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AN EXPOSITION OF THE STATEMENT

THAT

THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH “DESTROYS MORE
SOULS THAN IT SAVES.”

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THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH “DESTROYS MORE
SOULS THAN IT SAVES.”

BY

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THE EDITOR OF THE RECORD;

THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN OBSERVER? AND OTHERS.

IN

A LETTER

TO

“ONE OF THE CLERGY WHO SIGNED THE LATE
REQUISITION
TO THE ARCHDEACON OF WORCESTER.”

EDITED

BY JOHN SEARCH.

“They are commonly aptest to pass a judgment upon other men, who have *least studied the matter*; * * * liberally to bestow their censures and *reproaches*; and to conclude that they cannot but have some BASE DESIGN, who in anything presume to differ from them, especially if the advantage, in any temporal respect, happen to lie on that side *from which they dissent*.”—HOWE.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following extract from the second of two letters on Church Rates, published in reply to those of the Clergyman to whom the following pages are addressed, will give the distant reader (if they obtain such) some idea of their local origin.

“It now only remains for me to vindicate myself from the implied charge of falsifying the fact relative to Mr. Binney’s words, which our requisitionist *professed to quote*. He stated, that Mr. B. *in his opening Sermon preached at the Chapel of which he is the Minister*, AFFIRMED *that the Church of England has destroyed more souls than she has saved, and her destruction is devoutly to be wished by every wise and good man*. In his last letter, however, instructed by me, he quotes Mr. B.’s words correctly *as far as he goes*, but should have added the following, to give a fair view of the whole passage:—

“Right or wrong, this is my *belief* And I should not feel the slightest offence, if a Churchman were to express

himself to me 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, &c.”

Now the two points between our clerical friend and myself are these: 1st, he stated that Mr. B. preached the above; I contradicted him: he was ingenious enough to discover, that I was right, and he wrong, but not *ingenuous* enough to confess it. 2ndly, I denied that Mr. B. had ever *affirmed* any such thing—ever made any such *assertion*. I adhere to my statement. It rests upon the distinction between *opinion* and *affirmation*. Mr. B. expressly states, over and over again, that it is only his *opinion—belief—conviction*; and clearly admits, that he may be either “right or wrong but he is unfairly dealt with, when he is represented as *affirming* it to be actually and positively so, when he candidly admits it may be *wrong* * * * * I therefore say, Mr. B. has stated an *opinion*, derived from *facts and reasonings*, but admitting explicitly that he may be right or he may be wrong; but *he has made no such* ASSERTION as that attributed to him.

The following pages are an attempt to supply what may be supposed to be “the facts and reasonings” referred to above. The writer, a Dissenter, though not an Independent, holds certain great principles which are common to the members of the Independent, Baptist, and other Evangelical denominations. Connected with the county of Worcester, he had

an opportunity of hearing Mr. B. preach one part of the day which he recently spent in the city of Worcester, and, in common with many others, felt grieved that a Christian minister could not visit the place for a benevolent purpose, without being assailed and misrepresented. It was not, however, till after the controversy on Church Rates was closed, that he decided on going into the "statement" that had been mixed up with it,—which, indeed, Churchmen are incessantly mixing up with every thing, every where, with as much confidence as if they had examined it, or, in the words of Howe, had "*studied the matter.*" This will partly account for the late appearance of this pamphlet. That, however, has been principally occasioned by the author's having altered his original intention, which was a brief reply in the same local print which had admitted the previous letters; and by the difficulty of obtaining in the country some papers and periodicals which it was necessary to refer to. He has contented himself indeed, as sufficient for his purpose, with such extracts as most readily occurred to his recollection, which he had last noticed, or were the most accessible. He is not aware of any thing in his spirit or manner indefensible or unbecoming; but of *this* he is aware, that he has met, in preparing these pages, with language of which before he was ignorant; and that, if he had attempted to speak of Churchmen as *they* have spoken of Dissenters (especially of "the gentleman whose name was announced as about to preach in this city") the vocabulary of Newgate, or of Sydney itself, would have failed to furnish him with parallel expressions. Shunning, however, this

example, he has aimed to keep his own object steadily in view; nor will he have written in vain, if he help to remove a prevalent misconception respecting the “political” character and “base designs” of the Dissenters; or if he teach controversialists the justice of ascertaining what their opponents *say* before they “profess to quote,” and what they *mean* before they condemn; and the wisdom of remembering what *they themselves* have both SAID and MEANT—*before they do either.*

TO
“ONE OF THE CLERGY

WHO

SIGNED THE LATE REQUISITION TO THE ARCHDEACON
OF WORCESTER.”



REVEREND SIR,

IN your late letters on Church Rates, you have referred to a subject on which I beg to submit to you a few remarks.

It is not my object to enter into the controversy between you and your opponent; nor to commence another myself on the general question of establishments; nor, I might add, to engage *directly* in the modern ecclesiastical warfare. I am a looker-on, though I have also my interests and my partialities, some of which it would be very foolish to affect to conceal. In addressing you, however, I desire to do so rather as the interpreter and expounder of the real opinions of certain parties on both sides, who do not, or will not, understand each other.

In your first letter you introduced an allusion, not *very* essential to your argument, to Mr. Binney, “the gentleman,” to use your own words, “whose name was announced in last week’s paper, *as about to preach in this city*,”—indicating, as I suppose, by the italic character, your surprise, regret, or indignation at the circumstance. You have been led to refer to him again, and to the “celebrated sentence”

B

I

for which he has acquired such unenviable distinction. It is in relation to this, and to the remark you append to it, that I now address you.

After quoting the words in which the Dissenter embodies his "conviction," that the Establishment "destroys more souls than it saves," you add, "*but he does not favour us with detailing the steps by which he has arrived at this conviction.*" It is just at this point I should like to be allowed to step in to your assistance. As a Dissenter, acquainted with dissenting views and dissenting publications, I think I can furnish you with statements and extracts, from which you yourself may infer the "steps" by which the dissenting "conviction" is arrived at; and, as one attentive to the passing conflict of great principles, and acquainted in some measure with the views and publications of those opposed to Dissenters, I purpose furnishing you also with extracts from *them*, sanctioning, in my judgment, the first class, both in respect to sentiment and language.

This is my object; and I do not despair of your full and honest attention to it. Your first reference to the words of the gentleman "whose name was announced to preach in this city," was obviously made in utter ignorance of what they were:—no singular culpability this; nothing but the common crime of hundreds of your order. I judge, however, from your second reference, that you have had the good sense to send for Mr. Binney's publication, and, having read it, while you are still shocked at the author's "conviction," and regard it, very naturally, as "a bigoted sentiment," "the dictate of unfounded prejudice and party feeling," yet you have the manliness to admit that "there is a calmness and candour about his tone and spirit, which his defender would do well to imitate." Whether his defender deserved this censure, I shall not stay to enquire, it is enough for me to remark, that your admission is such a proof of "candour"

in yourself, that I am led to hope you will with “calmness” weigh what I shall produce. Having done so, I say not that I expect you to conclude respecting the Dissenter’s “conviction,” in the admirable phrase of Butler, that, after all, “it is not so clear a case that there is nothing in it but I do expect you to admit, and this is all I aim at, that, whether right or wrong, it is nothing but what Churchmen have said, only, to use your own words, “concentrated into a quintessence,” and that, however “blasphemous” it may at first sight appear, it may yet be held, not only without impiety, but as the direct result of deep and decided, though perhaps mistaken, religious feeling.

I shall not trouble you, I trust, with any very extended observations of my own, though I must of course supply a string to connect together the observations of others. My letter will principally consist of “extracts,” some of which, I humbly think, will be worth your attention, and that of “the clergy of the diocese of Worcester,” as “one” of whom I address you.

I think it right to commence by giving the entire passage in which Mr. B.’s sentence occurs, that, from the manner in which it is fenced and guarded, it may at least be observed what he does *not* mean.

“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 welfare of the world; only let the society just mentioned be careful that its portraitures 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 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

* A tract by Dr. Gray, Bishop of Bristol, entitled “A Dialogue between a Churchman and a Methodist,” is so grossly inaccurate that its expulsion has been moved for at Bartlett’s Buildings; I fear without success.

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 harmonising ‘household.’”

Very few of the clergy of the diocese of Worcester, I imagine, besides yourself, have ever seen the above passage, though they have heard so often, and have shuddered so much, at one of its sentences. Some of them will be surprised, I think, to find how carefully it distinguishes between *systems* and *men*;—how it separates the political *Establishment* from the *Episcopal Church*;—and how obviously the writer rejoices in anticipating even the “end” of Dissent itself!—all proving that it cannot be the Church, as a religious community, or spiritual body, that he or his brethren wish to see destroyed. Nor is it to be overlooked, how *studiously* everything is put hypothetically; “opinion,” “conviction,” “belief, that maybe right or wrong.” No-

thing is *affirmed* as *known*. The writer's *mental persuasion* is asserted, but the *thing* of which he is persuaded is *not*.*

* It does not come within my province to notice the *misrepresentations* and *perversions* of Mr. Binney's words, by which alone the public misconception respecting them has been created and sustained; in one of the books, however, from which some of the extracts in this letter are collected, I met with the following instance of misrepresentation and inconsistency combined, which strikes me as so gross and incredible, that if I had not really stumbled upon it myself, I could not have believed it within the power of a CHRISTIAN to perpetrate. Let the reader compare the *letter* and *spirit* of what is given above, with the *letter* and *spirit* of what follows, particularly remembering that the writer of the annexed *distinctly states* that he had Mr. Binney's "Address" *lying before him*.

"You will, swing us off on the hinge of an abstract principle, and in the words of good (?) Mr. Binney will tell us—'I am an enemy to the Establishment.' 'The Established Church is a great national evil; it is an obstacle to the progress of truth and godliness in the land; it destroys more souls than it saves; and its end is most devoutly to be wished by every lover of God and man.'" Upon the rashness of a mortal man daring to pretend to read the inscrutable book of the Divine councils, and to assert 'without *if* or *but*,' that fewer souls are saved than would be if the Church of England did not exist, it is not necessary for us to descant. If Mr. Binney can really prove what he has asserted, there is an end of discussion. We depone, and we have endeavoured, and we believe satisfactorily, to prove, that a Church Establishment may be, and is, 'a means of grace but if Mr. Binney has had a miraculous insight into the Lamb's Book of Life, and actually knows—not asserts or suspects, but *knows*—that our Church 'destroys more souls than it saves,' then all other arguments must bend to one of such palpable fact."

The italics in the above extract are the reviewer's—they derive their force entirely from his *omissions*, which so change the sense of the sentences as to leave them no longer "the words of Mr. Binney." After something more, in which occur such terms as "prescience," "presumption," "foreknowledge," he puts several questions to Dissenters, among which is the following *poser*:—"Are you *perfectly sure* that the voluntary principle, as it is called, would furnish a full supply of religious ordinances, either in remote and scattered, or in poor and populous neighbourhoods?" Now, just connect the above *comment* and *question* with the following passage *from the very same article*. "As a system, we *believe* Dissent to be an *evil greater than we can express*; and if carried to the extent of the subversion of the national churches of England and Scotland, to say nothing of other Protestant countries, *nothing but a*

It is not my purpose, however, to indulge in comments of this kind, nor indeed in general inferences at all. I leave the above passage, therefore, to make its own impression, and proceed to furnish you with materials, by which you may construct for yourself a theory explanatory of the Dissenter's "conviction" as above expressed, and of the "steps by which be arrived at it."

