

AN
ADDRESS DELIVERED ON LAYING THE
FIRST STONE OF THE
NEW KING'S WEIGH-HOUSE

BY

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AN
ADDRESS
DELIVERED
ON LAYING THE FIRST STONE
OF THE
New King's Weigh-House,
A PLACE OF WORSHIP INTENDED
FOR THE USE OF A CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

BY T. BINNEY.
FIFTH EDITION.
WITH BRIEF PREFATORY REMARKS ON THE NATURE OF
CERTAIN ANIMADVER-
SIONS ON THE PUBLICATION AND ITS AUTHOR.

LONDON:

JACKSON AND WALFORD,

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1834.

“The idea of a nation of Christians, in the sense in which the phrase is now used, is one which has no exemplar in the New Testament. *My firm conviction* is, (and I speak it, not in the heat and haste of controversial discussion, but with calm deliberation and intense regret,) that national Christianity, in which is necessarily involved the admission to christian privileges of multitudes whose Christianity consists of nothing but the name, and their accidental residence in a christian land,—is

chargeable with a more extensive destruction of souls, than any other extraneous cause whatever which it is possible to specify.—Dr. Wardlaw.

LONDON:

R. CLAY, PRINTER, BREAD-STREET-HILL.

PREFACE

TO THE FIFTH EDITION.

ANOTHER edition of the following “Address” being required, the publishers have thought it proper to print it in octavo, uniform with other pamphlets on the Ecclesiastical Controversy. I avail myself of this change in its appearance, to offer a remark or two on the nature of the animadversions to which it has given rise.

During the last six months, as the reader is probably aware, the author has been attacked, in consequence of this publication, in the most violent manner. Writers of books and pamphlets—Editors of Reviews, Magazines, and Newspapers—Laics and Clergymen, the *latter* of various offices and of all orders—Professors and Prebendaries—Rectors and Curates, Deacons and Priests—have all, in various ways, warned the world against the “poisonous doctrine,” the “monstrous falsehoods,” the “bitterness and the blasphemy of the Weigh-house Orator.” The singularity has been this—that so *many* pens should have “leaped from their repose” to attack one who was so extremely “contemptible;” and that, almost without a single exception, the attacks should consist of little else but calumny and insult, conveyed in language either flippant or vulgar. Indeed, the manner of some of the writers has been unparalleled for its rabid and frantic violence; while the mistakes and misrepresentations of others have been such as could only be attributed to gross ignorance, or to wilful perversion—to the blindness produced by infuriated rage, or to the hardihood resulting from settled malignity. To have noticed such writers, would have been to forget the respect due to one’s self; to answer them was unnecessary—their coarseness and ran-

cour answered themselves. He who is conscious of being right, can afford to be calm; he who apprehends the contrary, but is unwilling to confess it, has no resource but to raise the cry of “blasphemy” or treason.

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I have often apologized for many of my adversaries, on the ground that they had not seen the publication which they reviled. The remarks of most of them contain internal evidence of this fact. Dr. Burton, for instance, describes as “a part of the speech,” words which are not to be found in it, and which were never spoken. The truth is, the men found in a newspaper a passage from the “Appendix”—a passage torn from the context, and altered in its import by mutilations and omissions,—and *beyond this* they knew nothing. On this ground, I have frequently excused their soreness and excitement, though I could not but condemn their precipitancy and injustice in judging of the general character of a writer whose work itself they had never read.

The abuse and violence of the last six months have had one effect upon me—they have *almost* made me a thorough Dissenter, a downright advocate of the “voluntary principle.” When I published this “Address,” I held opinions on the usefulness of endowments, and the possibility of state-assistance, so different from the approved standard of dissent, that, by many, I was hardly considered a Dissenter at all; I still entertained the views which I had thrown out, some time before, in “Two Letters by Fiat Justitia,” and I introduced a clause into the “Appendix,” expressive of the opinion that there might, perhaps, be “some kind and degree of aid” furnished by a government to religion and religious sects, distinct from the principle and form of an exclusive establishment. When, however, I have seen in what a spirit those who enjoy government patronage can write—when I have seen “Regius Professors of Divinity”—dignified clergymen, gentlemen and scholars—so forgetful of what was due to themselves, their profession, and their faith, as to seem at home in the language of the turf and the ring;—when I have “observed” “Christian” Editors indulging in habitual flippancy and virtual falsehood, adding cowardice to crime,

private duplicity to public injustice;—when I have seen arts and insinuations of the foulest description employed to produce an impression, which some of the writers must have *known* would be false;—when I have looked upon and

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listened to these things, I have said to myself, as these men differ in every thing else, and only agree in being equally connected with a state-church, in *this* quality, common to them all, must originate their common disposition to injustice. I have thus met, in my own experience, with what seems to indicate that there is something poisonous and paralyzing to the Christian spirit in Parliamentary provision for Christian instructors, and, fearing that any, and that every form of such provision would be bad, I have *almost* decided on joining the Voluntary Church Society, and (instructed by the conduct of my Episcopal *friends*) declaring myself an advocate of the *absolute, unaided, voluntary principle*, as at once the most defensible in theory, and the only one favourable to religion in fact.

So far as I am concerned, all the wrath and rage excited by this publication, have been prodigally wasted—they have neither disturbed my tranquillity, nor altered my opinions. How could they?—Sheer abuse can neither hurt the heart, nor convince the understanding. Instead of clamorously condemning an individual for the high crime of having an opinion, it would have been better calmly to have examined the opinion itself. For holding and expressing this opinion, the author's state of mind has been described as awful!—but, if it should happen that his opinion is right, *what* is it that is awful then? Many a delicate sentimentalist is shocked at the “uncharitableness” of the preacher who mentions *hell*; and yet, in looking at the parties, it may not be difficult to tell *whose* heart is the tenderest of the two. Charity does not consist in liberality towards error, but in love to individuals; and it *might* have been seen that the language I employ carefully discriminates between systems and men. Had any individual, with the seriousness which the subject demands, and *with which I wrote* when I penned the obnoxious and “celebrated” sentence—had any one thus

appealed to me respecting it, he would have found me ready to explain my meaning; to defend, by the highest examples, the phraseology I had employed; and to state the *data* on which my “belief” and “conviction” rest—*data*, the

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sufficiency of which, evangelical churchmen, on their own principles, would find it, I believe, difficult to deny. This, however, was not done, and I think myself entitled to say, that it is too late to do it now. Any thing serious should have had an answer, but I could not notice buffoonery and abuse; and now, after the conduct pursued—every principle of honour violated, and every maxim of courtesy forgotten—I hold myself under no obligation to notice any appeals or animadversions whatever. In a little time, the rapid and resistless progress of opinion and of events, will, among the pious of all parties, leave nothing to be accomplished by discussion and controversy. The sentiment which I expressed (in the *principle*, at least, if not to the *extent* of it,) is that, in the estimation of *religious* men, on which the question of a religious establishment turns. Even the “Christian Observer” admits, that “if it be true, the *anti-establishment-men* are right;” and I add, that, not only are they right, *if it be true*, but they are right if they *believe* it to be true. In many of the serious clergy there is a secret suspicion of its truth. By Dissenters it has long been felt, expressed, and deplored; with them, the great controversy of the present times is deeply and eminently religious. If it were not so, I should never have approached it. I never touch, it in connexion with infidels and radicals. I know nothing of political confederacies, and political agitation. The political movements incumbent on Dissenters are *accidental* to their principles, and, in devout men, are sanctified by the motive and the purpose with which they are associated. I desire, habitually, to view the question as it affects *the salvation of souls*—the glory of Christ—the purity and UNITY of his church; and I believe, that when *some* others come to contemplate it in the same light, they will not then mistake my spirit, misrepresent my senti-

ments, calumniate my character, nor—*wonder that I should have written what I have written.*

June 5th, 1834.

