” says Isaac

Taylor, no mean or prejudiced authority on any question, and least of all on this, “to see what is now vauntingly termed the Voluntary principles fully evolved and ripened under a summer heat, we have only to turn to the Papacy.—What has happened once may happen again, and will do so under like circumstances. We need not draw upon imagination in conceiving of the natural course of events, and the operation of common principles. The Church, we may suppose, instead of being befriended by the State, is barely tolerated, or perhaps oppressed. The clerical body, including, as it may, many high-minded and disinterested individuals, is yet, as a body, (what body is not?) actuated by the ordinary motives of our nature, and tends therefore, with a steady and silent momentum, toward its corporate aggrandizement—its wealth, its ease, its credit, and its secure enjoyment of special prerogatives. Every corporation shifts itself, if it be possible, from precarious ground, and moves toward that which is firm. If, then, the State does not lend its aid in this endeavour of the clergy to substantiate their honours and revenues, a resource will be found of another sort, and the minds of the people will be worked on with proportionate eagerness, in order to make sure of their subserviency. *Exaggerated doctrines will supply the place of legal provisions.* The claims of God’s ministers will be asserted in a hyperbolic yet insidious style. The merit of the offering laid upon the altar of the Church will be

overrated in a manner that at once enfeebles morality and corrupts doctrine. Genuine virtue will be made to give way to fictitious virtue. The just symmetry or relative magnitude of duties will be enormously distorted. And yet all this while there is no compulsion, there is no tax-gatherer or farmer of tithes—no state alliance. The Voluntary principle is in its full triumphant course. Nevertheless, a system of spiritual despotism, as cruel as it is foul, is fastening on the necks of the people. Why do any people submit to an unarmed tyranny of this sort? Nothing binds to obedience but sentiment and opinion. Their goods would not be distrained were they flatly to refuse their accustomed quotas. Why do they submit? Ask the Christian commonalty of the third or fourth century; ask the European nations of the ninth; or, not to go so far, ask our contemporaries and countrymen, the starving inmates of Irish hovels.”\* We must be permitted to add, nearer home still—ask the members of the Free Secession. †

But we must not dwell on tendencies when we are furnished with facts—at least with one fact, which exhibits on a large scale the peculiar evils to which

\* “Spiritual Despotism,” by the author of the “Natural History of Enthusiasm,” page 54.

† In proof of the intensity of pressure on the popular purse, we might refer to the last earnest “Appeal” of Dr Chalmers on the finances of the Free Church. In reading it, we are perplexed—we are stunned. We feel as though placed in a mighty factory, where multitudes of noisy machines are plying their task, rather than

we refer—I mean, the appropriation of the monies which, through the hands of their deputation, they received from the slave-holding churches in America. This is an act which, on the part of the Free Secession, has been as openly accomplished as it has been strongly and generally condemned;—and in saying so, one would think that a reference to the circumstance is enough. As I understand it, we are now living in the nineteenth century. We have been taking credit to ourselves for much light; and the idea has been as fondly cherished as it has been widely circulated, that while there is no article in morals that has not been rightly determined in the school of Christian ethics, they are gaining their ascendancy and asserting their proper place in the councils of Christian nations. On the great question of slavery, our congratulations have been peculiarly loud. That Wilberforce did not live in vain—that, after years of conflict most anxiously sustained, the cause of our common humanity came to its triumph, and was enrolled on the statute-book—are topics of national interest familiar to all of us. Hailed as the victory of truth over error—of an enlightened Chris-

within the precincts of a Christian church. Why should Dr Chalmers exhaust himself in such service? Can it be, that he who has exhibited in its largest dimensions theoretically, should complete the task by demonstrating experimentally, on a scale of proportionate magnitude, the utter impotency of the Voluntary system? And in proof of “exaggerated doctrine,” we give in the Appendix, E, the notes of a sermon preached by Mr Guthrie, on the fidelity of which the fullest dependence may be placed.

tianity over a code of morals on which selfishness is but too plainly stamped—it was also welcomed as the commencement of a new era among all the nations of the earth. The anticipation was cherished, that the ameliorating influence of British justice, in harmony with the voice of conscience and of God, touching the chains of the captive, and bidding the bond go free—would be gratefully recognised in other kingdoms; and that, as every sea was swept of that dire visitant the slave-ship, the most secluded recesses of Christendom, where slavery had intrenched itself for ages, should be purged by the same purifying breeze. America, especially, was not overlooked. That, despite its boasted liberty, slavery should there have its stronghold—nay, that in the Christian temple it should erect its shrine, gathering its priesthood and collecting its incense, not from the veriest dregs of the political world, but from the tribe of Levi, bearing in their hands the vessels of the sanctuary—must ever remain one of the greatest blots on the page of history, and on the religion of our Saviour and God. The liberties of mankind, so largely asserted elsewhere, not less than Christianity, seemed to require its destruction—and, without any violence done to the law of nations, America had been made aware of it. It needed not to be thundered at the cannon's mouth. She required no emissaries to tell her that the religion of Jesus had been outraged within her borders. No exaggerated declamation was needed to convince her, that the



freedom of which she boasted was but a wretched form, while the far-famed Union was cemented by tears and by blood. It had been proclaimed in every Christian senate-house—and as Europe looked on in expectation that at no distant period America would prove herself worthy of her freedom, by the repudiation of cherished prejudices and the sacrifice of unholy gains, Christianity was not indifferent to the prospect, or careless of the arrival of the long-protracted jubilee. But come when it may, the Free Secession have not to say that they have accelerated its approach. Scarcely had they seceded from the Church, when they took a position the most remote from the common sympathies of Christendom. They sought America, but not as the precursors of freedom, or the heralds of its cause. That was no business of theirs. For money they went—and, that obtained, what mattered it from what quarter it came? It might be it was gathered (to say the least) on doubtful ground, from which others might shrink—that the cries of thousands had been lodged with it, and that these cries had reached the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth—that did not affect the value of the currency, or the colour of the coin. It might be that churches were reared and pastors maintained by the ungodly traffic—that the ministrations of the pulpit had been prostituted to its defence—and that, under its withering blight, all that was fair, and lovely, and of good report, had been foully and fatally blasted—that awoke no