I begin by quoting two passages from Mr. Binney himself, which I think will afford you some assistance. The first is from a sermon on the unity of the church, founded on our blessed Lord's beautiful prayer for his disciples, "that they all might be one, &c." the fulfilment of which is represented as being "the ultimate object of the Evangelical Dissenters" in their opposition to establishments. Such a statement will, I doubt not, sound to you, strange and astounding,—but so it is. My purpose, in this letter, does not require me to discuss or explain it. I simply state it as a fact, that Evangelical Dissenters *say* that this is their object,—and they have a right to be believed. The means by which they think to attain this may seem absurd and

direct special miracle, which we have no right to look for, more especially when we set aside the obvious means of grace, *could prevent the ultimate extirpation of Christianity from the earth.*" Now, what *can* be thought of the above? It seems to me as if the most fertile ingenuity could not have produced a more instructive specimen of inconsistency, *modesty*, and misrepresentation. It is not, however, as I said, within my province to notice such things. I give the above, because I was struck with its grossness as appearing in a "*Christian Observer* (February, 1834;) as a specimen of the manner in which the religious public may be abused by gross perversions of an author's language and meaning—as a specimen, too, of the *coolness* with which men will use, on their own side, *the very words* which they will take another by the throat for using on his; and lastly, because the two things of which I have just said the above are specimens, continue still to be repeated and repeated in relation to the "celebrated sentence" in question—of the first of which, the occasion of this pamphlet is a proof; and of the second of which, I shall give some startling demonstrations before I have done with it. I think I shall call them—"ROSE-BUDS RESCUED."

foolish, but the moral sincerity and the religious feeling of the men may be admitted, though you may not be able to admit the intellectual sanity of their judgment. In discussing the above-mentioned subject, the author first states some things in which the unity of the Church does *not* consist, in the course of which he attacks the pretensions of the “Man of sin for, in common with all other Dissenters, and *as the necessary result of dissenting principles*, he is strongly opposed to Popery;—he then comes to point out in what it *does*, and *his first* observation is thus advanced and illustrated:—

“*Its foundation must be laid in an agreement as to the reception and profession of fundamental truth.* That there are some things fundamental to Christianity, few, we suppose, will have the hardihood to deny; and that these consist in its moral injunctions, still fewer, we imagine, will have the folly to assert. Whatever is fundamental, if found any where, must be found among the doctrinal discoveries peculiar to the system. For myself, I confess that I always endeavour to reduce these to the fewest possible points that Scripture, in my view of it, will permit. And I do this, because, in proportion as we lessen the number of essential doctrines, we enlarge the sphere of Christian charity, and widen the ground of Christian comprehension. The smaller the number of those things which the gospel will warrant us to regard as requisite to the Christianity of churches and men, the more of both can we conscientiously embrace with the feelings of cordial and uncompromising brotherhood. I am accustomed, in meditating upon this matter, to take my stand where, as it seems to my apprehension, the Apostle Paul took his. Paul, who, for the sake of usefulness or the promotion of peace, could become all things to all men; who could be a Jew with the Jew, or a Gentile with the Gentile; who could appear and act either as under the law or as free from it; who could shave his head, and

circumcise Timothy, and keep fasts, and yet write against 'the weak and the beggarly elements,' denouncing their weight and their imposition as a bondage:—Paul, who could do all this—who, in fellowship and affection, was the yielding universalist where prejudice rather than principle was in question;—he, with all his accommodating versatility—with all his looks and with all his language of love, was as firm as a rock, and as terrible as thunder, when an important principle itself was assailed. If ever he referred to what is to be considered fundamental, he referred to it when he said, 'though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, *let him be accursed*. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, *let him be accursed*.' "Whatever that gospel was, to which the apostle thus solemnly referred, it is obvious that no man, and no church that rejects it, can properly be Christian. On a subject, involving consequences so momentous, it would be presumptuous to speak but with cautious candour. Honesty and faithfulness, however, equally demand that what we *do* think should be declared with explicitness. It is very possible that our opinion upon this subject, in connexion with our view of its bearing on the business of the discourse, would be branded, by opposite parties, as chargeable at once with vagueness and bigotry—with illiberality and with latitudinarianism. 'It is a small matter to be judged of *them* or of men's judgment.' 'To the law and to the testimony;' guided, we trust, by that, we do not hesitate to say, that we consider the apostle to refer, as the whole tenor of the epistle shows, to the doctrine of *justification*,—justification on the exclusive ground of faith in the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. The whole argument of the apostle is directed, not, perhaps, against a *verbal* and *actual*, but against an *implied* and *virtual*, denial of this doctrine, by a primitive perversion of it,

which seduced the Galatians from the simplicity of Christ; and this circumstance imparts an additional importance to the truth itself, and additional force to the apostolic anathema. 'By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' 'Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.' Whoever, therefore, denies this doctrine, and seeks, *in whole or in part*, to be justified by law, 'Christ can profit him nothing.' He preaches or believes 'another gospel, which is not another,' and, in the language of the apostle, 'Christ,' in regard to that man, '*has died in vain*.' The awful consequence inevitably results—awful to contemplate—awful to express—that, whatever else he may believe or disbelieve, he is not united to 'the Head of the body,' and therefore he cannot be included in the unity of that body itself. If a society denies this doctrine, whatever may be its external form,—whatever it may have, or whatever it may not have, as to other things,—however simple, or however splendid its ritual and ceremonies,—it, also, has abandoned the faith for 'another gospel,' and has put itself in a position, in which it is impossible to recognise it as an integral part of the Christian Community. This grand fundamental doctrine involves in it, as it seems to us, the divinity of Christ, and the necessity of renewal and sanctification by the Spirit; but, it does not involve either of the classes of opinion which distinguish Calvinists and Arminians; nor has it any thing to do with a particular form of church government. It may be held in connexion with great variety of sentiment on subordinate points; and it may be preached, as fully and as scripturally, by the ennobled episcopal bishop of a *place*, as by the plain congregational bishop of a *people*.

"We lay the basis, then, of the unity of the church in the unity of the faith; and that faith we find in the reception of the atoning sacrifice and the sanctifying Spirit. Whatever individual has this faith, experimentally

and spiritually—whatever else he has, or whatever else he has not—is one with Christ as a vital member of his mystical body; whatever individual clearly and credibly professes this faith—whatever else he professes or denies—is a proper subject for admission into any particular church; and whatever church explicitly retains and teaches this faith, *without corrupting and destroying it by superadded perversions*—is a true church, and ought to be recognised as a part of the visible Christian community. This faith may consist with every possible form of discipline and order, and therefore no particular form of order and discipline, in connexion with which it *does* exist, can be properly considered as subversive of a character derived from something distinct from both, and superior to either.”

It appears from this passage, you will observe, that the doctrine of justification by faith,—that, denominated by Luther the doctrine of a standing or falling church—is held in high estimation, and with a tenacious hand, by Evangelical Dissenters; that they identify the distinct, scriptural statement of it, with the preaching of the gospel; and that they regard the denial, attenuation, or perversion of this mighty truth, as pregnant with danger to the souls of men.

Now, connect with the above, the following passage from Mr. Binney’s “Address” itself, in the “Appendix” to which his “celebrated sentence” occurs.

“All churches are necessarily exposed to the inroads of error. In spite of acts of parliament, creeds, and subscription, 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. 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 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.*”

Now, if this be the ease, or if it *was* the case in times that are past—on which, however, I do not give an opinion, although I shall presently quote Episcopalians who *do*—then, on the principles of Dissenters—with the view that they take of the great evangelical doctrine of justification—whether they be right or wrong in giving it the prominence they do, is not at present the question—but simply on the fact that thus and thus they estimate and regard it—the inference is obvious and inevitable, that an immense sum of injury must have been done to the souls of men, in your church, by “instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge by “another gospel, which is not another,” but a concealment or a mutilation of the exclusive and the true.

So much, then, from Mr. B.’s own writings, in relation to what we may consider as one “step” towards his “on-viction.” I again intimate, what I wish you to keep in view, that I do not enter into the question of the truth and accuracy either of Mr. B.’s notions of the gospel, or of his views of the state of the Establishment; I have only to point out to you what they *are*, and to leave you to mark, how, when put together, they necessarily lead to the result he has expressed.

I have now, however, to request your attention to a corroboration of the Dissenter's views and "convictions" by *Churchmen*;—to statements, by advocates of the Establishment, which fully sustain what he has advanced, and the very phraseology of which is coincident with his.

From an article which appeared in the "Record" newspaper of April 14, 1834, in reference to a discussion which had just taken place at a meeting of "the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge," I extract the following passages.

"Our readers would observe that Dr. Spry said it was necessary to put down this attempt to introduce the elements of discord into the Standing Committee. But we ask this reverend divine if these elements be not already introduced? *If the light be not even in that invisible conclave struggling with the darkness?* If great debate is not now carried on *in that formerly still and peaceful dormitory?* * * * * guet as is the theology in Mr. Beresford's sermon on death, *still lower and darker is the theology of the Rev. Dr. Spry.* It is indeed 'DARKNESS VISIBLE.'"*

"We should here gladly close our remarks on the meeting, but a sense of duty forces us to proceed to offer what we consider the far most important observations which it suggests. And when we mention that we find the ground for these observations in the speech of Mr. Hill, for whose character and objects we entertain the most unfeigned respect, we prove that *we do not offer them lightly*, and that *a regard to the VITAL INTERESTS of the CHURCH and of TRUTH calls them forth.*

[Very well. This introduction prepares us for something of grave and awful moment—something not to be disregarded. Even if the writer should be mistaken in his views, his "deep, serious, religious conviction" of their

* The words marked thus * are the italics and capitals of the "Record" itself.

“truth” and “importance” demande that their expression, “forced ” from him “by a sense of duty,” should be listened to with respect. Let us listen.]

“With the important exception which we shall immediately mention, we consider Mr. Hill’s speech to have been admirable in spirit, in manner, and in matter. The statement to which we object is contained in the following sentences:—‘He contended that as the society at large consisted of members of the church, who agreed in the profession of her holy faith, and yielded obedience to the requirements of her discipline, though they differed among themselves *on minor points*;^{*} so ought the Standing Committee fairly to represent the body of the society. He referred to the state of the church, when not long since heart-burnings and jealousies existed, which were but the hideous progeny of *prejudice and evil report*,^{*} and when those who were brethren in the church manifested a *sectarian spirit to each other*.’^{*}

“Now according to our judgment, Mr. Hill, as he unfolds his sentiments in the above sentences, misconceives the matter; and the consequence of the misconception is, that he follows a number of excellent men in making a statement—perfectly deceptive—opposed to truth—and calculated to perpetuate VITAL AND DESTRUCTIVE ERROR. To Some! who see the delusion conveyed in the above sentences, it may still appear to them *expedient*,^{*} from various considerations, to make such statements. In such views we cannot coincide. To depart from TRUTH^{*} is never expedient. It frequently appears so to sense, but never to faith.”

“We consider ourselves bound to say that the differenced subsisting between *different bodies of clergymen in that society*, and between different clergymen present last Tuesday in that room, are not *minor*,^{*} but *fundamental*,^{*}—so much so, that the preaching of *one class is raising their hearers to the gates of heaven*, and that of the other LEADING

THEM DOWN TO THE CHAMBERS OF DEATH. We use great plainness of speech. The more momentous the truth which is declared, the more paramount the duty to avoid circumlocution, which might darken the meaning we intend to convey.†

“We do not wish to be personal, but we shall most easily and distinctly explain our meaning by simply saying, that the men who approved of the circulation of such a sermon as that of the Rev. Mr. Beresford ‘on death,’ which we lately quoted from in these columns, and also, after its character has been brought home to them, can calmly further its circulation among the flock of Christ under the covering wings of the society, have *no conception of the nature, sanctions, and requirements of the gospel of Our salvation*; and that they are equally *ignorant of the gospel*—know it not themselves, and, therefore, *cannot** preach it to others, and are, in the language of Scripture, ‘*blind leaders of the blind*,’—who pertinaciously adhere to such tracts of the: Society as those which have been recently denounced in this and other publications;—in which WE ANEW DECLARE *the Gospel of Christ is either not preached at all, or is so blended and encrusted with error, as to rob it of all its freeness, dearness and glory, so that the unhappy reorders are led away by their instrumentality to ‘another Gospel which is not another.’* This being the deliberate and well-considered CONVICTION of our hearts, we are bound in faithfulness, and from a regard to the interests of truth, to declare it.”

“Having given expression to it, we leave it. We are disposed to work for the clearing away of evil doctrine from the Society—not, however, by promulgating that it is *minor** or *slight*,* but that it is so *momentous and fundamental* as more than to justify all our warmth and all our efforts.

† Really these gentlemen ought to feel very much obliged to one who has “concentrated” for them “into the quintessence” of a single sentence, what they strive so laboriously to express.

Not by insinuating to the *men who are sinfully circulating error* that we consider their offence venial, or their state before God safe; on the contrary, while we earnestly desire for them all heavenly light and every spiritual blessing, we shall not hesitate to express our CONVICTION, *derived, as we verily believe, directly from the word of God*, that their present spiritual condition, as unfolded in this pertinacious adherence to *fundamental error*, is highly critical and dangerous."