ADDRESS.

THE first stone of a public building devoted to the purposes of general benevolence, or to the advancement of science, of learning, or of religion, has often been laid with some ceremony, adapted to attach importance to the undertaking, and to excite and diffuse ail interest respecting it. In this way it has been usual to commence the erection of Hospitals and Infirmaries; Schools of Medicine and of Art; Libraries, Museums, Colleges, and Churches. The supporters of such institutions have thus publicly evinced their attachment to the great objects they are intended to promote, while the individual principally engaged has generally availed himself of the opportunity to advocate and enforce them. If there be any thing peculiar in the principles on which a public building is erected, or in the constitution of the Society for whose use it is designed, it is always felt that a distinct reference to this is not only allowable on such occasions, but that silence respecting it would be a species of injustice—injustice to the body whose peculiarities must be supposed to be important to themselves; and injustice to the public, who may properly be considered as having a right to understand them.

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As we are assembled this day to lay the foundation of an edifice sacred to religion—a structure intended for the use of “a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God will be preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ’s ordinance,” it has been

thought desirable and becoming to accompany this act, not only with prayer for the countenance and blessing of Almighty God, but with the expression of those feelings and sentiments which are either naturally excited by the ceremony, or which, from our peculiar principles, it becomes us, at such a time, to indulge and to avow.

In laying the foundation of a building intended for the solemnities of divine worship, it becomes us to rejoice in the pure and spiritual conceptions of the "blessed God," which it is our privilege to possess. We are not living during those "times of ignorance," in which the whole species was "given to idolatry." We are not, so to speak, the subjects of that grand experiment by which, "in the wisdom of God," the world was to be proved incapable of knowing him. We *do* know him; for "the Mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken, and hath called the earth from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." He hath displayed his glory, and "made all his goodness to pass before us." We *do* know him: we know that he "dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing that he giveth to all life and breath, and all things." Our thoughts of

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him are not like *theirs* who "turned the glory of God into a lie," and "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." We "think not" that he is "like unto gold, or silver, or brass, graven by art and man's device; but that he is "the King eternal, immortal, and invisible," "the blessed and only Potentate," the Source and the Sovereign of all rational and intelligent natures. It becomes us to rejoice in these views of the "Father of spirits." "We are also his offspring." We have received "the message," which he has

sent; “we believe that he is”—that “he is love”—that “he is light”—that “he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” We rejoice, therefore, to-day, that we are not “Gentiles,” groping and “searching after God,” abandoned to the darkness of reason, and exposed to the misdirection of guides as ignorant as ourselves. We rejoice that we are not assembled either as the disciples of those who, “professing themselves wise became fools,” or as the slaves and supporters of any superstition. We are not met to lay the foundation of a school of science, “falsely so called.” We are not commencing the erection of a temple, in which the fabrications of ignorance and priestcraft, or the achievements of art and genius, will receive from deluded worshippers the honour which exclusively belongs to God. We are making no provision for the cruelties and impurities of idolatry; for those deeds of darkness and of blood which always attended it, whether elegant or barbarous. We are neither raising a structure to Jupiter or Moloch, nor setting up a circle of stones under the oppres-

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sion and tyranny of Druidical imposture. In all this, it becomes us to rejoice, and we *do* rejoice. We unite in fervent thanksgivings this day, that our fathers were turned from their “lying vanities,” to serve God “the living and the true.”

We are not only laying the foundation of a gilding sacred to Jehovah, but to Jehovah as revealed and manifested in the person of his Son. “He who at first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” It becomes us to rejoice that we are not Jews. I do not mean Jews as at present humbled and oppressed, “a bye-word, a proverb, a hissing, and a curse,” the contempt and ridicule of the nations,—their covenant annulled,

and their glory departed: I do not mean this; I mean Jews, as in the time of Moses, of Solomon, and of Ezra, when, in all their pomp and magnificence, there pertained to them "the adoption and the glory, the giving of the law and the service of God." It is to this that I refer; and I assert, that it becomes us to rejoice this day, that we are not assembled to put together the splendid materials of the primitive tabernacle, nor to lay the foundation of either the first temple or the second. We live in better times than those of "the church in the wilderness," or of the church when confined even "to thy land, O Immanuel." We are under "a better covenant, established upon better promises." Our minds have more light, purer feet more liberty, and our hearts purer and ampler consolation. "If the ministration of death, written

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and engraven in stones, was glorious, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious? If the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory; even that which was made glorious hath no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth; for if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." That which remaineth is ours. Under the gospel dispensation, "we have received a kingdom which cannot be moved;" one, which no subsequent revelation is to supersede or to destroy. We are in possession of "the whole counsel of God"—of truth in her perfect form; and we are furnished with such laws of government and worship, as are adapted to the concerns of a spiritual kingdom. That kingdom is the farthest removed from the "beggarly elements" of previous dispensations, and stands nearest, both in character and place, to that which is on high. In itself it is "the kingdom of heaven;" and be-

tween it and “the consummation of all things” no *new* dispensation is ever to intervene. We are not like the Jew of old, even in the period of his highest privilege, deeply sensible of darkness and defect; longing for the day to break, and the shadows to disperse; “desiring to see what is now seen, and to hear what is now heard,” but dying without the indulgence. “We that believe do enter into rest.” True, the rites and ceremonies of Judaism are gone; Jerusalem is no longer “the perfection of beauty,” “whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of Israel;”

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the temple, the altar, and the priest, the sacrifice and the incense, “have vanished away;” they all “waxed old and decayed,” as things “that were done with;” but they answered the purpose intended by their appointment, and brought in “a better hope,” “by the which we are permitted to draw nigh unto God.” “The shadows of good things to come” have departed, but the “very image” or substance of the things is preserved; We have “a great High Priest,” who, not “by the blood of bulls and of goats, which can never take away sin, but by his own blood, has entered into the holy place, and has obtained for us eternal redemption;” he has entered, “not into the holy place made with hands, the figure of the true; but into heaven itself, there to appear in the presence of God for us.” Instead of being prohibited from approaching within the precincts of the tabernacle, or coming near to the “ark of the covenant,” we are invited, through the “righteous” “Advocate,” to enter with all “boldness” into the very “holiest of all,” and to exercise “liberty of speech” in urging the provisions and the promises of mercy. In these, and kindred discoveries of the gospel dispensation, we are called upon to exult this day. The superiority of the Christian to the Levitical

economy is surpassing and incalculable. “*We* are the circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, who rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” We rejoice, as such, that we are laying the foundation of a building, intended neither for the sacrifices of the temple, nor the services of the synagogue; and that we ourselves are

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not only delivered from the delusion and vassalage of Gentile superstitions, but that we are raised above whatever distinguished the infancy of the Church, and have entered into the full possession of the privileges of believers.