pity, and elicited no tone of remonstrance. Their spirits were not "stirred within" them. It was not for them to be vexed with Egypt, where they had gone down for help. The small cords of their indignation were twisted after another fashion and plied in another way. Their scourge was reserved for the Church of Scotland; and, as in mockery of the scenes where they stood, they doubtless pronounced it a house of bondage and a den of thieves, we are not informed that they called aloud in the hearing of these American money-changers, and in sight of the tables where something else than "oxen, and sheep, and doves," had been sold—"Take these hence; make not the house of God a house of merchandise."

I am aware that the appropriation of this money by the Free Church has been openly defended; and defended against the remonstrances with which, from various quarters, it has been assailed. This I consider not the least melancholy feature in the transaction. Had it perpetrated no other evil than by retarding, by a few months or years, the march of improvement in one of the great quarters of the globe, it was still to be reprehended. But it has entailed other evils. It has thrown us back on a code of ethics, against which, apart from all reasoning, the religious world, quickened into new life, and emancipated from old errors, rises with instinctive aversion. Their line of defence is essentially West Indian. The foregone conclusions, and the exploded policy of a party which sought to

retard the triumph of truth by a strange admixture of arguments drawn from an immature state of religion in the Jewish economy, and a graduated scale of their own, by which the great-grandson may possibly share in rights of which his fathers were unrighteously deprived,—these are again virtually revived. We are carried back to the vicinity of the pest-house, and that pest-house a church. The approach is most cautious—it is not to be needlessly disturbed. Not a look and not a tone betrays the reverend visitant from Scotland. Deaf he is to the rattle of the chain—blind he is to the signals of distress to which all Europe is awake. His own case is urgent—his nerves are strung—he ascends the pulpit—he asks the sympathy of the slave-holders for an oppressed and outraged Christianity in “the land of the mountain and the flood;” and, touched by the appeal, the purse-strings of their charity are unloosed. Filled with the sense of his own wrongs, it is not for him to remember the affliction of Joseph; and as he retires arm in arm with the minister of a sanctuary where, perhaps, but a Sabbath-day before, there was notice given of an auction of slaves, the property of the church, and sold for its behoof, he carries with him his proffered sympathy, and, it may be, has the promise of his prayers. Verily, such conquests are not to be envied, any more than the “impressions” of Mr Lewis, one of the deputies, who, in the published account of his visit, says this—“We have no hesitation in pro-

nouncing slave-holding a sin, and calling on all slaveholders to abandon it;—*we have as little in pronouncing these men foolish and unwise who would proscribe and cast out of the Church those who, like Abraham, have been born and bred to the evil—have seen it practised by the best as well as the worst men from their youth up—have been visited as yet only by scattered rays of that light which has fallen in all its fulness on British Christians, the result of twenty years' moral agitation against the trade, and twenty years more against slavery itself.* Men coming out of moral evil are to be dealt with very differently from men returning to it; even as men coming out of doctrinal error are in a different position from men falling into it. We are wont to make this distinction, having regard to men's imperfect light; and, assuredly, if we desire to do men good, and lead them by the hand out of sin and darkness of any kind, it is by dealing with them as we would desire to be dealt with in like circumstances—*remembering the slowness of our own moral perceptions*, whilst we grieve at their tardy convictions of rectitude and justice. But, while urging these views, which I think must commend themselves to every man's conscience, I am compelled to express my regret at the uncertain sound yet uttered by the Presbyterian churches of America, and at their extreme timidity and slowness in taking any part in this great question, even that part to which they are called in vindication of the violated privileges of their own

churches." And as little do we envy the feelings of the committee of the Free Church, when, after their deputies had returned, and put a few thousand miles between them and their money-giving friends, they report this to their Assembly:—"The committee might further observe, that the real question which has been raised, so far as the conduct of this Church is concerned, is, not whether the American churches ought, or ought not, to refuse the privilege of their communion to all slave-holders? Nor whether they are, or are not, as faithful as they should and might be, in exercising discipline against all the moral offences, and all the cruelty and neglect which the existence of that relation is apt to cause? Nor whether they are doing all that they should and might do to influence public opinion and the legislative councils, with a view to the abolition of this nationally sinful system?—But *whether this Church, having been brought, in God's providence, into intercourse with these churches, as regards the interchange of brotherly sympathy and aid, is bound to refuse the tokens of their attachment which their people have given, and to renounce and repudiate all further friendly correspondence with them; or, is not rather at liberty, or under an obligation, to continue to cultivate a good understanding with them; taking care always to do so for the very purpose of faithfully exhorting and admonishing them to a full discharge of their duty in this matter, to themselves and their country, as well as to the*

oppressed." Such sophistical reasoning cannot gloss over the enormity of the case. America sought not them—they sought America. They found their way to the Southern States, not the least wealthy in the Union—and into the heart of churches, *which, as churches, had a vested interest* in the slave-trade, and shared in its profits. They remonstrated not. Money alone they wanted, and money they got; and though urged to refund, they have declined to do it. Is this the high-toned bearing of men alive to the evils of slavery—who would patriotically sweep it from the statute-book of a nation—and yet leave it to prey on the very vitals of a Christian church?