I know not, sir, what you may think of this extract; but there it is, studded with sentences, which, had they been written by a Dissenter, might have become as "celebrated," and have called forth as much virulent execration, as Mr. Binney's itself. *There it is*; and if you *look at it in connexion with the following facts*, you will see how Churchmen contrive, in their differences with each other, to advance what confirms and countenances the dissenting "conviction." The "Christian Remembrancer," for May, 1834, referring to the very discussion which "forced" from the Record the above solemn declaration of its views, says, exultingly, "*the REFRACTORIES were outvoted on Mr. Hill's motion, by ten to one.*" In various articles, indeed, which appeared about that time in this periodical, the agitation then carrying on in the society, in which agitation the Record rejoices, is spoken of as that of a "knot of zealots," aiming at the "evangelical purgation" of books, constituting a "repository of sound religious instruction," "a standard of doctrine," "to which the clergy may resort with confidence," furnished by a society said to be "the best bulwark of the Church of England." The "knot of zealots,"—the *one* of the Record's "*bodies of clergymen*" are spoken of as "*a party*—carrying on an insidious warfare," while those opposed to them, the *other* of the "bodies of clergymen" is shown to be "*an overwhelming majority*," firm in their adherence to the good old books, and deprecating *fonda-*

mental changes in the principles of the society.—For any thing I know, the conductors of the Remembrancer are just as conscientious as those of the Record. It is *their* “conviction” that the books are sound, and the ministers who agree with them *properly* evangelical. The two statements, however, put together, *on the principles of the Record*, amount to this,—that by far the larger “body of clergymen,” in a great national society, comprehending the mass of the whole order, are “*ignorant of the gospel*,” “cannot preach it,” *distinguished for “their pertinacious adherence to fundamental error”*—to books “*in which the gospel of Christ is either not contained, or so encrusted with error that the unhappy readers are led away to another gospel which is not another.*” and whose preaching “*leads their hearers down to the chambers of death!*”—This is the amount and meaning of the testimony of these two episcopal witnesses, interpreted by the solemn “declaration” and “conviction” of one of them, and it is certainly quite as bad, if not worse, than any thing that can fairly be understood by what was uttered by the Dissenter. The thing is as plain as any question in proportion.

Remember, I have no more to do with the correctness or incorrectness of the Record’s notions of the gospel, or the Remembrancer’s belief of the comparative size of “different bodies of clergymen,” than I have with Mr. Binney’s view of these matters. I am only showing, that, whether right or wrong in their opinions and facts, the two former contrive between them to sustain most triumphantly the “conviction” of the latter. There is a perfect coincidence, in fact, in some of their phraseology. You might almost imagine there was some secret understanding amongst them. This, however, could not be; for the pens of the two witnesses, at the very time when they were furnishing their testimony, were employed against “the person,” whom unwittingly they united to defend. If it should be said, “but it

is long since the Record used this strong language; why refer to what is so old?" It is enough to reply, Mr. Binney's sentence is *older*; and *you*, sir, know how that continues to be quoted.

But you shall have something more recent. Listen again.

"Shortly after coming to London in 1800, I purchased *the twelve volumes* of the Christian Knowledge Society, for the purpose of perusing them for circulation; and must honestly confess, that I found them so unfit, in my judgment, for this purpose, that *I studiously concealed them from the eyes of my family, as unsound and delusory statements of the truth of the gospel; nor would they probably have ever been drawn from their concealment, but for a purpose which will be adverted to in the following narrative.*"

What an acknowledgment! And yet such *is* the acknowledgment of the Rev. H. Budd, in the Christian Observer for November last year. The whole twelve volumes of a society, composed of the great mass of the clergy, and exercising an incalculable influence on the spiritual condition and destiny of the people—all so marked throughout with what was "*unsound*" and "*delusory*," as to be deemed by an enlightened and conscientious man, "unfit for circulation," and "studiously concealed from the eyes of his family;" and never intended, for the *use* of anybody, to be "drawn from that concealment." Nor is this a solitary instance. Similar statements have repeatedly been made in the publications from which I have quoted—publications conducted and patronised by Churchmen. I shall close this part of my letter, in which I have referred to the existence and tendency of a certain kind of preaching, and a certain class of publications, identified with the Establishment,—most "dangerous," "delusive," and "destructive," according to the showing of its own advocates—as *two* of the "steps," or two aspects of the same step, by which the Dissenter "arrives at his conviction"—I shall close, I say, this part of

my letter, by the following extract, in which *both* the things just mentioned are referred to: it is from a pamphlet entitled⁴⁴ *Modern High Church Principles examined* consisting of articles which appeared in the "Record," and which are thought worthy of reappearing in a more permanent form.

"What a *minute seed* was *the gospel*, preached in simplicity, in this country, in the early days of Romaine, Venn, Milner, Berridge, and other such worthies. How were their names cast out as evil, and their principles received as utterly fanatical and visionary! What a change even, since the Rev. Mr. Simeon was repeatedly black-balled in the Bartlett's Buildings Society, as utterly unworthy of a place in that centre of orthodoxy; and now, that men of his principles are freely admitted by hundreds, *and the light of divine truth which they promulgate, is contending, even in that sphere, against the darkness of error.*"

"*Darkness of error:*"—which means, interpreted by the language already quoted from the "Record," "*darkness visible,*"—"vital and destructive error,"—error respecting what is "not *minor*, but *fundamental*"—"not *slight*, but *momentous*"—which *robs* the truth of all its freeness, clearness, and glory, so that the unhappy readers are led away to "another gospel which is not another," and the *preaching* of which "*leads the hearers down to the chambers of death.*" And all this, observe, had been *long in full and unchecked operation*, till a "*minute seed*" made its appearance at a time comparatively recent, and the men with whose opposition it has to contend in its growth, *say* that *they are still* "an overwhelming majority."

I leave the inference from these statements to *you*, and pass on to another particular.

You have seen how it is, that, by Evangelical Dissenters, injury is conceived to be done to the souls of men through the medium of your church; the extracts I now proceed to introduce, will assist you in understanding how it comes to

pass, that they attribute this to the influence which the *Establishment* exerts upon it. You may not be accustomed, perhaps, to distinctions like these, but Dissenters are: they distinguish both between the Church and the Establishment, and between a particular church (the English Episcopal, for instance) and the church of *Christ*. You will see, as I proceed, the nature of the first of these distinctions. It may be a just distinction or not: with that I have nothing to do. I merely profess to lay before you what Dissenters *think*, from which you may *infer* the grounds of a “conviction” you thought bigoted and baseless, and the *sense* in which it is to be understood. I shall pursue the same plan as before, beginning with the statement by Dissenters of their own views, and supporting these by the testimony of the advocates of Establishments. I begin, also, as before, with Mr. Bmney himself. The following passage from his sermon, entitled “Dissent not Schism,” is not without meaning, though rather implied than expressed. After giving certain quotations from Episcopalian writers, in which they assert that there is little or no safety for any beyond the pale of Episcopacy, he observes:—

“It is admitted, indeed, that ‘*some* Dissenters may *possibly* belong to the invisible Church but the charge against them is incessantly repeated that, as a body, they, ‘by their schism,’ in rejecting Episcopacy, expose themselves to the eternal malediction of heaven. If this be schism, well may it be thought, as to its nature and consequences, to be a sin ‘greater than that of drunkenness;’ for it destroys not merely the debauched and the dissolute, but the (apparently) most moral and religious portion of the people: it destroys not *some* merely of these, but the mass and the multitude—sweeping them to ‘eternal’ ‘wrath’ by thousands and tens of thousands, except *possibly* here and there a solitary individual. And now, let it be particularly observed, that Dissent is chargeable with this amount of injury and ruin

to the souls of men, not because it bribes and allures into the ministry the ambitious and the secular,—not because it appoints to the care of other's souls those who have never bestowed a thought upon their own,—not because it leads, from whatever cause, in a vast majority of its ministers, to a style of instruction destitute of the life and power of the gospel,—not because it so confounds the world and the Church, and in practice so equally recognises as Christians the righteous and the wicked, as to destroy all moral distinctions, and to prevent the truth from reaching the conscience,—not because it prescribes offices which tend to deceive, and countenances views of the efficacy of the sacraments, and the power and virtue of priestly services, which engender among the mass of its adherents the most mischievous misconceptions,—not, in short, because it sustains among its teachers numbers who so preach as 'to make the cross of Christ of none effect,' and by whom the great truths respecting 'God's method of justification,' the cardinal doctrine of scripture, are kept back, obscured, misrepresented, or denied. Were this the charge, we could understand it. *Were Dissent, as a RELIGIOUS system, represented as allied to or enclosed by another SECULAR system, which, though separable from it, had, on account of the connexion of the two, the power to act most injuriously on its purity and working,*—were *this* the representation, we repeat, we should be able to account for the statements referred to, and should be ready to attribute them to zeal for God and affection for *us*. But this is *not* the ground of the statements. Let it be granted that dissenting ministers are, in the strain of their instructions, the most Evangelical; let it be granted that 'Christ is preached' by them, and preached apparently in the most serious spirit and with most delightful results; let it be granted that there is not a minister in 'all the various sectarian societies, that are without the presence and presidency of a regular successor of the apostles,' but what

speaks and lives like those of our brethren in the Establishment, for whose success we give God thanks, and in whose joy we cordially sympathize: let all this be granted,—yet all this avails nothing; the indications of piety, and the appearances of zeal and of success, are all false, nugatory, and deceptive—for the men *by rejecting bishops, have rejected Christ*; they, and all connected with them, are separated from his sheep, and beyond the reach of covenanted blessings.”

There are several “steps,” you observe, described in the above passage, by which the Dissenter arrives at the “conviction,” that the Church destroys *more* souls than it saves; and these appear to be contrasted with the *one step* by which Churchmen arrive at the conviction, that Dissent destroys *all*! The former are all connected, more or less, with *the Truth*—with what belongs essentially to God’s method of justification; the latter—*has nothing to do with it*.

The following extract from another dissenting writer may be taken in connexion with the above. It occurs in Dr. Pye Smith’s first letter to Dr. Lee. Of Dr. Smith, it may interest you to know, that the Bishop of London speaks in the following terms, in the notes to his Charge, delivered in 1834. Having quoted something from him, his lordship adds, “It is with unfeigned pleasure that I transcribe a passage, so true and just in itself, and so honourable to the Christian charity and candour of its author. *The testimony of such a man, WHETHER FOR OR AGAINST US, is of more weight than the invectives of ten Mr. Binneys.*” This is high authority. Dr. Smith’s “testimony,” then, so valuable in the estimation of the Bishop of London, is this:—

“Is not the union (as it is improperly called) of Church and State, productive of the most irreligious and mischievous effects? Does it not consist in a prostration of the most holy rights and most solemn duties of Christians, under the

feet of the Ministry for the time being? Can a more monstrous, a more unchristian thing be imagined, than that the political party which happens to be in ascendancy, should have the absolute command over the very life-power of the Church, in its primary pastors, who, upon the episcopal system, are the sources of the authority and the validity of all the clerical ministrations? The Ministry appoints your bishops as it does its lords of the treasury, or its governors of colonies; and it proclaims its own usurpation and insults your sense and feeling with a *congé d'élire*. With scarcely an exception, are not these appointments made from motives and upon reasons perfectly political and worldly? and is not the same principle dominant in the patronage of your church livings? * * * Seven thousand, at least, are in the gift of the government or of private persons: and you know that one part of these are constantly made oil to assist the motion of the wheels of the existing administration; and the others are often advertised, sold, bought, or bartered, like stalls in a cattle-market. Now and then, a good man, like you, is presented to a rectory, or higher dignity; and then we rejoice and thank God, who often causes good out of evil. But this alters not the wrongfulness of the system. And as to its general working, YOU KNOW that this very feature of the system produces *the grand motive* which brings to your university hundreds of young men, whose ignorance of real religion, their profaneness, their indubitable ungodliness, even if they be externally of decent behaviour, make the grief and burden of life to you, and such university-men as you. You know that it causes the cradle-destination, and the ultimate introduction into *the most sacred and awful office upon earth*, of a perpetual shoal of men who would be deeply affronted at being described by the attributives laid down in the Scriptures as INDISPENSABLE qualifications for the Christian ministry; and you know that (though we exult and bless

God for the *increasing* proportion of young men of well evidenced piety at your universities, and studying for orders,) the sad majority is of this description. Oh, abomination that maketh desolate! Foul and crying impiety! Systematic robbery of the most precious rights of the flock of Christ; and a method the most likely to secure a succession of false pretenders, hypocrites, wolves to ravage the flock! Hence is your total want of a godly and efficient discipline: hence the heart-breaking difficulties and secret agonies of many devoted clergymen and others among you: *hence the delusion of myriads of souls, the blind led by the blind*, and both falling into the pit, the blackness of darkness for ever! Well might you excuse my pious, and honest, and warm-hearted friend, Mr. Binney, contemplating the tremendous extent of soul-delusion from this cause, and your baptismal formularies, for exclaiming, ‘She ruins more souls than she saves.’ Oh, Dr. Lee, and all ye other clergymen in every rank, who feel the importance and enjoy the power of vital religion, whom the love of Christ constrains, and who watch for souls as they that must give account,—why do ye not arise as one man, in prayer to heaven and protest upon earth, against this SACRILEGIOUS, THIS IMPIOUS PATRONAGE?”