In founding a building intended as a place of Protestant worship, it becomes us to rejoice, that, with respect to the christian church itself, “the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” The edifice about to be raised is not to be constructed for splendid shows and pompous processions. It is not to be filled with the enchantments of music, painting, sculpture, and incense, by which the senses of the people may be ravished, and their minds corrupted and seduced. We build no altars, for we have no officiating priests and no sensible sacrifices. We believe, according to St Peter, that the whole christian church—the body of the believers—are “God’s clergy,” or heritage, and are constituted “a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices by Jesus Christ;” and we believe, according to St. Paul, that we have in heaven “a great High Priest, who was once offered to bear the sins of many,” and who, “by that one offering, has for ever perfected them that are sanctified.” We adore Christ as the “Head of the Church,” and we believe that he is instructing, guiding, and governing it through the instrumentality of Bishops, whom he hath graciously given for this end; but we know nothing either of the supremacy of a pope, or the absolution of a priest. We provide

no confessionals; for we desire not, by such means, to excite terror or to exercise tyranny. We do,

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however, make provision for social and public prayer, for the preaching of the gospel, and the exposition of Scripture. We prepare a place, where “God, who is a Spirit, may be worshipped in spirit and in truth”—where he may be adored and served in the language of the worshippers. We erect schools for the religious education of the young; we provide for those of our number who visit the poor of the neighbourhood, that they may meet and consult together on whatever concerns them in their enterprise of instruction; we have libraries for the use of thoughtful children and intelligent adults, and tracts for the careless, the ignorant, and the busy. We propose, by these means, to demonstrate the nature of our faith and the spirit of our church. Our desire is to enjoy the light of the truth ourselves, and our ambition to maintain, to exhibit, and diffuse it. The Bible—the Bible only—is the religion of Protestants; the Bible—the whole Bible—is the property of the people. We rejoice that on these principles we can take our stand this day. We are laying the first stone, not of a prison in which truth is to be manacled, nor of a show in which she is to be masked; but of a palace and a home, where she may emit her splendour and develop her virtues. It is matter of thankfulness that we are delivered from the dominion of the “Man of Sin;” that we have nothing to do with the yoke of ignorance, but to endeavour to remove it; and nothing with the “word of life” and the lamp of knowledge, but “to hold them forth.” “The candle of the Lord” is lighted in our tabernacle, and we have no desire

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to conceal it by the “bushel” or the “bed.” We are free from the usurpation of Antichrist, the imposture and priestcraft of past ages; and we exult in the thought that we are met this morning to lay the foundation of an edifice sacred to the inculcation of christian truth, as well as to the exercise of christian devotion,

In laying the foundation of a structure dedicated not only to Christian and Protestant worship, but to worship to be conducted by Protestant Dissenters, it becomes us to rejoice, as such, in the liberty which it is at present our privilege to enjoy. There have been periods in the history of our country, when we dared not to have engaged in the public services of this day. It would have been madness to have attempted it. The ceremony would have been a crime punishable by law; it would have been regarded as an outrage on the constituted order of things; and have been thought an insult equally to the King in heaven and the king upon earth. The fact is, the principle of persecution was formerly common to all sects. The Catholics persecuted the Protestants; the Protestants the Catholics; and one class of Protestants another. The rights of conscience and of man were understood and respected by none of them. The nature of religion was misconceived, and the authority of the magistrate misapplied. All the evils of persecution have arisen from the notion—fundamentally false, but once universally admitted—that religion is to be established and supported by the State, and the power of the sword used for the extirpation of error, heresy, and

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schism. This has been the fruitful source of every enormity. Had Christianity never been allied to the State, persecution never could have existed or

prevailed. Rival sects might have reasoned against or ridiculed each other—they might have argued or declaimed—exhausted the resources of logic or the vocabulary of reproach: nothing of this kind would have drawn blood; and, had they dared to draw it by other weapons, the “powers that be,” and that are “ordained of God to be the ministers of good,” would have then interposed, in their proper character and legitimate function, to compel them “to keep the peace,” and to punish them for the commission of outrage and violence: all would have been equally protected from the infliction of “wrong and wicked lewdness;” the magistrate would not have been a judge “in other matters” beyond his province; and hence persecution, had it thus accidentally appeared, must soon have subsided from the absence of that which is essential to its support. It is only when the contest is unequal, and carried on with other weapons besides reason and argument—only when one sect is elevated above the rest, and is aided and backed by the civil arm—that persecution is possible or likely to be permanent. The lawfulness and necessity, however, of this aid and alliance, and the vigorous use of the power it conferred, were once universally admitted and desired, and hence different sects were each and equally persecutors in their turn. The sufferings of many neither enlightened nor softened them. They oppressed when they had power—they complained when they were oppressed

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—and when power returned, they oppressed again. Among Protestants, this was especially the case with the Episcopalians and Presbyterians; and it should never be forgotten, in recollecting the wrongs of our fathers, that the adherents of “prelacy,” as such, furnished their confessors and martyrs in the days of confiscation, proscription, and blood. The Independents were unquestionably

the first who, as a body, advocated a generous and impartial toleration; and if, when in power, they acted inconsistently by excepting “prelacy and popery,” it should be remembered that it *was* inconsistent—that it was opposed to the wishes of their leaders—and that it was occasioned by the influence of other sects, since they never acted exclusively and alone. To them, under God, we are indebted, as a nation, for whatever of civil or religious liberty we enjoy. We breathe that liberty to-day. Our ecclesiastical ancestors, the founders and fathers of this church, for nearly twenty years after its formation, could only meet for worship in comparative secrecy; it was an object with them to be unobserved; their assembling together was illegal; they were safe only by connivance, for they were deprived of civil security and protection. We rejoice in our altered circumstances. We exult in the thought that we can come forth and lay the foundation of our future sanctuary in the face of day, in the presence of numbers, and under the canopy of heaven. We stand, in many respects, on an equal footing with the rest of the community; and the day *will* come when not a vestige of past oppression shall remain. The prin-

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ciples advocated by our ancestors have been gradually acquiring strength and ascendancy; they are beginning to be universally recognized and diffused. The truth has gone forth—the fundamental and formidable truth—fundamental, as the basis of religious freedom; formidable, from its simplicity, to the mightiest strongholds of religious intolerance; the truth has gone forth, that the civil magistrate is not appointed of God for the purpose of saving men’s souls, but of protecting each equally in saving his own; that his province is not to preside over the church, nor to modify nor manage it; that he is not required to legislate

about her doctrines and ceremonies, to determine respectively the true and the becoming; but that, leaving these to be settled by men and by churches for themselves, he is to extend to all the shield of his protection, so long as they entrench not on the rights and liberties of each other, and to exert for any the vigour of his arm, if it can prove that it suffers in either from the usurpation of the rest.