It were needless, however, to dwell upon a subject conclusively settled everywhere else but in the councils of the Free Secession. If across the Atlantic, and in the southern states of America, the existence of slavery is proclaimed, in religious perceptions blunted, and morals degraded, and sensibilities crushed, it is not to be thought that they who have cherished its companionship and shared in its gains should preserve unimpaired the nicer instincts of the Christian life. By an inevitable law, they must pay the penalty of their affiliation. And, for the vindication of Scotland, we say they must bear it alone. They stand isolated and apart. On no other denomination do we find the impress of the brand. Protestation against it has been tendered, but in vain. Retract!—no; not a hair's-breadth! is still the watchword of the party; and it

must content all who are beyond their pale, to look on—the astonished witnesses of an appropriation that is without palliation, and without excuse. Nay, in the midst of it all, we must bear to hear still of their close and exclusive affinity to all that is illustrious among the living, and high and ennobling among the dead. The successors of Knox and Melville in the past, they have, in the language of their favourite journal, “the three master minds of Protestantism, in our day, united in setting their seal to the Free Church of Scotland—Thomas Chalmers, Isaac Taylor, and Merle D’Aubigné.” Be it so. *If* they have them, they would do well to keep them. Already have they parted company with the memory of Dr Andrew Thomson. In the office-bearers of a community—whose coffers have been replenished from the slave-holding churches in America—whose deputies crossed the sea, to return laden with the spoil, unabashed by the British flag under which they sailed, and unrebuked by the waves of the Atlantic, to whose rolling waters all but slavery is free—against whose outrage of the common law of Christianity the voice of remonstrance was raised, only to find that the receiving-houses at home had completed the work of Transatlantic robbery—that the dollars had been melted, and were not now to be distinguished from the current coin of the realm;—in such men, so unaccountably stunted in the fair proportions of humanity, and so strangely seared in their Christian sympathies, I for one indignantly decline to recognise

the representatives of one whose opinions were never sold unto bondage—who lived and died a freeman—and whose noblest triumph it was, ere his sun went down—and it went down almost at noonday—that, with Clarkson and Wilberforce, and other kindred spirits, he hurried on the era when the blood-stained page was erased from our history, and Africa once more echoed to the cry—“ How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings ! ”—that ill-used land, where the merciless stranger had been welcomed as the deadly breath of the pestilence. “ Give me the whirlwind ! ” said Dr Thomson, in his last public effort, and at the close of his stirring appeal for the *immediate* emancipation of the slaves—*that* was Jacob’s voice, and there is music in it to the ear of suffering humanity. “ Feed me, I pray thee, with *that same red pottage*, for I am faint,”—that is the voice of Esau. And “ he sold his birthright for a mess.”



## CHAPTER X.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS.

IF, in the observations which I have thus submitted to the consideration of the public, I have spoken my mind honestly and fearlessly, I trust that I have not done so in acrimony of temper, whatever may be said of my boldness of speech. I am quite aware, of course, of the criticism to which these observations will subject me, and of the sharp ordeal through which they must pass. Nor can I plead ignorance of the temper and bearing of those to whom they must prove any thing but palatable. Brought into contact with them on many occasions, I know full well that they are little inclined to brook opposition to their will; and that, though reserving to themselves the privilege, and employing it too, of pronouncing largely on the character and condition of Christian communities other than their own, they are but little disposed to concede this privilege to their neighbours. But as I am not amenable to their jurisdiction, they are not to be troubled with my appeal. It lies elsewhere;—to an intelligent, and, let me add, to a Christian public, not fettered by their

dogmas, nor harassed by their rule—exercising an impartial judgment on our recent troubles in the Church ; and prepared to pronounce calmly and dispassionately between us and them—between the Church from which they have retired, and that which they are labouring to erect.

Of such an appeal I am not afraid. If there are those who entertain the conscientious opinion, that every establishment of religion by the civil magistrate is wrong in principle, they will do the Church of Scotland the justice to believe, that in holding an opposite view, she would not wilfully compromise those spiritual privileges and functions which inherently belong to every church, whether established or not. The office-bearers of that Church are not conscious of having done so ; and I know that I can claim the concurrence of almost all the Evangelical Dissenters in the country, when I say, that the conduct of those who have now seceded—their policy and their plans, their struggles and their strivings, when in the Establishment, to keep possession of its emoluments—however coincident with the “Voluntary” views of the day, awoke no sympathy, and commanded no response. Though studiously courted, and courted for a purpose too plain to be mistaken, the Dissenters were not won. Till the Secession was over there was no intermingling ; and even now, occupying as they do common ground, and bound though they are, to a certain extent, by a community of interest, I cannot

see the golden chain of a wholesome and undivided Christian sympathy imparting to them unity and strength. That there has been the semblance of this I do not deny. Essays have been written on the all-important subject of Christian union; but these, instead of hastening its arrival, have only made more palpably plain the differential points on which almost every denomination is most vigorously entrenching itself. Deputations have entered the hall of Tanfield, but they have learned to become much more chary in their visits, and much more cautious in their eulogies. A time of reserve has succeeded a season, apparently at least, of unbounded confidence; and not unnaturally have the sister branches of the Secession learned to distrust those, who, steady to no purpose but their own aggrandisement and the destruction of the Church, at one time elevate their protest, emblazoned with the insignia of an establishment, and anon depress it; at one time cry out for the abolition of all tests in the universities of Scotland, and anon for tests that will exclude all Dissenters but themselves; at one time expanding their arms so widely as to overtake in their embrace the universal family of the faithful; and again, so closely compressing them as not to leave admission for the most fractional portion of the great Christian commonwealth.