This language is certainly sufficiently strong. It is that of one proverbially meek and gentle—the admired and praised of the Bishop of London. His lordship mentions, as you have seen, his “Christian charity and candour,” and adds,—“the testimony of *such* a man *for* or AGAINST US, is of more weight than the invectives of ten Mr. Binneys,”—implying, that Dr. Smith might have an opinion “against” the bishop and the bishop’s church, without forfeiting his claim to “candour and charity.” What can take place in one mind can take place in another; it is *possible*, therefore, on his lordship’s own showing, that other Dissenters, even those whom he honours by his abuse, may, perchance,

be the subjects of this most extraordinary combination of attributes—candid and charitable in character, *although* they differ in opinion from his lordship! Waving, however, this general reasoning, I only remark, that here you have the testimony in question—testimony, the value of which has been publicly stated by so high an authority as your Mitred Metropolitan; and what does it do? Do! it not merely adopts, but it aggravates and amplifies what Mr. Binney had advanced. It re-states and defends it. And yet, in spite of this, and of many similar proofs of Mr. B.'s opinion being nothing but that of the Dissenters generally, and especially of the more pious and spiritual among them, it continues to be stigmatized as something *unique*—"monstrous," "profane," "political," "blasphemous,"—the offspring and the proof of Satanic possession!

But I go on with my extracts. The above passages indicate that *patronage*—a thing, in the estimation of the Dissenter (whether justly or not, concerns not me) "sacrilegious and impious," is at least *one* of the grounds on which he tests his "belief" of injury and ruin resulting to the Souls of men from a political establishment. It introduces, he thinks, into the sacred office many, whose ministry must destroy rather than save. That the Dissenter is not destitute of episcopalian sympathy in this opinion, and *that he has its sanction for the very language* in which he states it, *is a simple matter of fact*. There is no denying it. Men may rage and rail against him, but they cannot help themselves—they might be willing, in one sense, to eat their own words, and thus to get rid of them, but they cannot eat the printed books in which they are contained. It is a *fact*, for instance, that the following language, and a great deal more of similar import, is to be found in the number of the Christian Observer for March, 1834, pp. 174 and 179.—Before transcribing it, permit me to remark, that I have nothing

to do with the *reasonings* of the writer, in the article from which I quote, nor the *opinions* which he holds respecting what is to be done for the correction of the evil of which he complains. Whether he or the Dissenters have the best notions of the remedy, I know not, and I care not, in this argument. I merely cite him for the fact of his testimony to the reality, the nature, and the extent of an evil, the existence of which affords to nonconformists, in *their* opinion, a "step" toward the "conviction" which they are known to cherish.

"With respect to the evils resulting from the present administration of patronage, it is impossible to speak in terms of too great regret. We quoted in our last number some remarks of Mr. Southey, which *in principle apply as much to the state of the Church now as ever they did. It is not even pretended* IN NINETY-NINE CASES OUT OF A HUNDRED that either a private or an official patron *seriously sets himself to look out for the person best qualified for an appointment*; it is quite sufficient that the friend whom he wishes to oblige is not legally or scandalously incompetent. Mr. Simeon, we know, and a few other individuals, have been accused of the atrocious crime of expending large sums of money in purchasing advowsons for the sole object of nominating to the incumbency the best men they could find, without any tie of relationship, or private interest, or friendship. *But no one pretends that such crimes are common.* The auctioneers who DAILY knock down advowsons to the best bidder, never suspect that they are bought upon such Utopian principles. *It is enough that the purchaser has a son, a nephew, a friend, whom he wishes to PROVIDE FOR,* and who is not disqualified for holding the preferment. AND SO ALSO IN THE CASE OF PUBLIC AND OFFICIAL PATRONS."

The extract which follows contains the writer's account of the *consequences* to the *souls of men* of this "daily" work-

ing of a machinery which influences (*he says, not I,*) “ninety-nine out of a hundred” of *one class* of the actings of the Establishment on the church.

“*We have not a shadow of doubt* that the system which he (Lord Eldon) and others like minded pursued, was *most mischievous to the cause of true piety*, and the spiritual interests of the Church of England. His lordship, it is said, never failed to enquire very carefully whether the party recommended to him had the misfortune to be a Calvinist or Methodist or any other strange animal; but did his lordship and others always ask, all other things being to their mind, whether he was a careless shepherd, a clerical sportsman, a non-resident pluralist, or perhaps a man of *no theological information whatever, except so far as to compose or copy a tirade against bible societies and evangelicals*. We wish that ecclesiastical patrons of all classes could be better instructed than too many of them are, not only respecting the duty of acting conscientiously, but also of guiding their conscience by a scripturally enlightened understanding. We have so often urged this subject in detail, and particularly in reviewing the chapters No. v. and vi. of Dr. Chalmers’ Christian and Civic Economy, in our volume for 1821, that we forbear dwelling upon it at present; but we earnestly wish that all patrons, especially official patrons, would peruse those admirable chapters of Dr. Chalmers’ work; more especially as the high esteem which that pious, zealous, and eloquent writer, at this moment enjoys in the Church of England, on account of his Defence of National ecclesiastical Establishments, may perhaps honey the edges of a cup which contains to many a somewhat bitter draught: for the object of the dissertation is to show that *the doctrines which it has been for a century past the practice of too many persons of influence to denounce as irrational, fanatical, anti-church, anti-moral, anti-scholarlike, and most ungentlemanly, are the doctrines of holy writ, and are pre-*

eminently suited to the wants of mankind, and calculated to promote the spiritual welfare of individuals and the best interests of nations. Dr. Chalmers *clearly shews* that official patrons in particular, *have acted MOST RUINOUSLY, not only as concerns the cause of true religion, AND THE SALVATION OF THE SOULS OF MEN,* but in reference also to the peace and order of the land, and the external interests of the Established Church.”*

I am not, you will remember, discussing the *theory* of a National Ecclesiastical establishment: I do not enquire, therefore, whether “official patronage” be not, in one form or other, inseparable from the thing; or, if it be not, whether it might not yet be so exercised as to be a good

* These extracts are from *the very same article* of “the Christian Observer,” quoted in a former note, only continued in the succeeding number. The following questions which occur in it immediately after its comment on Mr. Binney’s “conviction” and addressed to Dissenters, may be advantageously compared with what is given in the text.—“And are you, Christian Brethren, convinced by *assertions* like the above? [see ante, p. 6, *belief* changed into *knowledge*, and *opinions* into *assertions*] Do you really believe that *ALL the churches, the ministers;* the reading of God’s word, of which such large portions are interwoven in all our services; the administration of sacraments; and the offering up of solemn prayer and thanksgiving from sabbath to sabbath in so many thousands of places of divine worship in every corner of the land, so far from being means of grace and salvation are only instruments of spiritual destruction? *Do you really believe* that the affectionate labours of a *faithful servant of Christ* are actually converted into poison *by being employed within the precincts of a national church?*” No, sir, we don’t,—nor Mr. Binney either, and you *know* it. *We* neither say that “*all the churches and ministers*” are “*instruments of spiritual destruction,*” nor dare you say that *all* the latter are “*faithful servants of Christ,*” and *all* the former free from what is “*ruinous as concerns the salvation of the souls of men.*”—Look at your own words as given above. You *know* that our objections to an Establishment spring from our belief of its *tendency*, as a system, to introduce into the ministry of the purest church *faithless* men, and that *they* do “*mischief;*” but as to “*the affectionate labours of a faithful servant of Christ,*” whether within a national church or out of it, ask your conscience our opinion upon that:—you know it as well as ourselves.

rather than an evil. I don't touch these questions—but I ask you, sir, or any man of common sense, to say, whether the above passages do not state, that, in the writer's "deep, serious, religious conviction," patronage *has in fact* been so exercised—(I might add—"for a century past," as to time, and "ninety-nine cases out of a hundred" as to extent.)—in other words, that that which *is* at present the Establishment, has so operated on the church—so corrupted its ministry, opposed "the doctrines of holy writ," &c., as to have proved "*most mischievous to the cause of true piety*"—and to have acted "*most ruinously as concerns the salvation of the souls of men?*" One Churchman "*has not the shadow of a doubt*" of this; he refers to another, who, he asserts, has "*clearly shown*" it; and yet you shrink from a Dissenter as guilty of impiety for using phraseology which your friends have taught him!

The truth is, language far worse than Mr. Binney's is to be found in the writings of pious ecclesiastics. Mr. Acaster, for instance, in his "Church in danger from herself," repeatedly speaks of "thousands perishing for ever, in their sins," and of "millions being lost for ever and ever;" from the cause just mentioned, namely, the poisonous influence of the *Establishment* on the spiritual character of the ministry of the *Church*; and not content with stating that evil is done, he affirms that it is done, if I may so speak, on principle or systematically, and not merely accidentally occasioned; for he says, that certain bishops,—*spiritual* "official patrons"—employ themselves in "restraining the zealous efforts of the well-disposed and active to promote the real benefit of the people's souls,"—that is, as Dissenters would interpret it, discountenancing evangelical religion, or those doctrines which Dr. Chalmers shows to be those of holy writ, though thought by "many persons of influence" to be "ungentlemanly" and "*anti-church*" Alas! how many proofs are there of the correctness of all the above affirma-

tions and opinions! How true is it, that the evangelical system has made its way in the church, *not* in consequence, but *in spite* of the Establishment! *against* the influence from high places, both secular and spiritual, and not *because* of it! A splendid demonstration, indeed, of the power of truth—but equally so of the absurdity of advocating an expensive apparatus, which truth has to contend with as an incumbrance, and an obstacle. I know not, sir, whether *you* are an evangelical clergyman, but that is of no consequence in a question of fact; and as such, I ask you, where the cathedrals are—the chapters—the societies of the dignified and the rich among the clergy—the centres where assemble those sons of the church, to whom has fallen the greatest share of the emoluments and honours which she possesses as an establishment—where are they—those places, and *bodies* ecclesiastical, that, *as such*, excited, nourished, hailed, that revival of spiritual religion which has taken place of late years, or which, by Dissenters at least, is thought to have taken place? I do not ask for instances of *individuals*,—bishops or other dignitaries,—who have been thus distinguished—but I ask for the production of any one solitary case, in which cathedral *bodies* have done this?—in which they are *doing* it? *These* are the Establishment emphatically—the power and principle of the system is in its strength in *them*: if it be good for any thing, *they* ought to be the grand originators and promoters of all vital spiritual action—and to them ought to be traced the late religious renovation of the church. Is it so? where are the proofs?—where is the chapter that did not scowl darkly and loweringly on evangelicism at first?—where is the chapter in which the *majority* of its dignitaries is evangelical now?—where is the cathedral, which, from this circumstance, is like a brilliant constellation, whose light and lustre, the accumulated radiance of its collection of stars of superior magnitude, flame forth with a brilliancy that cannot be

mistaken? Why, sir, whether you agree with them or not in opinion, you *know* it is a fact, that the organs of your evangelical party lament, that “the pure gospel,” as “the Record” expresses it, from being “a minute seed,” at the close of the last century, has had to make its way against all possible forms of *ecclesiastical* opposition, especially against “the darkness of error,” concentrated in the Christian Knowledge Society, which again is nothing but the meeting, at the mighty heart of the metropolis, of the black blood which still circulates so largely in every separate county, and which settles and corrupts in every cathedral.

This is strong language. To some, indeed, it will appear vile and virulent, who, if Dr. Chalmers had used it, would have clapped their hands and called it “admirable,” deeming it nothing but a natural drop of the “somewhat bitter draught” prepared for and administered to certain parties, by “that pious, zealous, and eloquent writer.” *The fact is, I am indebted to the Doctor for it.* I have just been obeying the “earnest wish” of his friend, “the Christian Observer,”—swallowing the bitter draught myself,—and I find my mind brought by the process into such sympathy with both, that I am falling, I fear, into their modes of expression. I will cease, however, at once, remarks of my own, and proceed to quote from “the admirable chapters” of one, who “enjoys, at this moment, such high esteem in the Church of England, on account of his defence of National Ecclesiastical Establishments.” Here, says the Christian Observer, “Dr. Chalmers has *clearly shewn*” that that system, “which we *have not a shadow of doubt*” has been “*most mischievous to the came of true piety*” has acted “MOST RUINOUSLY AS CONCERNS THE SALVATION OF THE SOULS OF MEN.” What Such a man says and “shews” (*proves*) must be worth something. Let us cull, then, a few of the Doctor’s flowers, and wrap them up in his own phraseology, and grasp them, and see what it is we really get—what the *substance* and *meaning* of his declamation. Of Mr. Binney “The British Critic” remarked,

—“Certainly, he is not polite; he does not mince matters; but there are many things for which we like him. We like him for the vigorous idiomatic English of his style; we like him for his downrightness; we like him for the manly and straightforward determination with which he deals his blows. He does not keep us in doubt or suspense.” For most of these things, you will find *Dr. Chalmers* remarkable. I wonder how they will be “liked” in *him!* He is “a pious, zealous, and eloquent writer,” and “lie enjoys at this moment high esteem in the Church of England,” ay, even among those who think his theology fanaticism, and who, if he remains the man he was, *he* must think the patrons of “another gospel which is not another,” but which, received and rested in, in preference to the grand theme of his own ministrations, will “destroy” men’s souls instead of saving them.