In laying the foundation of a building, for the use of a church which has existed; for one hundred and seventy years, and which; still flourishes in the profession and the maintenance of the essential truths which formed its cement and basis at first, it becomes us to rejoice in this extended period of vitality and vigour. We date our existence, as a distinct and organized Society, separated from the secularized portion of the church, by the mercy of God and the tyranny of the times, and directed to return back to the spirituality and simplicity of apostolical order—we date this from the passing of

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the “Act of Uniformity,” in the year 1662. The first three pastors of the church were ministers ejected from the Establishment by that violent measure. We are reminded to-day, by our present condition, of the melancholy end of many kindred societies, whose rise was contemporary with our own. They originated at the same period, and professed, and gloried in the profession, of the same saving and sanctifying truths. The disappearance of many of them may be accounted for by causes altogether distinct from doctrinal defection; of others, however, this *was* the cause. They departed from the truth, and then the God of truth departed from *them*. Error gradually crept in; spirituality decayed; a secular spirit was, first tolerated and then caressed; coldness and formalism were diffused and propagated; till at last, the dark wing of the angel of death cast its gloomy shadow over

many a place where our fathers worshipped, and “extinct”—“dead”—were written on the deserted and desecrated walls.

This fact is often urged against Dissent—held up as its curse and its condemnation—adduced to demonstrate the danger of a system, which has no legal security for the integrity of the faith, and the uniformity of its ministers. I may be forgiven if I say that I believe it is well known that I have never attempted to conceal the evils of Dissent; I think the evils of all sorts of Dissent ought to be exposed;—evils, by their nature, are bad and debasing;—the evils of Dissent are so, whether it be tolerated Dissent from the Church of England, or established Dissent from the Church of Christ. It

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is, therefore, wise in the supporters of both systems, to get rid, as speedily as possible, of any evils that may be peculiar to either. On proper occasions, I am never reluctant to admit the evils of my own system; but, in the present instance, I must be permitted to contend that the death and burial of anti-evangelical churches, is not an evil, but a good. It is rather an excellence than an evil quietly to inter what has ceased to live—“to bury the dead out of our sight,” instead of embalming an inanimate form, or attempting, by some artificial excitement, to make a cold corpse appear to discharge the functions of a living man. The fact is (speaking without a figure), that all churches are necessarily exposed to the inroads of error. In spite of Acts of Parliament, creeds, and subscriptions, the Church of England is the most discordant and divided christian denomination in the land. The most opposite and conflicting opinions are professed and inculcated by her sons,—by men who have solemnly signed the very same identical declarations. The clergy are separated into parties; the pretence that uniformity exists among them *is* a pretence, and nothing

more; and every man knows it to be so, who has an eye to observe, or an ear to hear, or a head to think; and every such man will admit the assertion, who has honesty to acknowledge what he cannot but perceive. And these differences of opinion are not confined to minor and insignificant matters, but, upon the showing, and according to the current language, of some of the clergy themselves, enter into the very essentials and fundamentals of the faith. Hence it is customary for them to speak of

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large tracts of the country, in which there is only here and there a solitary clergyman who “preaches the gospel;” and this man is often represented as despised by his brethren, and persecuted by his neighbours, for his adherence to the truth: hence, too, we hear of the “gospel” (the *gospel*, observe,) being “introduced” into a place, in which it had not been declared for thirty, or fifty, or a hundred years. By such facts, incessantly obtruded on our attention, we are given to understand that *anti-evangelical clergymen* are an overwhelming majority. If any of an opposite character are elevated and dignified, the wonder is announced with triumph and trumpets, and we are thus left to the natural inference, that in the high places of the Establishment, spiritual religion is the exception and not the rule. Among the mass of the body it is said to be the same: and yet these men are patronized and supported as the legal and authorized instructors of the people; the only persons whose orders are valid, and whose ministry is apostolical; and who are therefore regarded with a blind sentiment of veneration and respect. Let this system, then, be contrasted with the history of *anti-evangelical Dissent*. A minister of our order becomes a “denier of fundamental doctrines;” the consequence is, that he is instantly discountenanced and proscribed; he drags on for a while a heartless existence by the

aid of some slender endowment; one by one his attendants retire, till, at length, the sanctuary comes to look like a sepulchre, and is at last converted to some secular use; while, in the mean time, the active and imperishable principles of our faith spring

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up under the cultivation of other labourers, and flourish in new and multiplied churches. In the Establishment, it is just the contrary. A sort of immortality is conferred on ignorance, imbecility, and error: however dangerous and destructive the doctrines of the minister, he continues to be held up as the legal and legitimate guide of the flock, while the people, perishing and dying, have no power within their own parish to provide themselves with truth on their own principles. The church, though deserted and desolate, stands—stands as a building—the only authorized provision for instruction and worship, though it presents nothing but the monument and the mockery of both. The principle of Dissent compels the evil to cure itself; the principle of the Establishment perpetuates and protects it. With us, the Faith flourishes, though the machinery decays; with our brethren the machinery is preserved at the expense of the Faith. We rejoice this day, that the faith of our fathers is among us in its integrity and vigour; we hope to leave it as an inheritance to our children; and, we trust, they will retain and transmit it inviolate to theirs; but if not—we rejoice in the reflection, that the principles of our communion will confer upon others the liberty and the power, without waiting for the leave of civil or ecclesiastical superiors, to fill up the place of our degenerate descendants.

The structure, of which the first stone has been now laid, will be built and paid for by voluntary contributions. In this circumstance, we feel that at all times,—but especially in times; like these—we are permitted to rejoice with an honest joy. We

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indulge, this day, feelings of pure and enviable independence. *We* build what is intended for ourselves and for our children. We have no power to compel others, who dissent from us as much as we do from *them*, to build an edifice they would never enter. We trust we have not the will, if we had the power, and that, if the power were offered to be conferred, we should have the virtue to refuse it. We give voluntarily all we appropriate of our substance to this sacred erection, acting upon the principle authorized by God himself, in relation both to the tabernacle and the temple. It may be proper, however, to explain our sense of the term voluntary, in times like the present, when a phrase, of which it is a part, is not only meeting the eye and accosting the ear almost every moment of every day, but is employed as the title of societies of no ordinary importance—distinguished by their activity, their numbers, and their magnitude. I regard our churches, then, both as voluntary and compulsive; and our contributions to religion as partaking likewise of the same properties. It is a matter of positive, direct, Christian obligation, resting upon every individual who hears the gospel, to receive and profess it, “to give himself to God and then to the Church,” to appear identified and incorporated with some visible society of believers; but it is a matter of voluntary election, with what particular congregation he associates of that body which appears to him to possess most of the characteristics of Christ’s spiritual kingdom. Hence we are compelled, by our duty to God, to unite with one of those churches, which, without

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condemning others as fundamentally false, we firmly believe to be apostolical and true; while, at the same time, we use our liberty in determining for

ourselves the particular society with which we coalesce. Our churches are thus "voluntary," in opposition to any constraint from the law of the land, but compulsive, in opposition to any supposed independence of "the law of Christ." It is the same with our contributions, and it is the presence and operation of this principle in both, which, we believe, makes our conduct in either "acceptable to God," whether or not it be "approved of men." We give, we repeat, "voluntarily," what we devote of our substance to this edifice,—voluntarily, in respect to an entire freedom from all legal compulsion and constraint; but, in relation to the will of God, we feel ourselves equally constrained and compelled. To give, and to give liberally, is a matter of positive christian obligation;—the obligation of gratitude "to Him who has loved us;" and the obligation of justice because the building is intended for our personal benefit. Acting upon these principles, we feel it is our privilege to exult in them this day. We can look the world and the church firmly in the face, and we can ask, without fearing the reply, "Whose ox have we taken?—whose ass have we taken?—whom have we defrauded?—whom have we oppressed?" We can assert, with unquivering emphasis, that we have forced from no man "his silver or gold, goods or apparel." We can go in procession through the streets, and lay the foundation of our building under the public eye,