It were an anomaly, certainly, in the Christian world, did a secession, originated and conducted as this has been up to this day, become the herald and the harbinger

of the millennial reign of love. Its own declarations would have it so; and there were some, perhaps, not unwilling to entertain the hope, that in the providence of God, the recent attempt, of which they were the originators, might lead to the most blessed results. The formation of the Evangelical Alliance was not unwelcome to many devout men of various churches and creeds. The reign of separation and division every where had been a long one; and, in some places, the warfare had been peculiarly keen and protracted. What can be more repugnant to the beautiful idea which our Saviour gives us of his Church, as one fold under one shepherd, than the aspect of that Church, split into different sections, frowning defiance on each other, "as though the epithet 'militant,' when applied to it, were designed to announce, not a state of conflict with the powers of darkness, but of intestine warfare and division?" What more extraordinary, than that they who differ only on one subject, and that perhaps of very inferior moment, should contend with more fierceness than has been usually displayed for all that is vital and important in Christianity itself? Who can tell how often the perplexed and bewildered mind has received its final and fatal shock from this spectacle of sin, and folly, and pride? Who can calculate how often it has provoked the displeasure of Him whose name is love, arresting the outgivings of the Spirit, and leaving the Church in many an age to its own dark and bewildered course?

These are evils most deeply to be deplored, and we have the confession of the most eminent men of all churches that deserve the name, that a new spirit and energy must arise ere Christianity possess itself of the empire decreed to it in the fulness of time ; and that the principle of repulsion must be destroyed, which keeps Christians alike from each other and from the common centre where they should unite and repose. In proportion, however, to the importance of the subject, and the magnitude of the interest at stake, should be the watchful jealousy with which it is guarded. And in this I do not refer to mere orthodoxy of views, or harmony of sentiment on the great and essential points of Christian doctrine. That is indispensable—a unity of mind so replenished with the love of the truth as it is in Jesus, that, when compared with this, all minor points fade into insignificance. But more than this is required. As there must be no heresy to mar the harmony of the symbol, there must be no latent grudge to destroy the sympathies of the heart. The heart, not less than the head, must be in good order in all such alliances ; and then only can they be expected to prosper ;—when from no motive of policy, but under the guidance of principle—filled with a holy love to all the brotherhood, by whatever name or denomination they are known—cherishing no antipathies to any, but sincerely wishing the welfare of all, men are striving prayerfully, and striving earnestly, to quench the fires of controversy,

that the gospel may shine every where with its pure and peaceful light. On such an alliance we would look for a blessing, even the blessing of Him whose emblem is the dove, and who alone can effectually move on the troubled waters of the sanctuary. But is it otherwise with any one who would seek to take a conspicuous part in such a movement? Does faction creep into it, only to employ it as one among many instruments to accomplish its designs? Is a league to be formed, which, full of love in England, discharges itself, on Scottish ground, in the most vindictive anathemas? Is British evangelism to be bound together in the closest brotherhood, not that the triumph of truth may be advanced, but that the reign of faction may be the better perpetuated? Of such mock alliances the evils are incalculable. And they are worse than a mockery and a delusion. They are an insult to the Christian body, and they bring dishonour on the Christian name. Bound together, not by the cords of love, but by the bands of bigotry, they will do more harm to religion than all the ravings of the unbeliever, or the dreams of the sceptic. More than a thousand open contests on the field of the world, will they deserve the cause of the gospel. The studied exclusion, or the contumelious treatment, of a single section of the Christian commonwealth, is the manifestation of a spirit which, in different circumstances, will take umbrage at all. This is the "plague" spot in the feast of love — this the "dead fly" in the ointment of the

apothecary ; and not till relieved of this foul and noxious spirit, may we expect that, in these distracted days, the cause of Christian union will come to its full and unfettered triumph.

It is a day much to be longed for, even as it is earnestly to be prayed for. There is in the moral, as well as in the physical world, an irreversible law, under the ceaseless influence of which, every form of existence is joining its kindred elements—combining by its power the diversified features of society into systems of harmony and union. By the application of various tests to the development of character, the statesman, the philosopher, and the sensualist, according to their prevailing habits, are ever surrounding themselves with those who exhibit the moral or the intellectual features of the family to which they themselves belong. The process of assimilation is never at rest ; and kindred join kindred, concentrating in their collective capacity the evil or the good which form the principle of their union. Why should such a process be retarded any where in the Christian world? He who knoweth what is in man deemed it not good for his people that they should be alone, each individual pursuing his course by himself. He commanded their association in churches, in the bonds of a close and endearing fellowship ; and established ordinances of public worship, and requirements of social intercourse, that in the due observance of these they might strengthen one another's hands, and encourage

one another's hearts on the road to heaven. And this is the standing law of the Christian world, from the obligation of which she is never relieved. In primitive times it circulated far and wide the praises of the Saviour—eliciting from the pagan the well-known exclamation, “See how these Christians love one another;” and if the religion of Jesus is to appear again in its pristine glory—“bright as the sun, and fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners,”—it must display its loveliness by showing its love. A common solicitude, not less than a common interest, must bind the hearts of all God's people together. They must stand in close order as a phalanx that has yet a foe to meet, a victory to achieve, and a conquest to gain—and if the kingdoms of this earth are to be reclaimed from the usurped dominion of the god of this world—if, through the effusion of the Spirit on the thirsty ground, and by the agency of men whom He hath called to a knowledge of the truth, the visions of prophecy are to be realised, and “the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest”—it must be when, in the history of all the redeemed, the love of a crucified Saviour is filling the whole soul, and enlarging the sphere of their spiritual vision—leaving nothing to be felt but the treasures and the triumphs of Christianity. Oh, that this salvation of God were come out of Zion, and that the dispersed of Israel were thus gathered into one! Such a blessed revival



in the Christian world—such a holy blending of heart with heart in the career of duty—such a triumphant refutation of the reproach of the worldling—such a gracious healing of our divisions—such a happy union of the friends of the Redeemer upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone—what homage would it yield—what mighty strength would it impart to the spread of pure and undefiled religion! The gracious promise would receive its fulfilment, “Ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the briar shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.”