Dr. Chalmers’s style is so diffuse, and so full of repetitions, that it is impossible to quote the whole of every paragraph, the point and pith of which I may wish you to observe. Suffer me to say, therefore, that the *key* to the following running extracts is to be found in this—that the Doctor takes precisely the view of the doctrine of justification by faith, and of the danger, not only of “a verbal and actual,” but of even “an implied and virtual denial of it,” which I have “clearly shown,” by quotations, that Mr. Binney takes, and which is taken by Evangelical Dissenters in general; that he regards this truth as emphatically “*the* gospel,”—as at once the exclusive ground of “reconciliation,” and the nurse or mother of universal virtue;—not only as *that* “which bringeth salvation,” but which teacheth those who understand it, to “deny worldly lusts” as well as “ungodliness,” and to live “soberly and righteously” in the world; the Doctor, therefore, looks upon it as important to promote the happiness, order, and present interests of society, as well as essential to secure individual salvation: hence, he cannot but regard *that*, whatever it may be, the tendency of

which is to induce the concealment, the mutilation, or the denial of this truth as “a great national evil,” as well as an obstacle to the progress of truth and godliness in the land,” and “mischievous,” and “ruinous” to the “souls of men.” This is the key, sir, to what follows on the evils inflicted by church patrons, especially “official patrons,” spiritual and political, on the interests of humanity, in relation both to “the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” It must be kept in view, also, that the Doctor’s rooted opinion is, that the “popular taste” is altogether on his side—in favour of the system of faith, and style of preaching, which he advocates—which he regards as the import of “Holy Writ,” and the grand instrument of righteousness and salvation, in spite of the sneers of “persons of influence,” who scout the whole thing as “ungentlemanly,” and “unscholarlike,” “anti-moral” and “anti-church!”

“Instead of a respectful deference to the popular opinion on these occasions (in the exercise of patronage) there is often a *haughty, intolerant, and avowed* DEFIANCE of it—and we then see the longings of the public sorely thwarted by the resolute and impregnable determination of the patron. It may easily be conceived, therefore, how wide the disruption is between the ruling and the subject party, when a spirit *altogether adverse* to the prevailing taste is seen to preside over *the great bulk* of our ecclesiastical nominations. If power and popularity shall ever stand in hostile array against each other, we are not to wonder though the result should be, *a church* on the one hand, *frowning aloof in all the pride and distance of hierarchy*, upon our population; and a people on the other, *revolted into utter distaste for establishments*, and mingling with this, a very general alienation of heart from all that carries the stamp of authority in the land.” “There is a leading policy which *presides* over this department of public affairs ” (government patron-

age), “and *we repeat it*, it is a policy *mainly derived from the representations and the authority of churchmen*. It is far more the interest of a government to be right than wrong—but, as in questions of commerce, they may be misled by interested merchants, so, in questions of church countenance and preferment, they may be misled by the oracles of a spiritual partizanship—the *main force* of their patronage may be directed to one kind of theology, and that the very theology that unpeoples the establishment—their honours and rewards, in the great bulk of them, lavished on one set of ecclesiastics, and these the very ecclesiastics who alienate the population from the church.”—“The popular taste—is not the mere fantastic relish which it is often conceived to be, but the deep and strong aspiration of conscious humanity, feeling, and most intelligently feeling, what the truths and who the teachers are, that are most fitted to exalt and to moralise her;”—“and thus it is fearful to think that, *in the systematic opposition* which has been raised upon this subject against the *vox populi*, government may have been *combating the growth of virtue in our land, and withering up all those graces of religion, which would ELSE have blessed and beautified our population.*”

After giving a description of the evangelical doctrine of justification, and explaining its influence on human character, Dr. Chalmers remarks, “it is only in proportion to the prevalence of this derided orthodoxy, that the honesties and sobrieties of life will spread in healthful diffusion over the face of the country. That system of doctrine which is stigmatized as Methodism, and *against which government are led to array the whole force of their overwhelming patronage; and on the approaches of which ecclesiastics are often seen to combine as they would against the inroads of some pestilential visitor; and which, when it DOES appear within the well smoothed garden of the Establishment, is viewed as a loathsome weed that should be cast out and left to luxuriate in its rankness among*

the wilds and the commons of Sectarianism; WHAT A QUANTITY OF UNDESIGNED OUTRAGE MUST BE INFLICTED EVERY YEAR, on the best objects both of principle and patriotism, should this, indeed, be the alone system that has the truth of heaven impressed upon it, and the alone system that can transform and moralise the families of our land!"—The manner in which the popular taste has been treated is expressed in a great variety of intense and significant phrases, such as contempt and resistance against it,"—"wanton defiance of it,"—"High Church intolerance that evidently scowls upon it from the Episcopal bench," and yet that taste is described as directed to the only Christianity "which is indeed the Christianity of the New Testament, and the only system of doctrine which can either regenerate the people for heaven, or reform them into the sober and patriotic virtues of the present world."—The Doctor, also, intimates that Dissenters are distinguished by their adherence to these doctrines, and testifies to the effect of them in the habits of their people—"Christ has been more preached in the Church, by their means, and it is our part to rejoice in it, even though, in some instances, it may have been of contention—they have poured a fresh zeal into the bosom of our Establishment, and done something to guide and to purify the exercise of its patronage—the very jealousy that they awaken among the fiery and alarmed bigots of our Establishment is, of itself, a salutary principle—we are most thoroughly aware of the association that obtains between Dissent and Democracy—the evidences are innumerable, that the association is, in the main, unfounded—about three years ago, (written in 1821) when apprehensions were numerous, of those chargeable with seditious practices, there was not among them the case of one individual, who was a member of any of the great dissenting bodies in our kingdom. And it will be found, we venture to say, in every season of poli-

tical alarm, when such apprehensions are called for, that, with a very few exceptions indeed, neither the guilt of disaffection, nor even the suspicion of it, has brought down this kind of visitation at least on a regular member of any of the evangelical denominations of Christianity. The great majority, in fact, belong to those outcasts from the word and ordinances, who associate themselves with no body of worshippers at all; and the question comes to be, *Why were they not to be met with in the empty churches of the Establishment?* This matter suggests whole volumes of argument and reproof to statesmen. And it is right that they should know the real origin of those troubles which most embarrass them. IT DOES NOT LIE WITH DISSENTERS, WHO ARE INNOCENT OF IT ALL; but it lies with their own careless and corrupt patronage. Were the Church of England rightly extended and rightly patronised, there would neither be sedition, nor plebeian infidelity in the land. And thus, *in the eye of one who connects an ultimate effect with its real though unseen cause*, the whole host of Radicalism may have been summoned into being by the very government that sent forth her forces to destroy it; and fierce ministerial clergymen, though they think not so, may each, from his own parish, have contributed his quota to this mass ' of disaffection; and, ascending from the men of subaltern influence, that Bishop, whose measures may have alienated from the church the whole popular feeling of his diocese, instead of a captain of fifties, may virtually, though unwittingly, be a captain of thousands, in the camp of that very rebellion which would sweep, did it triumph, the existence of his order from the kingdom; and, to complete the picture of this sore and infatuating blindness, if there be one individual in the cabinet, whose pernicious ascendancy it is, that has diverted away the patronage of the crown *from the only men who can Christianise and conciliate the people*, he, in all

moral and substantial estimation, is the generalissimo in this treasonable warfare against the rights and prerogatives of the monarchy.”

These passages require no comment. Had a Dissenter written them, they would have been branded as a disgusting specimen of bigotry and rant—“the dictate of unfounded prejudice and party feeling”—the frothy and foaming ebullition of a “thing” *possessed*, railing, in its enthusiastic attachment to a narrow and sectarian theology, against the higher powers in church and state! They cast, you will observe, considerable light on the “steps” by which Dissenters “arrive at their conviction” of the pernicious working of a political-religious Establishment. By its injurious operation on the character of the ministry of that Church which it professes externally to aid, but which spiritually it fetters, starves, defrauds, corrupts:—by its “presiding over” its agents with an influence antagonist to the “deep and strong aspirations of conscious humanity” in the people, which it learns to deem and to treat as a fantastic relish:—it is here “clearly shown,” by churchmen themselves, to be “a great national evil;” “an obstacle to the progress of truth and godliness in the land;” to be “most mischievous to the cause of true piety;” and to act “most ruinously as concerns the salvation of the souls of men.” The might and mystery, as Dr. Chalmers would say, of the “admirable chapters,” comes just to this, that *the people would do a great deal better, and much more wisely for themselves, if their governors would only let them alone to follow the impulses of their own humanity,*” feeling, and most intelligently feeling, what the truths, and who the teachers are, that are best fitted to exalt and to moralise it;” that *the superadded political and ecclesiastical machinery,* well meant, perhaps, but most mischievously managed, *habitually inflicts such a quantity of “OUTRAGE” on this nature and these impulses,* as to have become little better

than an incumbrance and a curse. That Dr. Chalmers clearly shows" the propriety of the "Christian Observers" superlative "*most* ruinously," in other words, the "destruction" of "*more* souls" than what are saved, is obvious enough from the constant recurrence of the statement itself, in such phrases as, "the *great bulk* of ecclesiastical nominations," the "overwhelming force," "the systematic opposition," "the haughty," "scowling," "avowed, intolerant defiance," both of civil and ecclesiastical patrons, being, respectively, diverted from, directed against, or "*altogether adverse*" to, "THE ONLY SYSTEM OF DOCTRINE THAT CAN REGENERATE THE PEOPLE FOR HEAVEN."

Before I pass on to introduce an extract or two of a still different class, which will afford *additional* aid in the process of inference and induction which I wish you to pursue, permit me to observe, that I am well aware the force of the above "testimonies" would be met by many with the remark, that, in the first place, things are very different now from what they used to be; and, in the second, that Dr. Chalmers does not counsel the destruction of the Establishment for the purpose of increasing the spiritual purity and efficiency of the Church, although he depicts, so eloquently, its "most ruinous" actings, in the production of "national evils," the "obstructing the progress of truth and godliness in the land," and "as concerns the salvation of the souls of men." To this I reply, it is not my concern to meet these objections. I am not defending Mr. Binney's *opinions*, nor those of Dissenters who agree with him, though I *am* defending *both*, for having such opinions, and for the language in which they have expressed them, as I conceive they are sustained and countenanced, in their sentiments and phraseology, by Churchmen themselves. I may mention, however, that I imagine *their* reply to the above remark would be, that, in the first place, it cannot be pretended that the "*great bulk*" of ecclesiastics are "*Evan-*

gelical," in *Dr. Chalmers' own sense of that term*, or the "overwhelming force" of patronage brought to bear on the "truths and the teachers" whom he delights to honour: and that, secondly, while Dissenters call Dr. Chalmers as a witness to the question of *fact*—to the existence and extent of the disease complained of, they have a perfect right to differ from him in *opinion*, both as to the cause and the cure of it. I infer that this would be the Dissenters' answer, from the tenor of Dr. Smith's statement as given above.. He appears to regard the very principle of political patronage and appointment as corrupt and vitiating, and the *greater number* of its separate acts as yet, in spite of much recent improvement, which he joyfully acknowledges, "altogether adverse" in the language of Dr. Chalmers, "*to the only system of doctrine which can regenerate the people for heaven.*"

Leaving the above extracts to your calm consideration, and the inference to be drawn from them to your logical justice, I now pass on to another topic.

In addition to the THEOLOGY of that class of clergymen who are said to be an "overwhelming majority," theology, which, as *preached* from the pulpit, the "*Record*" says, "leads the hearers down to the chambers of death," and which, as embodied in the twelve volumes of Tracts, published by the great national Society, *Mr. Budd* says, "consists of unsound and delusory statements of gospel truth;"—in addition to PATRONAGE, ecclesiastical, political, and private, which *Dr. Chalmers* says has so directed the "great bulk" of its "overwhelming force," that the "*Christian Observer*" says, he has "clearly shewn," that it acts "most ruinously as regards the salvation of the souls of men." In addition to these "steps," by which Dissenters "arrive at their conviction," there is another, you may observe, glanced at both by Dr. Smith and Mr. Binney, furnished by the baptismal

and other formularies of the Church itself. Let us look a moment at this.