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and lift our voices in prayer and praise, and attract the attention of the infidel and the scoffer; but we dread no derision—no gibes, and mockery, and insult, but such as vice and folly will always fling at piety and wisdom. We apprehend no contemptuous insinuations that we are "serving God with that which costs us nothing," or nothing but the trouble of the tax-gatherer to collect. We fear no

murmurs—no dissatisfaction and complaint—from any whom we compel to provide us with religious accommodation, in addition to what they provide for themselves. “It is not expedient for us, doubtless, to glory,” yet “none may stop us in this confidence of boasting.” We do it with honest thankfulness; and we can truly affirm that, if there be any thing which occasions us a pang this day, it is the thought that our brethren of another communion—brethren whom we love “for the truth’s sake that dwelleth in them”—are deprived, on occasions similar to the present, of participating in those sentiments and satisfactions which it is our privilege to cherish and to share. I know that a proceeding opposite to ours is advocated and enforced on the principle of expediency—a principle which, when properly explained, I recognize and admit. It is said that if a person goes forth “armed” with the principle of an Establishment, which is, “that all men shall be compelled to build her churches and pay her ministers,”—it is said, that such a person would have his way clear, and that his course would necessarily be short and successful. We admit it. “Armed” with all the power of the State,—which means—all the strength

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of its armies, and all the force of its police, and all the terror of its prisons;—certainly, such a man might make short work of his mission with a vengeance. It *would* be the shortest way of filling the land with churches in the length and the breadth of it. But, would it also be the most just, and proper, and becoming? Especially if these structures were reared for the exclusive services of one sect, in a nation where the combined numbers of the other sects are probably the majority? Would such a proceeding be not only “short and successful,” but would it be consistent with the nature of religion, the nature of man, the rights of con-

science, and the law of God? No: and I believe that enlightened and purified reason, as possessed either by angels or men, nay, the very bosom of God, the throne and sanctuary of eternal rectitude, echoes the negation. We are acting, this day, on the opposite principle to that which we condemn; and we feel that neither our consciences nor our countrymen can reproach us for what forms the *moral foundation* of the edifice we erect. The sentiments we advocate will one day be universally admitted. They may be summed up in an aphorism like this—one which in its spirit and essence is now traversing the land, and hourly acquiring vigour and ascendancy—As in civil affairs, according to the principles of the British Constitution, taxation without representation is tyranny; so, in religion, compulsory payments to a Church from which we conscientiously dissent, is of the nature of persecution, and the exclusive patronage by the State of one sect is injustice.

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In laying the foundation of a place of Divine worship and Christian instruction—a place, not only intended for our personal benefit, but for that of the poor of the surrounding neighbourhood; we feel that we are only acting in consistency with our professed principles of Christian benevolence, loyalty, and patriotism. We are bound, as a church of Jesus Christ, “to do good unto all men as we have opportunity;” to aim, in our associated character, “to hold forth the Word of Life, and to shine as lights in the world.” We feel bound, by every solemn obligation, to seek the salvation of our neighbours and the benefit of our country. We hope to promote this by the erection of a place in which the gospel is to be preached, and where children will be collected together for instruction. The christian pulpits of the land we believe to be the principal source of whatever

moral virtue or vigour may pervade it; and the imparting to the children of the poor a sound and scriptural education, we regard not only as next in importance, but as that, without which, the power of the pulpit would be limited and lost. In the building begun this day, we make provision for the gratuitous exercise of both of the instruments of good to which we have referred. In the accommodation provided for adults, every fifth sitting will be a gift of christian benevolence to the poor; while three hundred other places, equally free, will be given to their children; that is to say, more than one third—including those who may be in the aisles, one-half—of the entire number of immortal souls, at any time present at our worship, may be

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those who are there “without money and without price:” thus, we not only compel none to contribute to the structure by whom it never could be used, but we provide for those who could not contribute if they would. In addition to one hundred and fifty children in the day schools, one-third of whom are clothed as well as educated, we propose accommodation for three hundred others to receive religious instruction on the Sabbath. Our motive in all this is two-fold. We desire u to save souls from death,” to train immortal spirits for eternity and heaven; and we desire to secure to our country the blessings which religion confers upon society—dropping, as she does, in the present world, inestimable advantages on her way to another. “Righteousness exalteth a nation;” and we are anxious, as lovers of our own, to diffuse and perpetuate those principles by which she may possess it. We are devoted to our lawful Sovereign; we desire the perpetuity of our admirable constitution; we respect magistracy and the laws; we are the enemies of faction, the friends of order, the advocates of obedience; for all these reasons,

we desire to rear around us a portion of the people in the principles and the habits of that faith which teaches them to “fear God and honour the King.” We believe that they will fulfil this precept, in proportion as they understand the grounds of obedience, and can appreciate the advantages of settled government, in comparison with tumult, anarchy, and change. When we reflect on the amount of beneficial impression, in relation both to the present world and a future, which may be

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made upon a portion of our race by the erection of the present building, and which, by the Divine blessing, may be prolonged and propagated to remotest posterity, we cannot but indulge the hope that, in some measure, we are “serving our generation,” and shall not live altogether in vain.

In founding an edifice, intended for the use and occupancy of a church, limited in its communion by no party or sectarian restrictions, I feel that we are permitted to rejoice in this circumstance. There is nothing for which I pray with more frequency or fervour, than that all Christians who agree in the fundamental principles of the gospel may be brought to understand, advocate, and practise, universal communion. Whatever may be their secondary differences in doctrine or discipline, those “who hold the Head” may consistently unite in the services of the sanctuary and the fellowship of the Church; they *ought* to do so, to feel and to manifest “that they are all one in Christ Jesus.” I never expect a perfect uniformity, in all points, in sentiment and practice,—no, not in the Millennium. The union and unity of the Church will never be established or secured by a minute agreement in subordinate particulars. To the very last, probably, there will be Ephraim and Judah; the identity of both with the true Church

will only be ascertained by their affection for each other. The sooner that this spirit is displayed, the better. We trust that we and the churches of our communion, have imbibed something of this Millennial distinction. We maintain, as a Church,

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our specific peculiarities; we profess to be Congregational Dissenters; moderate Calvinists; and family or relative Baptists: but none of these sentiments interfere with our communion and fellowship with all who profess to have received "like precious faith" with ourselves. Every teacher who inculcates the fundamentals of the gospel will be welcome to the pulpit, and every disciple who credibly adheres to the same principles will be welcome at the table, in that house the foundation of which is laid this day. The Evangelical Episcopalian, the orthodox Presbyterian, the individual or personal Baptist, the Methodist, and the Quaker, may each occupy the place of instruction: we agree in essentials, and we can welcome, as the servants of the same Lord, all who, with some subordinate peculiarities, equally honour, confide in, and confess him. We will not hold communion either with the world on the one hand, or with the deniers of fundamental truth on the other; but "all who hold the Head," and who evince their faith by their works, Will receive from us the hand of fellowship and the cup of salvation. "Grace be with all those who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." I should be ashamed if I were laying the foundation of a building, in which none could be recognized as teachers or disciples but the ministers and members of one sect. I could not lift my head in society, if friends and brethren were not only debarred "the liberty of prophesying," but were denied the privilege of committing to their father's sepulchre their spiritual children, the members of another communion, but whose family

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resting-place might be connected with ours; and still more, if the building and the burying-ground were national property, created by taxes levied on the public, and yet restricted to the use of one denomination; I should experience irrepressible anguish, if I, in the circumstances supposed,—I, who might be to the afflicted family an entire stranger,—with no knowledge of the dead and no sympathy with the living,—if I were compelled to take the place of the minister of the departed, while he stood by, silent and sorrowful, enduring the injury of ecclesiastical insult in addition to that of political injustice.