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## APPENDIX.

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### A.

THE particular Note referred to has not been obtained in time for press. It is well known to all conversant with the question, and was largely commented on at the time of its appearance. We may also refer to his Lordship's Note on the Alves case, April 1843; and on the Cambusnethan case, in January last.

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### B.

*28th November, 1821.*

Sir H. Moncreiff then gave in his reasons of dissent from the resolution of last meeting on the subject of the memorial and petition of the Governors of George Heriot's Hospital, which were read as follows:—

“ I dissent—1st, Because there is no example which can be regarded as a precedent of the erection of a new landward parish by the exclusive authority of a Presbytery, or of any of the ecclesiastical courts of Scotland. Though three examples—from the parishes of North Leith, Ferry-Port-on-Craig, and Strichen, have been founded on as if they were precedents in point, these examples are quite inapplicable to the case before

the Presbytery—the two first having been erected by Act of Parliament, without the least reference to the decree of a Presbytery; and the parish of Strichen, though it was nominally erected by a Synod, having afterwards received the ratification of Parliament because, without this ratification it was held to be both ineffectual and illegal, and was therefore expressly, and *in terminis* erected anew; while having been besides an erection upon teinds, if a Synod could have had the power which the Synod of Aberdeen assumed, it would have been an example of a proceeding which, as far as the Church was concerned, going beyond the case for which it was quoted, proved too much, and therefore can prove nothing as a precedent. 2d, Because the new erection created by the Presbytery is declared in their decree to be an erection *quoad sacra* only, though it is an unquestionable fact, that down to the present time there is not one example upon record of the erection of a parish *quoad sacra tantum*, either by the Court for Plantation of Kirks, or by any Presbytery of the Church; and that, though there are many examples of annexations *quoad sacra*, these cannot, as precedents, warrant the disjunction and erection of new parishes *quoad sacra tantum*, without any direct precedent or authority whatever. 3d, Because the examples chiefly relied on as precedents are all taken from burghs, in which the division into parishes within the burghs does not prevent the different districts from remaining, in many respects, substantially but one parish, notwithstanding the division, and are quite inapplicable to the present case. 4th, Because there is no example, before this decree of the Presbytery dissented from, of the erection of a parish, within which there are no inhabitants to form a congregation at the date of the new erection; and that, in this respect, the decree of the Presbytery is without any parallel or precedent whatever in the records, either in the Court of Teinds, or of the ecclesiastical courts. 5th, Because, though it is admitted that Presbyteries have no power to make new erections where the livings of the incumbents are to arise from teinds, it appears clearly, from the precedents which have been quoted as precedents for the decree of the Presbytery, that many of the parishes originally created by the sole authority of the Church Courts on funds

independent of teinds, have ultimately had the stipends of the incumbents augmented from teinds, as in the case of the second charges of Haddington and Cupar; and that it must be equally evident, that if such a proceeding can still be resorted to, the Church Courts would have a power of erecting parishes indirectly on teinds, as well as other funds—a power which has never yet been openly contended for, and which, if it could ever be legally claimed, would effectually counteract all the law which has hitherto been understood to exist on the subject. 6th, Because the Act of Parliament in 1707, by which the present Court for Plantation of Kirks was established, professes to remedy “the prejudice which had before redounded to this nation through the want of an established and fixed judicature” for plantation of kirks and valuation of teinds; and gives to the court, which was by that act created as a fixed and permanent judicature, the power, without limitation or reserve, of transporting kirks, disjoining large parishes, and erecting and building new kirks, under the conditions specified in the Act. And it seems to be an irresistible conclusion from the language of that Act, that it could not have been in the contemplation of the Legislature, that there were to be still existing in the kingdom no less than seventy-eight co-ordinate courts besides, who were to have the power of exercising a large proportion of the same jurisdiction. 7th, Because the cases quoted in support of the co-ordinate jurisdiction of Presbyteries, taken from the powers vested in the Sheriffs’, or other civil or criminal courts, are all cases founded on positive statutes, which can have no analogy to the power assumed by the Presbytery, which no statute had ever authorised. 8th, Because the act of Parliament requires, that in every disjunction or new erection, the consent of the heritors of at least three parts in four of the valuation of the original parish, shall be obtained before the decree can be legally pronounced, and that it does not appear to the dissenter that any evidence to this effect was laid before the Presbytery, when they pronounced the decree in question. That though a report was made to the Presbytery that there had been a meeting of heritors held at South Leith, no evidence was laid before the Presbytery that

the heritors of three parts in four of the valuation of the parish had either attended that meeting, or signified any consent on the subject ; and that in the opinion of the dissenter, with such documents as were before the Presbytery, no decree of disjunction or erection could have been legally pronounced. 9th, Because there are a variety of civil rights vested in every parish legally constituted, to the exercise of which, a parish erected contrary to law might be completely incompetent ; and because, in all the circumstances, it was very inexpedient that the Presbytery should have assumed a power of erecting a parish, to which so many serious and legal objections can be stated. 10th, Because the Governors of George Heriot's Hospital, in the memorial and petition, have preferred to reserve to themselves, as the authors of the endowment, the patronage of the new-erected parish, although both the House of Lords and the Court of Session have long ago decided that the right of patronage in a new erection belongs to the patron of the original parish within which the new erection is made.