Dissenters, then, whether justly or not, believe that baptismal regeneration,—the exclusive validity of the orders conferred by Bishops,—the consequent exclusive right of the clergy, “to be quite sure that they have the body of Christ to give to the people”—the conversion of the Christian ministry into a priesthood, with the inevitable association of some mysterious virtue connected with their services—in fact, the germ and general principle, at least, of what the “Record” and “Christian Observer,” and publications of that class, and those whom they represent, regard as “dangerous and ruinous delusions.”—They believe that *that* from which these naturally spring, really *is* contained and taught in the offices and canons of the Church; and if not, they *know* that the things themselves are extensively assumed and inculcated as if *they* were there;—and that, even where denied in the pulpit, the belief of them is fostered by the fact, that the uniform phraseology of the Book of Common Prayer is, *apparently* at least, founded upon them. They consider, that pernicious and perilous errors lurk in the language, and are supported by the use, of the Confirmation Service, and the form of Absolution both public and private; and they think, that very much that is awfully deceptive is engendered or aggravated by the manner in which the Lord’s Supper is dispensed to the dying, and the Burial Service used over the dead.* The *tendency* of the

* A priest only can read the absolution; it must surely then be something more than a simple declarative statement of truth, for that a peasant could pronounce. There appeared, not long since, in a London paper, a complaint against the Rector of St. Margaret’s, Westminster, that he retained a curate who was only in deacon’s orders, and thus deprived the people, Sunday after Sunday, *which many painfully* felt, of the benefit of the absolution. Archbishop Whately mentions, in the first chapter of his “Errors of Romanism,” the case of one who repelled the

whole system appears to Dissenters to be dangerous from its obviously leading the mind to rest in the mere fact of having come, or of habitually coming, in contact with certain services and ceremonies, regarded, in a peculiar sense, "as duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance, in all these things (and persons) that of necessity are requisite to the same." Multitudes, in your church, are believed to repose on the mere *opus operatum*, and to be *led* to this, and confirmed in it, by what *seems* the obvious tenor of the book they use, and what *is* the tenor of much of the teaching to which they listen: they are thus encouraged to say to themselves "peace, peace, when there is no peace"—to be satisfied with "a name to live while they are dead"—to think well of their state, or rather to think little or nothing about the matter, but to take the safety of their state for granted, though they have nothing to depend on, as sinners before God, but what is as the moving sand of the desert, or "the loose chaff of the summer thrashing-floor."—These, sir, are the views of Dissenters respecting the *tendency* of certain parts of your system, and you see to what they lead. They afford you another of those "steps" of which we are in search.—Dissenters are well aware, that consequences,

attempts of the minister to examine and instruct him, by saying, "Do, dear sir, give me the sacrament first, and then talk as much as you please." And of another, who remarked, "speaking of a deceased neighbour, whose character had been irreligious and profligate, 'How great a comfort it was to hear the words of the funeral service said over her, because she had been such a bad liver.'" Such cases, and many such there are, Dissenters conceive to be only symptoms of a vast mass of diseased feeling, which they think exists in the bosom of the Establishment. The wise among them, indeed, look for something of the same sort among themselves, for it is a thing so at home in the natural heart of man as to be able to find for itself food and shelter, even under the most simple ceremonial. This, however, they think is just the reason why it should, by every possible means, be discountenanced; and they further think, that, different from theirs, the rites and offices of the Church have a *direct tendency* to encourage and foster it.

precisely the same as those above detailed, are supposed, by many clergymen, to flow directly and necessarily from Dissent, because of its invalid ministry and ineffective sacraments—they think that its adherents are in imminent spiritual danger, by being destitute of a proper church-state, and without rites and ordinances “duly administered,” and therefore incapable of conveying requisite grace. Dissenters know this, and they are not surprised at it; they think such a “conviction” consistently follows from what clergymen solemnly acknowledge and avow;—but they further think, that *their* “conviction” and that of the Churchman rests upon very different grounds, and that the difference—as to truth, reasonableness, and charity—is on their own side. Right or wrong,” as Mr. B. says, “this is their belief,”—and I suppose the fact of the existence of the above opposite “convictions” is what he refers to, when, after having uttered his own respecting the Establishment, he adds—“I should not feel the slightest offence, if a Churchman were to express himself to me 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.*” “With these statements,” said the British Critic, “we entirely agree.”

I am well aware of the opposite opinions entertained by “different bodies of clergymen,” on the subjects now before us. I know that there are those, who, like what all the evangelical clergy once were, or were thought to be, deny the correctness of the views which Dissenters take of the *meaning* of the offices of the church; and that there are those, who, like the writers of the “Oxford Tracts,” and many of the clergy, *now* called evangelical, openly advocate *that meaning*, and teach baptismal regeneration, the virtue of priestly services, the exclusive validity of an episcopally ordained ministry, with all the consequences flowing from these principles. Remember, however, that I have nothing

to do with this. I am not called upon even to *attempt* to prove that Dissenters are right, either in their interpretation of the prayer-book, or their views of the injurious tendency of the belief of that interpretation. It is enough for my purpose simply to inform you of *the fact*, that thus and thus they think and reason; and that thinking and reasoning (whether soundly or not) in this manner, they necessarily, according to their views of evangelical truth, obtain a “step” towards that “conviction” which you have led me so frequently to refer to.

Although, however, I am not bound to do more than what I have stated, it is legitimately within my province to add some such remarks as those in which I shall now indulge.

Whether or not, then, Dissenters are right in thinking baptismal regeneration an error, or in thinking that the Prayer-book teaches it; whether or not they are right in believing that Churchmen are only consistent in confiding in the virtue and efficacy of sacraments duly administered, to an extent which *they* regard as unscriptural, “delusory,” and “dangerous—however this may be, it is a plain matter of fact, that the meaning that Dissenters attribute to the Prayer-book does prevail very extensively; that it colours the current language of a great portion of the theological literature of the church, even of some of it where it would not be expected; and that this meaning, drawn out, honestly and fearlessly, to its legitimate consequences, is at the present period expanded and advocated in tracts regularly issued from the first men in one of our universities; and that those tracts are finding disciples and defenders in every part of the country, even among the Evangelical Clergy themselves, though the periodical organs of this “body” are fighting and fulminating against them—denouncing what is taught *in their own church*, and *by their own brethren*; and, I had almost added, in language far more

offensive than what any Dissenter ever used against Churchmen.

These, I say, are *facts*. Evidence in support of this assertion is abundant. Were I to take the trouble, I could support each of the above points by many quotations. By any person, however, competent to have an opinion on the matter, I do not expect them to be questioned; yet you may take the following extracts, in illustration of what I mean, which I select, as they happen to be among the last which I have observed. The following is from Mr. Le Bas' Sermon on the "Christian Transformation," in his first vol. p. 443.

"Now, in modern times, the breadth and distinctness of the line that separates the world from the Church, is almost, if not altogether, destroyed. Our entrance into the one is soon succeeded by our admission into the other. *Our second and spiritual birth follows hard upon our first and natural birth.* In this state of things, Christian instruction and discipline must, of course, come after Christian baptism; and the one being secured, the other is often most fearfully disregarded and forgotten. The result is, that while *the sacrament of regeneration* is almost universally administered, there are vast regions within the pale of the visible church, which seem *as if the grace and blessing of regeneration had never descended upon them.*"

This, you observe, is smoothly and naturally said—said with the calm consciousness of a man, who feels that he is advancing nothing inconsistent with the doctrines of his church, or that would fail to find a ready acquiescence in the minds of his auditors or readers. And in how many hundreds of parishes might the same language be employed without either exciting surprise or requiring apology! I was over at Gloucester the other day, and taking up Mr. Dowling's sermon "On the Church of the Middle Ages," preached at the late archidiaconal visitation, the first sentence on which my eye fell was this:—

“He (Christ) has ever been with his Church. He has never ceased to bless the work of his minister. He has always been present in the administration of the sacraments—*blessing WITH SUPERNATURAL POWERS the cleansing waters of baptism, and COMMUNICATING HIMSELF* in the blessed Eucharist.”

Of course here there can be no mistake. And this is published, the preacher tells us, at the “call of his brethren”—the Rev. John Timbrill, D.D., Archdeacon, and the reverend the clergy of the Deanery of Gloucester. Such is the state of opinion in a neighbouring deanery—such, most probably, that of the whole diocese;—how is it here? How is it with *you*?

But the formularies of the Church so naturally suggest and maintain these views, that they pervade your general literature as well as your theological, of which take the following proof:—

“Blest be the church, that, watching o’er the needs
 Of infancy, provides a timely shower,
Whose virtue changes to a Christian flower
The sinful product of a bed of weeds!
 Fitliest beneath the sacred roof proceeds
 The ministration: while parental love
 Looks on, and *grace descendeth from above*
 As the high service pledges now, now pleads.
 There, should vain thoughts outspread their wings and fly
 To meet the coming hours of festal mirth.
 The tombs which hear and answer that brief cry,
 The infant’s notice of his second birth,
 Recal the wandering soul to sympathy
 With what man hopes from heaven, yet fears from earth.”

WORDSWORTH.

Exquisite poetry this—but Dissenters would think it execrable theology. Their own hymns they regard as often the reverse, being very bad poetry, but very good religion. Of course that is a matter of opinion, and I mention it only as such. I proceed with my quotations.

The following is Mr. Melville's opinion of the *charm* that invests a regular episcopally ordained clergyman. It occurs in the second discourse of the first volume of sermons which he published. The subject of the sermon is *Christ the Minister of the Church.*" After telling his hearers to put aside all that is *personal*, and to regard the ordained preacher" in his "office," as a messenger of God, stating that "*whoever preaches,*" they may be profited, if they sit down in a proper temper,—all which is indisputably good advice, *truth* being supposed in the message—he sums up the whole by saying:—

"If whensoever the minister is himself deficient and untaught, so that his sermons exhibit *a wrong system of doctrine*, you will not allow that Christ's church may be profited by the ordinance of preaching; you clearly argue that Christ has given up his office, and that he can no longer be styled 'the minister of the true tabernacle;' *when every thing seems against* the true followers of Christ, so that, *on a carnal calculation*, you would suppose the services of the Church stripped of all efficacy, then, by acting faith on the Head of the ministry, they are instructed and nourished, *though*, IN THE MAIN, *the given lesson be FALSEHOOD, and the professed sustenance little better than POISON.*" Have we here, then, the discovery of the secret source of what has often been so amazing to pious Dissenters, namely, that evangelical clergymen should deliberately recommend their followers to attend at churches where the gospel was not preached? The popish doctrine of a priesthood, and of the virtue of priestly official services as such, naturally, indeed, engenders such monstrous and delusive errors as those announced by Mr. Melville. From the performance of a priestly act by a bad man, the idea of efficacy is carried on to the ministerial act of an ignorant and erring one, and thus catholic superstition expands into protestant absurdity. Few would express themselves like

Mr. Melville; but a lurking, unavowed belief in, and dependence on, the *principle* recognised and involved in his statement, are suspected by Dissenters extensively to prevail as the necessary result of certain well-known episcopal assumptions, and are thought to be “most mischievous to the cause of true piety,” and obstructive to the “only system of doctrine that can regenerate people for heaven.” When the body can be nourished by arsenic, and the mind enlightened by error, souls may be sanctified by “falsehood,” and live through “poison and men may teach such things to listening crowds, and they may hear them, without danger. Mr. Melville has uttered and published more astounding and atrocious absurdities, in the way of figure and flourish, than most men; but we smile at them, and pass on, after recovering our surprise at the “late Fellow and Tutor” of a College. The above, however, is too serious for laughter; it is based on a most pernicious principle,—one of the delusions of the Man of sin, though countenanced by the twenty-sixth article of your church. And it excites the fear that that principle, in a most dangerous form, is deeply rooted in your communion when an *evangelical* clergyman can thus speak.

The extracts which I next introduce, are from a Tract addressed to young persons on the Lord’s Supper. They are far less offensive than what might have been given, but I have a reason, that will appear, for selecting *them*.