In commencing the erection of a structure devoted to the glory of God and the good of mankind, we desire to mingle feelings of devotion with all the sentiments which we cherish and indulge. We pretend to no consecration of the spot on which this building is to stand; but God, we trust, will sanctify it with his gracious presence, and fill it hereafter with his power and his glory. We desire to recognize our dependence; to feel that without the Divine blessing all we do will be useless; and that, “except the Lord build the house, we shall labour in vain who build it.” We lay the foundation of this sanctuary in prayer; we devoutly commit it to the Divine protection; we look forward with confidence to the period when the “top-stone” shall be “brought forth,” “with shouting” and with praise. We are founding “a place for the Lord, a habitation for the mighty God of Jacob.” In a little time “the house will be finished,” then “will we go into his tabernacle, and worship at his foot-

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stool;” then will we say, “Arise, O Lord, into thy rest, thou and the ark of thy strength; let thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let thy

saints shout for joy.” We anticipate these results. We supplicate the influence of the Spirit to give effect to the word which shall hereafter be declared within these walls. Here, we trust, many will be instructed, and many saved. We cherish the expectation, that, “by the manifestation of the truth,” the hardened will be melted, the scoffer silenced, the immoral reformed: we pray, that “by the still small voice,” the distressed may be comforted, the tempted succoured, the wanderer recovered, the weary refreshed. Here, we hope, the young will be stimulated to decision, and the aged prepared for glory; “the sinner converted from the error of his ways,” and the “man of God thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” We indulge these sacred expectations, and we unite in fervent prayers for their abundant fulfilment. “Send, O Lord,—O Lord, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.”

I conclude by remarking, that the ceremony of the day reminds us of a number of scriptural representations, which will be found to derive from it additional interest, and may be adverted to with great practical advantage. The figurative allusions of the sacred penmen are remarkable for their appropriateness, variety, and beauty. They are drawn from every possible source; from the objects of nature—the relations of life—the occupations of man:—many are suggested by Building and Architecture, to which, on an occasion like this, it cannot be deemed improper to refer. We are commencing

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the erection of an edifice; we have been laying the foundation with appropriate ceremonies; we have deposited and secured our coins and inscriptions; every circumstance reminds us of something attributed to the omnipotent Architect. “Ye are *God’s* building;”—“Behold! *I* lay in Zion a stone,—*I* will engrave the graving thereof;” “the foundation of God standeth sure, having *this seal*, the Lord

knoweth them that are his, and, let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”—Meditate on the *properties* of this foundation—“a tried corner stone, elect, precious; whosoever believeth shall not be ashamed.”—Consider its *pre-eminence, and the peril of rejecting it.*—“Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid—Jesus Christ;” “On this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it;” “Whoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder.” Think of the *materials* of the structure—“living stones;” of its *decorations*—“the beauties of holiness;” of the *ultimate design* of the erection—“a temple,” “a spiritual house,” “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” Reflecting upon such representations, let us inquire whether *we* are thus built on the immovable foundation,—built into the edifice—forming a vital part of the residence of God?—The ceremony reminds us, that a day is coming when every thing but what truly belongs to this building shall be utterly destroyed. None of the present confederacies of the human race shall exist hereafter;—none but that, which begins, continues, and is consummated in

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God. This shall be coeval with eternity. This is that “spiritual house,” that divine “building,” “whose foundations are in the holy mountains” and whose permanency and stability nothing can impair. Every thing distinct from it shall perish. And not only so,—but “the wood, the hay, and the stubble” that may be mingled with its materials; “the gold, and silver, and precious stones” that may be there;—all things, however base or beautiful they may be, which are not intrinsically a part of the structure itself—which, as doctrines, are not true, or, as persons, are not holy—all shall perish. “The fire shall try every man’s work.” It shall

search, and purge, and penetrate, and burn, and “nothing shall be hid from the heat thereof.” It becomes us, by anxious vigilance and constant consistency, to be careful to escape a condemnation like this. “Seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless.”—The ceremony reminds us of a world in which there will be no temple. When heaven was opened to the view of “the beloved disciple,” he saw “no temple therein”—no place peculiarly appropriated to religious service. Every spot of that world is equally holy; every portion of it is pervaded and sanctified by the presence of God. There is nothing common or unclean there. It is “the holy of holies” of the universe. Heaven is the sanctuary, as eternity is the sabbath, of all redeemed and unfallen natures. *This* world is corrupt and polluted; it is under “the curse;” we seem to have rescued a portion from the general anathema, when we have enclosed it within sacred

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limits, and devoted it to the service of “the blessed God;” but in the world we anticipate *all* is sacred;—no part can be holier than the rest; God is the glory of the whole, and the Lamb is universally its light and its lustre.—The ceremony reminds us of the brevity of life. Our present body is in Scripture compared to “a tent”—a thing easily taken down and removed; the “house” “in the heavens” is “a building of God,”—indestructible and eternal. The works of man mock his mortality. We raise structures that exist for ages, while we continue to inhabit “houses of clay.” We are this morning founding an edifice, which, if no accident prevent, will last incalculably longer than ourselves. It may stand—and stand fitted for all the purposes for which it is reared, after both we and our children are “gathered to our fathers.” It may be trodden by the feet, and filled with the voices, of

other generations. We desire that it may. We pray that from sire to son the truth may be transmitted to the latest posterity; and that we, and every succeeding generation that shall worship after us, may obtain a sanctuary and a home in those “mansions” which Christ has ascended to heaven to prepare;—mansions, far more capacious, magnificent, and lasting, than any which mortals can erect or conceive.

“O Lord, who hast been the dwelling-place of thy Church in all generations, we beseech thee now to satisfy us with thy mercy, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. Let thy work

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appear unto thy servants, and thy glory unto their children; and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.” Amen.

APPENDIX.