(Signed)

H. MONCREIFF WELLWOOD.

### C.

#### MOTIONS ON THE AUCHTERARDER CASE—

##### DR COOK'S MOTION.

In the year 1834, the General Assembly passed an interim act on Calls, whereby it was enacted and ordained :—“ That it shall be an instruction to Presbyteries, that if, at the moderating in a call to a vacant pastoral charge, the major part of the male heads of families, members of the vacant congregation, and in full communion with the Church, shall disapprove of the person in whose favour the call is proposed to be moderated in, such disapproval shall be judged sufficient ground for the Presbytery rejecting such person, and that he shall be rejected accordingly, due notice thereof being forthwith given to all concerned.”

The church and parish of Auchterarder having become vacant in August 1834, on the 16th September thereafter, the Earl of Kinnoul, as patron, issued a presentation to the said church and parish, in favour of the Rev. Robert Young, preacher of the gospel. The presentation having been sustained by the Presbytery, an opportunity was afforded, in terms of the foresaid act and relative regulations, to the male heads of families to give in dissents from the call and settlement of Mr Young, as minister of the parish; and in consequence of dissents having been tendered by a majority of the male heads of families, Mr Young was afterwards rejected as presentee to the said church and parish of Auchterarder.

Thereupon, the Earl of Kinnoul and Mr Young instituted, in the Court of Session, a process of declarator against the Presbytery of Auchterarder, concluding, *inter alia*, that it should be declared, that the rejection of Mr Young as presentee, was *ultra vires* of the Presbytery, in violation of statutes libelled on, and to the serious injury of their patrimonial rights as patron and presentee.

The Presbytery of Auchterarder having transmitted the summons executed against them to the Commission of the General Assembly, which met in November 1835, and the Commission having heard a statement from the Commissioners of the Presbytery of Auchterarder, were, as the record bears, unanimously of opinion "that this is an action which ought to be defended, and therefore recommend to the General Assembly to authorise the Procurator to conduct the defence at the expense of the Church; and, in the meantime, approve of the offer of the Procurator to take charge of the cause in the name of the Presbytery of Auchterarder, so far as may be necessary, before the meeting of the next General Assembly."

The process having been defended, accordingly, by the Presbytery of Auchterarder, under the sanction, and at the expense, of the General Assembly, the following judgment was pronounced by the Court of Session:—"Edinburgh, 8th March, 1838.—The Lords of the First Division having considered the cases for the Earl of Kinnoul and the Rev. Robert Young, and for the Presbytery of Auchterarder, and additional plea in de-

fence admitted to the record, and having heard counsel for the said parties at length, in presence of the Judges of the Second Division, and Lords Ordinary, and having heard the opinions of the said Judges, they, in terms of the opinions of the majority of the Judges, repel the objections to the jurisdiction of the Court, and to the competency of the action as directed against the Presbytery. Further, repel the plea in defence of acquiescence: Find that the Earl of Kinnoul has legally, validly, and effectually, exercised his right, as patron of the church and parish of Auchterarder, by presenting the pursuer, the said Robert Young, to the said church and parish: Find that the defenders, the Presbytery of Auchterarder, did refuse, and continue to refuse, to take trial of the qualifications of the said Robert Young, and have rejected him as presentee to the said church and parish on the sole ground—as they admit on the record—that a majority of male heads of families, communicants in the said parish have dissented, without any reasons assigned, from his admission as minister: Find, that the Presbytery in so doing, have acted to the hurt and prejudice of the said pursuers—illegally, and in violation of their duty—and contrary to the provisions of certain statutes libelled on; and in particular, contrary to the provisions of the statute 10th, Anne, chap. 12, entitled, “An act to restore patrons to their ancient rights of presenting ministers to the churches vacant in that part of Great Britain called Scotland—in so far repel the defences stated on the part of the Presbytery, and decern and declare accordingly; and allow the above decree to go out, and be extracted as an interim decree—and with these findings and declarations, remit the process to the Lord Ordinary to proceed further therein as he shall see just. (Signed) C. HOPE, I.P.D.”

In terms of the authority given by the General Assembly to the Procurator for the Church, on the 24th May, 1838, to appeal the judgment of the Court of Session, so soon as he and the other counsel for the Presbytery in the said cause shall think fit, an appeal was entered to the House of Lords, by whom the following judgment has been pronounced: 3d May 1839:—“It is ordered and judged by the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, That the said petition and



appeal be and is hereby dismissed this house, and that the said interlocutor therein complained of be, and the same is hereby affirmed."

Under these circumstances, it is moved, "That the Act on Calls, commonly denominated the Veto Act, having been thus declared by the supreme civil tribunals of the country, to infringe on civil and patrimonial rights, with which the Church has often and expressly required that its judicatories should not intermeddle as being matters incompetent to them, and not within their jurisdiction, it be an instruction by the General Assembly to all Presbyteries, that they proceed, henceforth, in the settlement of parishes according to the practice which prevailed previously to the passing of that act; keeping specially in view the undoubted privilege of parishioners to state, at the moderating in the call, any relevant objection to the induction of presentees; upon which Presbyteries, after hearing parties, shall decide—it being in the power of these parties to appeal, if they see cause, to the superior church courts."