“The Lord’s Supper is an appointed token and pledge of the pardon of sin, justification, and every spiritual blessing; as well as *a means of conveying those blessings to the heart*. It gives, as it were, a sensible evidence and assurance of the divine favour; it confirms and ratifies all the promises of the gospel, *conveys the right to them*, and brings the sincere Christian into *the actual possession and enjoyment of them*.”
 * * * * In explaining the “benefits to be derived from the Lord’s Supper,” the author says,—“*We obtain the benefit*

of forgiveness of sins. The general offers of pardon which are made to all who truly repent and believe the gospel, are here confirmed to the humble communicant in particular. He comes with a burdened conscience, and views a crucified Saviour, *and obtains the actual remission of all his sins.*" * * * "We have the privilege of union with Christ. There takes place at the Lord's table, that peculiar union with Christ which no other means of grace is designed to convey." * * * * "We receive the grace of adoption as the children of God." * * * "God is pleased, at the supper of the Redeemer, to send forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So high a distinction might well astonish your minds and lead you to distrust the promise: but, lo, *by these holy mysteries* God assures you, as it were, of his faithfulness, gives you the children's bread, and treats you as the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. *He bestows upon you not only the right, but the spirit and hope of children.*"

You, perhaps, may not see any thing to object to in these statements; and it is even possible that they might be used with such mental limitations, as to be *intended* to convey nothing to which *Dissenters* would object; but such language as the above is generally deemed by them very dangerous, as the *tendency* of it, they conceive, is to lead the mind to associate the "bestowment" and "obtaining" of "spiritual blessings," "pardon," "justification," "adoption," &c., *with an approach to the sacrament of the Church*; whereas, these blessings, they believe, are exclusively connected with the exercise of faith in the Redeemer; and they farther believe that *that faith, and the consequent reception of those blessings, ought to precede an approach to the communion, as a necessary preparation for it.* *Dissenters* may be right or wrong in this. I think some go too far, and use language tending to produce discouragement, by appearing to require assurance of personal salvation, instead of humble faith in

the sufficiency of Christ to save. But, however this may be, seeing that Dissenters hold the matter as I have put it, it is easy for you to perceive how dangerous they must necessarily consider the prevalence of such sentiments to be, as, in their judgment, *tend* to inspire a mistaken dependence on an approach to the sensible symbol of the sacrifice, instead of a spiritual and exclusive trust in the sacrifice itself. Their views, indeed, are tolerably well expressed in the following extract from a pamphlet already quoted, "Modern High Church Principles examined:"—

"The true Christian '*being* justified by faith,' and *having thus* obtained 'peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;' *having* obtained access 'by faith into this grace wherein we stand,' hears his Saviour's voice addressing him, 'do this in remembrance of me.' Without *that faith*, which overcometh the world and *constitutes him a child of God*, it were impossible he could approach with acceptance the sacred board; for 'without faith it is impossible to please him;' without faith it were impossible to 'discern the Lord's body;' and *it is only as a living member of the mystical body of Christ* that, in the nature of things, he can draw spiritual sustenance from his divine head. He obeys this command given in circumstances so moving. *He is already by faith united to Christ. He is 'a member of his body of his flesh, and of his bones.'*"

This passage puts the Sacrament, according to the views of Dissenters, in its proper place—*after* the reception of spiritual blessings by faith, and not before them, as "the means" of their "bestowment." The other passages do this—they speak of the Lord's Supper in language *calculated*, to say the least, to confound an approach to *it* with an approach to *Christ*, and to lead the mind to expect from *it* what must come from *him*. And who was it that wrote so unguardedly? The present Bishop of Calcutta, when Vicar of Islington, in a tract called "A Plain Address to Young

Persons," of which the ninth edition, from which I quote, was published four years since. How many young persons have got *clear* and scriptural ideas of the Lord's Supper from such representations as the above, I know not; but this I know, that Evangelical Dissenters would say, that, when Daniel Wilson could thus talk, it just proves, that, however evangelical a clergyman may be, and however opposed, therefore, in reality, to the mere *opus operatum* view of the Sacrament, yet so natural is it for him to use the language that involves it—so congenial is this with the system in which he lives and moves, and the dialect he is continually hearing and using, that he falls unwittingly into it, either because he does, after all, believe it, or, because from having learnt to find less in the Prayer-book than plain people, he gets into the habit of clothing simple ideas in large and luscious phraseology.

Dissenters, then, I repeat, are of opinion, that the *tendency* of the offices and canons of the Church* is to counte-

* Advantage may probably be taken of the above statements, to object, that, since it thus seems the Church by her religious offices is regarded by Dissenters as calculated to be injurious to the souls of men, they cannot but be considered, after all, as wishing *her* destruction, in addition to that of the Establishment. This, however, is not the case. Their real wishes and opinions are the following. They think the Episcopal Church ought to be reformed in those points which they deem to be delusive and dangerous; and they think also, that Episcopacy, as a system, should be rendered so catholic as to admit of the actual "communion of saints"—avowed and visible fellowship with the ministers and members of other churches, sound in faith, though different in discipline. They not only think thus, but, for the sake of truth and godliness within the Episcopal Church, and for the advancement of universal charity without, they *desire* these things; and they think the "end" of the Establishment is "devoutly to be wished," on the ground, that, in their opinion, this would vastly accelerate so blessed a consummation. This may be an unfounded persuasion, or it may be foolish. I have nothing to do with that. I merely state the fact. The Episcopalian, who desires other communities to conform to *his*, and be absorbed by it, is, in the opinion of Dissenters, the person who seeks the end" or "destruction" of other churches,—for since they deny that they are schismatics, they regard their societies as such. They, on the other

nance and foster unscriptural views; and that, the Oxford tracts are nothing but the natural fruit of what is expressed or implied in them. But, I further repeat, that whether the Dissenters be right in this opinion or not, the *fact*, that such views extensively prevail—have extended lately, and are extending:—this is a matter of vulgar notoriety.

The Record, for instance, of the third of November last, referring to that party in the Church, of which I have already shown you how it habitually speaks, says, that it is now “startled” and “quickened into an unhealthy existence;” admitted, however, to be better for itself than “*absolute death*,” by the modern preaching of the gospel; and then, after describing its ministers as “*not comprehending the mystery of godliness*,” and stating that “*the simple exhibition of Christ for the salvation of man is still foolishness to them*,” it continues, “and while the fact remains undenied and undeniable, that it was the simple preaching of Christ, as the friend and Saviour of sinners, whether by Churchmen or Dissenters, which has quickened so many myriads of their countrymen into spiritual life, now they have found a more excellent way, and *are compassing heaven and earth* to make proselytes to their creed in relation to apostolical succession and the sacraments.” Such, then, is the *fact*, according to the most unexceptionable testimony; and that Dissenters are not singular in regarding it with suspicion, as pregnant with danger to the souls of men, the following Church authorities will show.

hand, limit their desires respecting his, to the extinction of what in its Offices is repugnant to Evangelical Protestantism, or in its constitution inconsistent with Christian catholicity. I could quote from many Dissenting writers, especially from Mr. Binney, abundant proofs of the correctness of those statements. If Churchmen would only become acquainted with what Dissenters really have written—with what they mean and wish, I think the candid, the pious, and the just, would respect some at least among them more, and some among themselves less.

“Our language has been, and will be, strong; but the discussion relates to questions which involve the whole economy of the gospel, of Protestantism, of a standing or falling church, of *the salvation of the souls of men*; and we may not, we dare not, use doubtful or deceitful words. For any unchristian asperity, we would at all times deeply humble ourselves before God, his Church, and an offended brother; but what we have intended, and still intend, in this discussion, is to speak as God shall give us grace, very plainly our view of the character and evils of the system inculcated in the Oxford Tracts, which, ‘even weeping,’ we believe to be anti-evangelical, anti-protestant, and a snare of our ghostly enemy to *impede the progress of the pure gospel of Christ, and to endanger the souls of men*. We say this, not as impeaching the unimpeached and unimpeachable sincerity and conscientiousness of the *writers* of these tracts, but in reference to *the system* which they have adopted.”—*Christian Observer*, Feb. 1837, p. 116.

In April last, the “Clergy Aid Society” was formed, in opposition, I believe, to the “Pastoral Aid Society.”—This new institution rejoices in the patronage of tile king—the head of the Church; the countenance and contributions of the archbishops and bishops—the shoulders; several university professors, deans, and dignitaries—the might and muscle of the trunk thereof; forming, as Dr. Chalmers would say, the “great bulk” of the higher ecclesiastics, and showing in what direction the “overwhelming force” of their influence tends. On this occasion, the “Record” of the first of May thus spoke:—

“Now that there are two societies formed, let every man go to his own company. We (in common, of course, with every Christian man) not only consider it our duty to assist in bearing the knowledge of the gospel to those who are lying in ignorance of it; but *to be very careful* in making the attempt, to see that it *is* the very gospel of the grace of

God that we present to our fellow-countrymen, *and not a spurious and DESTRUCTIVE imitation of it*. Every man is undoubtedly called upon, at all times, and especially in times when the essential principles of popery are attempted to be introduced into the Church, by men of name and consideration in her communion, to exercise a godly jealousy in this matter, and seriously to consider, as in the presence of his judge, what is due to the cause of truth and of God. *Deeds, in most cases, speak more loudly and significantly than words. The Rev. Professor Pusey, we perceive, has instantly joined himself to this society. Here is his declaration as to the quarter in which he expects countenance, support, fund circulation to his RUINOUS DELUSIONS.*"

Such, sir, is the language of the *friends* of the Establishment. I need not point out to you, how exactly coincident it is with that which has been condemned in Mr. Binney, and by none more so than by the writers of the foregoing paragraphs. Now, admitting that these gentlemen most sincerely and conscientiously believe, that the doctrines of the Oxford tracts, or anything like them, have not the least foundation in the formularies of the Church;—yet, since the Dissenters believe they have;—since, also, whether they have or not, they believe that they are, in fact, extensively promulgated;—and, moreover, since they also believe that the men who promulgate them are just the sort of men, who are *in the Church*, because there is a secular *Establishment* to allure and to sustain them on these grounds, it would really seem not to be very difficult for these gentlemen to see, how, *upon their own principles*. Dissenters inevitably come to have and to express the opinion which they condemn. At any rate, with the proof you have already given of your openness to conviction, I am sure it will not be difficult for you, or for any fair and candid examiner of what I have produced, not only to obtain some knowledge of the "steps" by which Mr. Binney may be

supposed “to have arrived at his conviction,” but also to discover that certain Churchmen themselves, who profess to be horrified at his mode of expressing it, are *in the habitual use* of language like his, and *often far worse*—and *that*, too, in relation to their brethren.

But another “step” still remains, and I might go on producing “another and another,” but that I feel myself very much in the condition of the municipal functionary who told the king, that he, and the inhabitants of the town, had ten reasons for not firing guns to salute him; and who would have enumerated them all, but that his Majesty was fully satisfied with the first, which was, “that they had none.” One “step” more, however, and I shall stand still. Supposing, then, that there should be nothing dangerous or deceptive in the formularies of a Church; supposing its offices, articles, and laws, to be the most simple and scriptural imaginable; Dissenters are of opinion, that for this Church to become *a national establishment* involves what must inevitably injure both it and the people. They believe that it cannot be done without such a promiscuous admission to Christian ordinances—such a recognition and treatment of the people as Christians—as must be delusive and destructive to a tremendous extent. Dissenters think, that a national establishment cannot possibly maintain “godly discipline”—that the king, the nobility, the ministers of state, judges, magistrates, and, by consequence, the great mass of the commonalty, though ungodly and profane, frivolous or vicious—constituting the *world*, properly so called—living in and loving its wickedness—they think, that all these will yet come, more or less; to be recognised by the church, in a character that does not belong to them, and many of them be thus brought to believe that it does; that they will be readily received to “holy mysteries,” or easily obtain them when about to die; and in either case be lulled into security, and cheated of salvation.

Dissenters farther believe, that the influence of an institution, which, as they think, would operate injuriously on much of the people, would also affect many of the priesthood. Though the articles, offices, &c., of a church were as pure and apostolic as if, like the New Jerusalem, it had descended from heaven,—they believe, that, if made a National Establishment, especially a rich one, it would come to have a number, if not “an overwhelming majority,” of ministers, who would be as blind themselves as the flocks they famished, and that the shepherds and the sheep would be alike in danger, though the former would be exposed to the “greater damnation.” This, sir, is the belief of many Dissenters. I merely state it without expressing an opinion myself. I state it, as it may aid you in ascertaining the “steps” to Mr. Binney’s “conviction.” It may, or it may not, be his belief. I will prove it, however, to be that of others; and being so—that is, being their belief respecting establishments in general, then, whether right or wrong, it is easy to see to which it will lead respecting yours, or any other, in particular.* The following passage is from Dr. Wardlaw’s Sermon on Establishments:—

* I beg that it may be distinctly observed, bow the above is put. *Since it was written*, I have been led to see the necessity for this request while drawing up a former note. The dissenting opinion, then, is not that the preaching of the gospel itself, and the “affectionate labours of a *faithful* servant of Christ” “are actually converted into poison,” from the mere fact of their being within the precincts of an establishment; nor is it, that “congregations of faithful men,” or societies of real believers, become “synagogues of Satan,” from the same circumstance: but it is this—that the *tendency* of the system is, to recognise and treat as Christians and Christian congregations, those who are *not* faithful men, and thus to deceive them, (according to the false analogy, as they deem it, of Hooker, adopted and advocated by the Rev. S. C. Wilks, in his tract on Establishments, “that *our state*, the English people, like the Jewish, is not part of them the commonwealth and part of them the church of God, but *the self-same people* WHOLE AND ENTIRE—BOTH;”) and to introduce into the ministry those who will *not* be faithful servants of Christ, but who, being “blind,” “not preaching the gospel,” advocating vital and fundamental error, &c., will *thus* injure and destroy: they think, the tendency