THE preceding Address was delivered on the 16th of October last, on laying the first stone of a new place of worship, intended for the Congregational Church at present assembling in the King’s Weigh-House, Little East Cheap, London. An account of the ceremony, as one interesting to Dissenters, appeared in the “Patriot,” a weekly paper, conducted by members of that body; and a report, substantially correct, was given of much that was spoken by me on that occasion. In consequence of this, I had many applications to publish the Address myself, in a separate form, as it was thought appropriate to the present times, and likely to do good; good, that is, in the estimation of Dissenters. Being much more disposed to peace and concord, than to agitation and controversy, I felt rather reluctant to comply with this request. It was represented, however, that the occasion *required* and *justified* the line of remark which I had pursued;

that it could not be pretended that I had gone out of my way to make a gratuitous attack on the Establishment; that there was not a week in which something or other was not published *against* us; and that a Dissenter, briefly stating his principles on an occasion when nothing else was appropriate, could hardly be condemned, with any consistency, by those who had praised the Scottish churchman, who practised a sort of fraud on the mixed congregation assembled in Regent Square, by delivering a lecture on establishments instead of a sermon, and who, in the course of it, talked in his usual style about “sectarists,” and “sectarians,” and “private adventurers.” Having consented to the publication, I thought it best to bring it into as small a compass as possible; I have omitted, therefore, all account of the ceremony that preceded the delivery of the Address, and have printed nothing but the report of the Address itself, making a few verbal corrections, and adding some of the omitted passages. Twice, I think, I observe a sentence or two adopted, but unconsciously,

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from a late anonymous publication: I suffer them, however, to pass, as no one has a better right than myself to any services they can render.

In sending forth these few pages, I feel disposed to make a desultory remark or two suggested by the publication, and by the character of “these our times.” These pages contain statements of some of the principles and proceedings of a Dissenting church, and statements *against* the principle and operation of a religious establishment. There is nothing improper in this. Churchmen and Dissenters have an equal right to advocate what they respectively approve, and to expose and condemn what they respectively reject. For one sermon or tract published by Dissenters in support of Dissent, a dozen may be found published by Churchmen in support of the Church; published by individuals, voluntarily, or in consequence of episcopal and archidiaconal visitations, and by the “Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge:”—these latter in hundreds and thousands. I have no fault to find with this. I think it right for every man, and every body of men, to endeavour, by all possible means, universally to establish those principles of ecclesiastical polity, which they consider to be intimately connected with the purity of the church and the wel-

fare of the world; only let the "Society" just mentioned be careful that its portraiture of Methodism and Dissent display something like "christian knowledge," and not downright heathenish ignorance. Truth cannot be injured by fair and full discussion, and by open and uncompromising statements. I have no hesitation about saying, that I am an enemy to the Establishment; and I do not see that a Churchman need hesitate to say, that he is an enemy to Dissent. Neither of us would mean the *persons* of Churchmen or Dissenters, nor the episcopal or other *portions* of the universal church; but the *principle* of the national religious establishment, which we should respectively regard as deserving, universally, opposition or support. It is with me, I confess, a matter of deep, serious, religious conviction, that the Established Church is a great national evil; that it is an obstacle to the progress of truth and godliness in the land; that it destroys more souls than it saves; and that, therefore, its end is most devoutly to be wished by every lover of God and man. Right or wrong, this is my belief; and I should feel not the slightest offence if a Churchman were to express himself to me

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in precisely the same words with respect to Dissent. We know very well that we do thus, actually differ in opinion, and it would be very foolish for either to be offended because the other expresses it. We are bound, each of us, to adopt those principles which we conscientiously consider to be true, and we are equally bound, in proportion to our ability, to defend and diffuse them.

It is at present universally felt, that the time is at hand when the Establishment must undergo a thorough sifting; the abstract principle on which it rests be discussed in Parliament; and the absolute separation of Church and State sought, and—perhaps obtained. Dissent and the Establishment will then die together—die on the same day. The terms and things are relative; the end of one will be the termination of both. The day that witnesses this, will be a bright and blessed one. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independents, Methodists, may remain; but Churchmen and Dissenters will exist no more. All denominations, placed on a perfect equality, with a thousand sources of jealousy and animosity removed, each possessed of the power of

advancing towards and admitting the approaches of the rest,—such movements would ultimately be seen; the spirit of peace, and love, and unity, would return; the *real* “communion of saints” would be practised; and God himself, on the throne of his glory, would rejoice over his once divided and broken, but then happy and harmonizing, “household.”

The advocates of establishments cannot see this, or do not desire it. Blinded by the sectarianism of their institutions, they shrink from communion with the rest of God’s church; and, attaching immense importance to the *secularities* that constitute *theirs*, they are agitated by the prospect of the coming conflict. Preparations are making for it; the note of alarm is sounded throughout the country; sympathy is sought to be excited; and advice is proffered on the best methods of conducting the war. Among recent recommendations, I observe that the Clergy, and the friends of the Church, are told to depend on themselves, and to do two things—“to gain the people,” and “to use the press.” I think this advice good. The people, the mass of active, intelligent, and reflecting men, that compose the middle classes of the country, are those against whose enlightened opinion nothing in future can be expected to prevail; the reign of prescription

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has passed, or is passing. As to the press, its power is immense; and, when properly employed, is laudable and legitimate. It is open to all parties, may be used in a variety of ways, and can adapt itself to all conditions of society, and to all classes of minds. It behoves us, however, to take care that we abuse not this mighty engine of evil and of good. Some of the dutiful sons of the Establishment seem to me to suffer their zeal to get the better both of their honour and their discretion. A printed paper—the “friends of the Church” are recommended the vigorous use of the press—a printed paper, of which the following is a copy, inclosed in a blank cover, has been lately sent to some of the Dissenters of the metropolis; sent by post, the letters unpaid, the charge ten pence, the address apparently in the handwriting of a gentleman!

“HISTORY OF DISSENT FROM THE BIBLE, AND GOD’S
DISAPPROVAL OF IT.

“The Devil was the first Dissenter in Heaven.—Where is he now?

“Cain was the first Dissenter on earth.—He slew his brother.

“Corah, Dathan, and Abiram, were Dissenters in the time of Moses.—The earth opened, and swallowed them up.

“Saul, King of Israel, usurped the priest’s office, and his kingdom was taken from him.

“Jeroboam was a Dissenter, and the chief of Dissenters: he made Israel to sin. He made priests of the lowest of the people; and whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became priest of the high places. He ordained a feast, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and in a month that he devised of his own head. And this became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut it off and destroy it from the face of the earth.

“Many of the Jews were prone to Dissent through the greater part of their history; and, in the time of our Saviour, they were divided into sects, against whom Christ pronounced a woe!

“The word Pharisee means a Separatist, or Dissenter.

“Christ and his Apostles strongly forbid divisions in a great many passages in the Bible.”