#### DR CHALMERS'S MOTION.

The General Assembly having heard the report of the Procurator on the Auchterarder case, and considered the judgment of the House of Lords affirming the decision of the Court of Session, and being satisfied that, by the said judgment, all questions of civil right, so far as the Presbytery of Auchterarder is concerned, are substantially decided, do now, in accordance with the uniform practice of this Church, and with the resolution of last General Assembly ever to give and inculcate implicit obedience to the decisions of civil courts in regard to the civil rights and emoluments secured by law to the Church, instruct the said Presbytery to offer no further resistance to the claims of Mr Young or of the patron, to the emoluments of the benefice of Auchterarder, and to refrain from claiming the *jus devolutum*, or any other civil right or privilege connected with the said benefice.

And whereas the principle of Non-intrusion is one coeval with the Reformed Kirk of Scotland, and forms an integral part of its constitution, embodied in its standards, and declared

in various acts of Assembly, the General Assembly resolved that this principle cannot be abandoned, and that no presentee shall be forced upon any parish contrary to the will of the congregation.

And whereas, by the decision above referred to, it appears that when this principle is carried into effect in any parish, the legal provision for the sustentation of the ministry in that parish may be thereby suspended, the General Assembly, being deeply impressed with the unhappy consequences which must arise from any collision between the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, and holding it to be their duty to use every mean in their power, not involving any dereliction of the principles and fundamental laws of their constitution to prevent such unfortunate results, do therefore appoint a committee for the purpose of considering in what way the privileges of the National Establishment, and the harmony between Church and State, may remain unimpaired, with instructions to confer with the government of the country if they see cause.

#### DR MUIR'S MOTION.

RESOLVED,—I. That the Church, in order the more effectually to accomplish *that* which has ever since been the design of her enactments relative to the calling and inducting of Ministers,—viz., the securing for vacant parishes of persons not only irreproachable in moral character, sound in doctrine, and of adequate learning, but also suited to the parishes to which they are nominated,—did pass the Act on Calls, commonly termed the Veto Act.

II. That, in passing this Act of her own will, and carrying it into effect, the Church was influenced by the belief, that this Act being not only in its nature, but also in its consequences, strictly and purely spiritual, there was no necessity to obtain previously the concurrence of the Legislature to it.

III. That the decision of the Supreme Civil Tribunal, in the recent case of Auchterarder, has determined that the consequences of this Act do infringe on civil and patrimonial rights; and that hence it is ascertained to have been incompetent for

the General Assembly to enforce the said enactment, without having first obtained the sanction of the Legislature.

IV. That the Church, however, while giving and inculcating implicit obedience to the decisions of the Civil Courts in all matters relating to a civil right, ought not to forego the steady prosecution of her own high purpose of securing more effectually the appointment of ministers not only sound in doctrine and morals, but also suitable to the parishes to which they are nominated.

V. That the suitability of presentees for the parishes to which they are nominated, and all circumstances and considerations for ascertaining *that* suitability in each particular case, whether as to the situation or mind of the people, or as to the special qualifications of the Presentees themselves, ought to become the subjects of investigation and judgment to Presbyteries, in the discharge of their solemn duty in the filling up of vacancies, as well as the usual and general qualifications in candidates for the sacred ministry.

VI. That a Committee be appointed to consider and to report as to the plan which may be best calculated for attaining this important end, and whereby, consistently with the acknowledgment and enforcement of such civil rights as are recognised by the law of the land, the spiritual interests of the Christian people, the judicial character and privileges of the Ecclesiastical Courts, and the professional character and usefulness of probationers, may be effectually maintained, and the union between Church and State be preserved entire.

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## D.

SIR.—Having just read a Narrative by Dr Candlish, relating to Certain Recent Negotiations for the Settlement of the Scottish Church Question, intended, I presume, as a justification of the part which he and his friends have taken in the matter, I cannot allow one or two observations which he has made, regarding the sentiments and conduct of the Minority of the Assembly's Non-Intrusion Committee, to pass altogether un-

noticed, more especially as these observations are calculated to mislead that portion of the Church who may take their information and their position from the Narrative in question, without referring to, or sufficiently considering, the published Minutes of the Committee.

On every occasion where Dr Candlish refers to the opinions of the Minority, he speaks of them as having discovered a new *interpretation* of the Clauses which formed the basis of negotiations with the Government.

At p. 25, Dr C. says, "I now see that the words of either clause are susceptible of an *interpretation*, which did not occur to me, or to any of us, at the time, although it has since been brought forward by some Members of Committee."

At p. 27, reference is made "to that *third interpretation*, which some our friends of the Committee have since put on the clause."

Again, at p. 28, he says, "At the time of these negotiations I certainly thought, and but for the *interpretation* since put upon the words by some Members of the Committee, I might still think, that either Sir George Sinclair's clause, or the clause suggested in its stead, when considered by itself, apart from the rest of the Bill, might be regarded as a Non-intrusion measure."

From these passages, any reader of the Narrative might presume that the minority of the Committee had, by some process of ingenious criticism, arrived at an *interpretation* of the clauses proposed, which we ourselves did not at first see, which they did not evidently bear, and which we had endeavoured to get the Committee to adopt.

The plain matter of fact is, that we had for some time observed a disposition to be quit of the negotiations of October altogether. When, therefore, at the Conference with the Solicitor-General, our friends of that Deputation put an interpretation upon the *Liberum Arbitrium* which we considered manifestly inconsistent with former negotiations, and sought to bind the Committee to this interpretation as the *minimum* measure of Legislation to which the Church could consent, we felt ourselves imperatively called upon, by a regard to our own consistency

as well as to the Church's safety, to endeavour to bring back the Committee to their former position.

This will be made apparent by viewing in juxtaposition the clauses in question, and the substantive part of the motion supported by the minority on the 31st December.

BY SIR GEORGE SINCLAIR'S CLAUSE, A POWER OF REJECTION IS ALLOWED TO THE CHURCH, "*in respect that the reasons and objections, though not in the judgment of the Presbytery in themselves conclusive, are entertained by such a proportion of the parishioners as, in the opinion of the Presbytery, to preclude the prospect of the presentee's usefulness in that particular parish.*"

THE COMMITTEE'S CLAUSE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF "FULLY ACCOMPLISHING THE OBJECT INTENDED," WAS FRAMED AS FOLLOWS:—"Or *in respect that the said objections or reasons, though not in themselves conclusive in the judgment of the Presbytery, are entertained by such a proportion of the Parishioners, AND ENTERTAINED BY THEM SO STRONGLY, as to render it, in the opinion of the Presbytery, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE REASONS AND OBJECTIONS AS AFORESAID, AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH THEY PREVAIL, inconsistent with their duty, or with the spiritual interests of the parish, to proceed with the settlement of the presentee as minister of that particular congregation.*"

THE MINORITY, ON THE 31ST DECEMBER, DECLARE BY THEIR MOTION THAT THEY CONSIDER AS "*inadmissible—a measure of settlement leaving the Church courts at full and uncontrolled liberty to reject the presentee in every instance, in respect that the objections and reasons, though not in themselves conclusive in the judgment of the Presbytery, nor such as the court in any way homologates, are yet entertained, and after dealing with the objectors, continue to be entertained, by such a proportion of the parishioners as to make it, in the opinion of the Presbytery, inconsistent with their duty, or with the spiritual interests of the parish, to proceed with the settlement of the presentee in that particular congregation.*"

A comparison of the above will show whether the minority have adopted any *new interpretation* of the clauses forming the the basis of agreement in October.

The fact is, that Dr C. and some of his friends had changed their minds as to that basis of settlement long before. He admits, at p. 21, that "Mr Hope's communication in October

changed his opinion in regard to Sir George Sinclair's clause." It is only matter of astonishment, therefore, to me to find him asserting in one of the passages quoted above, "that, but for the interpretation since put upon the words, by some members of the Committee," he "might still think, that either Sir George Sinclair's clause, or the clause suggested in its stead, when considered by itself, might be regarded as a Non-intrusion measure." The substantive part of our motion is identical, and was intended to be identical, with the Committee's own clause, except that we left out that portion of it which required the Church courts, in coming to a judgment, to *take into account the reasons and objections*—an omission of which Dr Candlish and the framers of the clause in question cannot surely complain, seeing that the presence of these words in it affords the strongest ground for an argument that it warrants an *interpretation* which they are anxious to repudiate, unless, indeed, we are always to read by contraries; and as it has already been maintained, that to *entertain strongly* means to *entertain weakly*, or rather *not to entertain at all*, so *reasons and objections* may mean *bare dissent*.

J. M. HOG.

Newliston, January 27, 1842.

To the Editor, &c.

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E.

NOTES OF SERMON BY MR GUTHRIE, 11TH JAN. 1846.

"I am a stranger and sojourner with you."—*Genesis*, xxiii. 1-4.

"Abraham never actually possessed any of the land of Canaan except the part which he bought for a grave; but he had it all in promise. He believed in this promise, and looked forward to the time when it would be fulfilled. Jacob was in the same circumstances; and when he died in Egypt, made his sons carry him up and bury him in the same grave which Abraham had purchased. Joseph also enacted a promise from

his brethren, to carry up his bones when the time of the promise should come. Now, as Abraham, Jacob, and Joseph, were strangers in the land of promise, so, my friends, are we strangers and sojourners on this earth. They possessed not Canaan, neither should we this earth. They had Canaan in promise, and so have we this earth in promise; for you will find the world, or this earth, among the things enumerated by St Paul as purchased by Christ for his followers. And as certainly as the Israelites obtained possession of the land of Canaan, so certainly will the saints possess the earth, at the resurrection. The Israelites had too Exoduses—one from Egypt into the Wilderness, and another out of the Wilderness into Canaan. Now all Christians have three Exoduses—one when they are converted, a second when they die, and a third at the Resurrection. At this last Exodus, they shall be put in possession of the promised earth. But, my friends, many forget that the earth is only given in promise, and they will possess it just now. They add acre to acre, and field to field, and estate to estate, and call themselves proprietors!—proprietors of the earth!! And, worse than the very heathen who sold Abraham a grave, they will not sell a Christian people as much space as they may build a house to worship God in!—to fall on their knees on!—or to bury their dead out of their sight! But let me tell these proprietors, that they will get only six feet of it at the last. \*

\* \* \* \* \*

“ But in the last place, let the circumstance of our being strangers and sojourners on the earth prevent us from setting our affections upon it and the things that belong to it. I think there is scarcely a greater sin which a man can be guilty of than this. And I agree with an old divine, who says that there are more examples than one in the Bible of drunken Christians, more than one of lying Christians, more than one of unclean Christians, but only one of a covetous hoarding Christian—namely, Lot—and that God burned him out of it. And if any of you, my friends, are hoarding Christians—if God loves you, He will burn you out of it. So far as I can understand the Bible, it appears to me that David—the best king that ever wore a crown—did not leave his great wealth to his sons and daughters, but to build the Temple of Jerusalem. And you

should do likewise. What would a Christian man do with laying up gold? What would a Christian man do always living here? The sailor would not be always on board ship, nor the soldier always on the battle-field, and what would a Christian do with his gold when he dies? It will not purchase one drop of Christ's blood—nor of the balm of Gilead. No, my friends, you cannot take your gold across yon stream that separates this world from the next. There are only two things which you can carry across that stream—your sins, or the righteousness of Christ. Let us do, then, my friends, with our gold as they do in heaven—tread it under our feet."

THE END.









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