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Now, I call this an unfair use of the press, and of the post too. The Churchman wields the power, and the Dissenter, *as usual*, is to pay for being insulted. As to the paper itself, it is pure nonsense. It reminds one of the manner of South,—a man of surpassing arrogance and malignity, and may probably be taken from his writings. It would be very easy to compose a counter-statement to the above, and to shew, “from the Bible,” “God’s *approval* of Dissent.” Abraham was a Dissenter; Moses was a Dissenter; the Apostles were Dissenters; Christianity was nursed and cradled in Dissent. Jeroboam, of whom so much is so frequently made, was the “head” of a state church; he “established” idolatry, and published laws and “canons” for the decent performance of public worship; the mass of the people conformed, and all that was good in the land was among the non-conformists—in such restless, agitating Dissenters as Elijah and Elisha; in the little dissenting academies of Jericho and Bethel;

and among the seven thousand “Dissenters on principle” who had not bowed the knee at the national altars. In this way it would be easy to give a different and a juster “history of Dissent from the Bible,” than that which some sapient Churchman has thought fit to employ “the press” to disseminate, in order “to gain,” I suppose, the support of the “people.” This is not the way, however, in which such questions can be settled. I would sooner lose my right hand than send such a statement to respectable clergymen and members of the Establishment, and would be the first to expose any Dissenting idiot who should attempt it. I quarrel with no man for striving to save and perpetuate his church; only “let him strive lawfully.” I think it his duty to strive: the time is at hand when neither Churchman nor Dissenter ought to be indifferent or neutral; when all must be expected to take a part in the contest, for all are deeply interested in the issue. To every Christian mind, it is unquestionably painful to mingle in controversy and engage in agitation. I can conceive of nothing sufficient to lead to the sacrifice, but such a sense of duty as shall make it imperative, and even *that* can never make it pleasant. To write, and speak, and act, in a manner that may give pain to many whom we respect; to disturb, perhaps, the freedom and harmony of private intercourse; to be misjudged, misrepresented, calumniated, shunned; all this must be expected, and should be prepared for, by any who

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engage, in however humble a capacity, in the coming conflict of great principles. Posterity will reap the benefit of their personal sacrifice. The clamour and the contest will be the prelude to a new state of harmony and order. The battle will end, at least ultimately, in the establishment of peace on such principles as shall render it permanent. To preserve our own ease, friendships, and reputation, at the expense of what we deem to be truth, is at once treason against God, and injustice to our country, our species, and our children. What should *we* have been at this moment but the miserable victims of popery or idolatry, had not the Reformers and the Apostles contended against the dominant establishments of their times, each of them, doubtless, frequently applying to himself the melancholy exclamation of the prophet,

“Woe is me, that my mother should have borne me a man of strife!”

But what will the battle be about? and between whom will it be fought? It will not be about any particular plan of ecclesiastical reform; for, on whatever it may commence, it will come, I apprehend, to a struggle on the principle itself of an exclusive Establishment. It will not be between Churchmen and Dissenters; but between both and the legislature, or between them *through* the legislature. No plan of church reform will ever satisfy either party. If I were a Churchman, I should contend against any latitudinarian alterations, by which the Establishment should be permitted to continue, but be made large enough to admit all other sects; and, as a Dissenter, I should say, that I have nothing primarily to do with those improvements in the articles or offices of the Church, which her children may regard as important to themselves. On the first supposition, if I found the Government about to adopt such alterations, I should beseech it rather to abandon us entirely, to give us up, to let us alone, to suffer us to become an episcopal sect, with the power and liberty possessed by others, of conducting our own affairs, of regulating our religious matters like religious men, independently of secular control or dictation; and, as a Dissenter, I would plainly state, that such supposed alterations are not with us an immediate object, because they would not be to truth an immediate good. We wish the entire and absolute dissolution of the existing connexion between Church and State; the Establishment, as such, terminated; the episcopal community to become an episcopal denomi-

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nation, on a perfect equality with every other: then, each of them may carry on its own religious reforms for itself, or promote the improvement of the rest by reason and argument; then, all may make such arrangements as they can conscientiously sanction, for the purpose of enjoying mutual communion, without the compromise of principles which they hold to be important. All sects stand in need of some religious reforms; all may be brought nearer to what a church ought to be than any one of them is at present; but this is their own concern—it is to be done *by* them as churches, and cannot be done *for* them by any secular assembly. Each, if all were placed on a level, would exert an influence,

direct or indirect, in promoting the purity and perfection of the rest; and that one, which is now bound, and fettered, and enslaved, would be free to take full and efficient measures for its own. Still more,—the question, which is quite distinct from that of establishments, of what kind and degree of aid a government can and may render to Religion, would be discussed with greater likelihood of agreement, when no particular denomination was exclusively patronized or intended to be so. The dissolution, then, of the existing anti-christian “alliance” between Church and State is the object at which Dissenters will aim, and aim at on serious, sacred, religious grounds; identifying it with the honour of God, the peace of his church, and the universal advantage of mankind. This, however much it may include, is that one thing, which, in the coming conflict, will be sought by them; that which, whatever else it may ultimately confer, shall, at once and immediately, secure, from the legislature, the extinction of compulsory payments to the Establishment; the opening of the Universities to our youth; an alteration in the law of marriage; and an equal right to the use of the national burying grounds, “the place,” with many of us, “of our fathers’ sepulchres.” The battle, so much talked of in every church publication which I have lately seen, will unquestionably come to this. Every pious and every patriotic man should feel that he is not permitted to be neutral. A judgment must be formed, a side taken, and every legitimate weapon appropriated and employed.

By the same Author.

I.

TWO LETTERS, BY FIAT JUSTITIA, Author of a Letter to the Hon. and Rev. B. W. NOEL; in Reply, the First to a Churchman, who condemns him for going too far; the Second, to a Dissenter, who expostulates with him for not

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“FIAT JUSTITIA VERY UNANSWERABLY shows that Mr. Noel’s principles afford irresistible arguments for separation from the Church with those who entertain them.”

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“In the Church of England, according to the conscientious belief of the evangelical party, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of the Clergy, who are anti-evangelical; that is, ‘who do not preach the Gospel;’ this is their own language: it means that these men, ‘although Clergymen,’ do that, which, if an angel from heaven were to do, St. Paul would visit him with his indignant anathema. The persons referred to above, who dissent from the Bible Society, in general believe this;—they believe, therefore, that these men are not ministers of Christ, and that their influence is extensively injurious to souls: yet they continue united with them in a manner which implies that they are; they continue, therefore, to countenance them as such,—to support the awful delusion, and to be accessory to all the evils which that delusion occasions.

“‘Not to preach the Gospel,’ which the evangelical Clergy attribute to the majority of their brethren, is to say, in effect, that they are ‘deniers of fundamental doctrines,’ though not in the sense of their being Socinians. Of such, Mr. N. says, ‘I neither publicly nor privately own them to be ministers of Christ; I hold no communion with them, as brethren, which I do with pious men of every name.’ This, however, cannot be admitted: for, he holds *church-communion* with them, and he holds, and can hold, church-communion with no other ministers whatever. It appears to me that it would be better to say, ‘True, I do not believe these men to be ministers of Christ at all,—this is my private opinion; yet, I hold church-communion with them, and publicly recognize them as such: but, observe, my union with them in the Church is founded not upon what they are, but upon what they profess to be; in my ecclesiastical relation to them, I know them only as ministers of the same apostolical body, that is, by supposition, true ministers; if they are not, the fault, is theirs, not mine.’ Now, this answer, I think, ‘legally’ satisfactory. It is sufficient to defend the union of light with darkness in the same Church, for those whose consciences can be governed by words rather than the facts. To minds of high moral feeling, however; to those, especially, who profess to “be peculiarly conscientious, the objection still returns—‘You believe certain individuals not to be ministers of Christ, yet you publicly sanction them as such;—you support a system which imposes them as such on the community;—you aid and assist this tremendous delusion.’ Now, what does conscience say to this?—conscience, not as soothed by an expedient and a subterfuge, but as enlightened by truth, governed by facts, alive to the consequences of the general inculcation of error, and anticipating the decisions of the judgment-seat on the system that protects it?”—Pp. 69–71.

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R. Clay, Printer, Bread-Street-Hill.