“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,

of an Establishment is to produce these effects, even though the articles of a church should be the most evangelical, and that thus there might be “the form of sound words” without the inculcation of “sound doctrine.” If, however, an Establishment existed, in which these two things were universal, Dissenters believe that such an institution could do nothing but unmixed good. This explanation will show the mistake under which Churchmen labour, when they speak to Dissenters thus—(Christian Observer, Feb. 1834)—“You admit the fact that our church has greatly improved in its practical administration; you will spare the proofs; you will give us all, and far more than we ask for; you will even *concede*, for argument sake, that our orders, our services, *our clergy*, our institutions, were perfection itself, and then, with all this accumulation of practical piety and actual benefit to the souls of men, *you will swing us off on the hinge of an abstract principle*, and, in the words of Mr. Binney, say, ‘I am an enemy to the Establishment—it destroys more souls than it saves,’” &c. No, sir; Dissenters say no such thing, nor has Mr. B. said it. I have *proved* in the course of this letter, that Dissenter ground their “conviction” not on “the hinge of an abstract principle” in relation to an establishment, *after conceding* “services, CLERGY, &c., to be perfection itself,” but on the assumed fact of the tendency of “the principle and operation” of an Establishment to produce the opposite of all this, even though it should begin with it; and on the belief, that, after admitting the *English* Establishment to have “greatly improved” in its practical administration, there is still an immense portion of its machinery that, “as a system,” works “most mischievously to the cause of true piety,” and “most ruinously as concerns the salvation of the souls of men.” “What is the mere moral preaching,” says the Rev. C. Bridges, in his admirable work on the Christian Ministry, “*that obtains so widely among us*, but a refined species of this cursed (Antinomian) leaven? * * *—How frightful to think of the *deluded souls sliding into eternity in this golden dream!*”

After reading these explanatory statements, I can imagine a candid and serious Churchman saying, “Why, this is very different from what I had always imagined Dissenters to mean: there is nothing here, but what our serious, good men are always lamenting as too true, and what I believe myself;—if these be the views of ‘political Dissenters,’ wish I had known it sooner.” So do we. We fear, however, that there are some, who have known this long enough, but who don’t wish *you* to know it; and there are many more, who talk and write very eloquently, who are as innocent as lambs of all acquaintance with the character and opinions, or real ultimate object” of Dissenters.

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. I say again, that I know not one thing that, in a country like ours, operates with a greater *latitude of ruin*, than the prevalence of nominal Christianity.”

This extract is remarkable for its singular coincidence in phraseology with the celebrated passage which has been thought by many to be so unique and unparalleled; and also for its stating the *one* “step” by which its author arrives at his “conviction.” I have shown, however, that the *English Dissenter* may have taken three or four in “arriving” at his.

Bare and bald, however, as the above passage is, and as the opinion itself of Dissenters which I am now referring to may be, in relation to *an establishment* simply considered *as such*—even this is authorised by the manner in which Churchmen, *evangelical* Churchmen, speak concerning *Dissent as such*. Witness the following, quoted before for another purpose.

“*As a system*, we believe Dissent to be *an evil greater than we can express*; and if carried to the extent of the subversion of the national churches of England and Scotland, to say nothing of other Protestant countries, nothing but a direct, special miracle, which we have no right to look for, more especially when we have set aside the obvious means of grace, could prevent the ultimate extirpation of Christianity from the earth.”—*Christian Observer, March, 1834*.

I make no remark on this. There it is. Every man has a right to his opinion: my object is answered by showing that they who thus talk—who “believe Dissent as a system

to be an evil *greater* than they can express," really ought not to quarrel with Dissenters if they, with equal conscientiousness, believe an Establishment, "as a system," to be a *great* evil"—a thing which they *can* express, and not "*the* obvious means of grace!"*

The last extracts with which I shall trouble you are the following. They are intended to show, that others, besides modern "political Dissenters" have thought the secular patronage of Christianity—which began at the commencement of the fourth century, when the Church ceased to stand on the principle of "Dissent as a system"—has been any thing but "the obvious means of grace they are intended also to show, that the dissenting opinion, before stated, of the probable operation of a National Establishment on the character of the priesthood, is neither novel nor singular; and lastly, they are given to demonstrate, that the language for which Mr. Binney has been so condemned, is suavity itself compared with that in which others have indulged:—some, indeed, of what follows, is so coarse and repulsive, so terrible and strong, that I shrink as I transcribe it.

"I have been long convinced from the whole tenor of ancient history, that this very event, Constantine's calling himself a Christian, and pouring that flood of wealth and

* Or put it in another form; what would be thought of the Dissenter who should thus write:—"as a system, we believe the establishment to be an evil greater than we can express; and if carried to the extent of the subversion of the Voluntary Churches of England and Scotland, to say nothing of America and other Protestant countries, nothing but a direct special miracle, which we have no right to look for, *more especially when we have set aside the obvious means of grace*, could prevent the ultimate extirpation of Christianity from the earth?" And why should not the dissenter write thus? yet if he were, it would be "a presumptuous party estimate," and pious horror would be expressed for his pretending to "*know*" the future; and much would be said about "the rashness of a mortal man daring to read the inscrutable book of the divine councils," and "being perfectly sure," or "not having the shadow of a doubt" of what he "affirmed," "asserted," and so on!

honour on the Christian Church, the clergy in particular, was productive of more evil to the church than all the ten persecutions together. From the time that power, riches, and honour of all kinds were heaped upon the Christians, vice of all kinds came in like a flood, both in the clergy and the laity. From the time that *the Church and State*, the kingdom of Christ and of the world, were so strangely and unnaturally *blended together*, Christianity and Heathenism were so thoroughly incorporated with each other, that they will hardly ever be divided till Christ comes to reign on the earth. So that, instead of fancying that the glory of the New Jerusalem covered the earth at that period, we have the terrible proof that *it was then, and has ever since been, covered with the smoke of the bottomless pit.*"

"Where is it written that we are bound to obey any minister, because we live in *what is called* his parish? Yes, you say, we are bound to obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. True, in all things indifferent: but this is not so; it is exceedingly far from it. It is far from being a thing indifferent to *me* who is the guide of my soul. I dare not receive one as my guide to heaven *who is himself in the high road to hell*. Such are many parochial ministers at this day."

"To speak the naked truth, not with anger or contempt, as too many have done, I acknowledge that *many, if not most*, of those that were appointed to minister in holy things, with whom it has been my lot to converse, *in almost every part* of England or Ireland, *for forty or fifty years last past*, have not been eminent either for knowledge or piety. It has been loudly affirmed, that most of the persons now in connexion with me, who believe it their duty to call sinners to repentance, having been taken immediately from low trades, tailors, shoemakers, and the like, are a set of poor, stupid, illiterate men, that scarce know their right hand from their left: yet, I cannot but say, that I would

sooner cut off my right hand, than suffer one of them to speak a word in any of our chapels, if I had not reasonable proof that he had *more knowledge in the Holy Scriptures, more knowledge of himself, more knowledge of God and the things of God than NINE IN TEN of the clergymen I have conversed with, either at the universities or elsewhere.*"

"Insolent clergymen, pleasure-taking clergymen, money-loving clergymen, praise-loving clergymen, preferment-seeking clergymen; these are the *wretches* that cause the order in general to be contemned. These are the *pests* of the Christian world,—*the grand nuisance of mankind,—a stink in the nostrils of God.*"

"I see those running whom God hath not sent, *destroying* their own souls, and *those that hear them*; perverting the right ways of the Lord, and blaspheming the truth as it is in Jesus. I see the blind leading the blind, and both falling into the ditch. Unless I warn in all ways I can these *perishing souls* of their danger, am I clear of the blood of these men? SOUL-DAMNING CLERGYMEN lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen."

This *is* terrible. You yourself attribute "calmness and candour" to Mr. Binney; but what have we here?—And who could dare to speak thus? What low, vulgar, foul-mouthed fanatic—what "bitter," "blasphemous," "political" Dissenter,—could so insult common decency, so violate public decorum, so degrade the nature and the name of man, as to indulge in Billingsgate like this?—who?—JOHN WESLEY!—The man whom your church formerly trampled beneath her feet—whom she now finds it politic to praise, and whose followers, hated and hunted once, now, in the hour of her need, she would willingly conciliate or cajole.*

But I *must* close, and I close here. I have done what I proposed. I have laid before you a few materials for reflec-

* The above passages, *with distinct references*, may be found, where I found them, in the "Patriot" of October 24th, 1836.

tion;—*data* from which you may yourself deduce what you appear anxious to know. I will not conceal that I write with an object beyond that of affording you, individually, either employment or satisfaction; and while I thus frankly speak of the objects I have, let none be imputed to me which I have *not*. My object, then, in this letter has not been to discuss the right or wrong of Establishments;—nor the right or wrong of Episcopacy—or Presbyterianism—or any form of church order; nor the truth or falsehood of what is called evangelical religion; nor the correctness or incorrectness of any opinions respecting the theological character of the English clergy, or the real import of the book they use;—all I have attempted has been this, to *state* what *Dissenters think* on most of these matters; to show that, thus thinking, whether rightly or not, they *cannot but arrive*” at the “conviction” complained of; and that, in thinking as they do, on the nature of the Gospel, and the state of the Establishment, and in having, and expressing, the “conviction” referred to, and *as expressed*, they are countenanced and authorised by the avowed principles, statements, assertions, and phraseology of members and ministers of your own church, and other advocates of similar institutions. This is what I have attempted, and *nothing but this*. The *points themselves*, on which most Dissenters and many Churchmen think and speak so strongly, I leave open to discussion, as, in my conscience, I think several of them are. But granting the Dissenter what he holds as important truth, and what he takes for undisputed fact, I ask you the following questions:—if you are a high, orthodox Churchman, I put them to your reason and judgment, your principle and honour, as a gentleman, and as a man of common candour and common sense. I ask you, granting to the Dissenters their peculiar views—narrow, bigoted, methodistical as you may deem them,—but granting to them the *sincere belief only* of their awful importance,

could they, consistently with this, and with the belief they have of what is *still* the state of the Establishment, “arrive” at any other “conviction” than the conviction in question? I ask you, whether you cannot conceive that they may hold this opinion, not because they are profane and impious, but just in consequence of the reality and depth of their religious feelings, though these feelings may flow from an erroneous judgment? I ask you, whether you cannot perceive that it is quite possible for persons to have a strong repugnance to establishments on account of their belief that they must necessarily affect the purity and promulgation of their favourite though fanatical notions, not only, without being political Dissenters, but exactly in proportion as they are *not* political hut religious men? I ask you, whether it is not possible for you to imagine that they may entertain this repugnance against Establishments, and yet have not the slightest feeling against Episcopacy, or the Episcopal church, as such, seeing that with them the mere forms of different churches, however relatively important compared with each other, are *all* nothing, but as “the small dust of the balance,” compared with that “*system of doctrine which regenerates the people for heaven?*” I ask you, whether I have not *proved*, by distinct citations, which it is neither possible to gainsay nor resist,” that, supposing the Dissenters to speak in Mr. Binney, they say and think nothing but what has been thought and said again and again, and is being thought and said continually, by *your own brethren?*—If, however, you are an *evangelical* clergyman, then, sir, in addition to these questions to your understanding and judgment, I beg to close with the following to your *conscience*. I ask you, in the presence, so to speak, of the rest of the clergy, and of all the inhabitants of the diocese of Worcester, *did* you not know these things? *Do* you not know them? Were you not aware that the person, “whose name was advertised

to preach in this city," and who did preach, (calamitous visitation!) had incurred the displeasure, if not the hatred, of your brethren, by giving utterance to nothing but the legitimate inference from their own principles and statements, and that, too, in language taught him by themselves? If you did not know this before, I ask you, can you deny it now? Dare you, with this letter before the public, pretend to say, that the organs of the evangelical clergy are guiltless of the Dissenter's offence? If you do, will any one believe you who can read and think for himself? Is it not palpable that, whether right or wrong in their opinions, Mr. B. and many Churchmen stand precisely on the same ground; but that he, as a Dissenter, has consistency for his companion?—But I have done. You began by misrepresenting Mr. Binney through ignorance; you proceeded to do him partial justice after partial examination; I hereby present you with the means of completing your work. I really have confidence in your candour. You appear to me to have shown that you are open to conviction. You seem willing to read, and to admit what you read. Read this. See here what clergymen have said, and what they have admired and praised others for saying. Listen to the lamentations they have uttered, as encouraged by the countenance and shielded by the shadow of the Colossus of the North—the eloquent advocate of Evangelicism and Establishments! Mark what is pouring incessantly from the periodical press by one class of Churchmen against another, and cease to wonder that Dissenters should learn something from such instructors. Again I caution you to observe my aim. For any thing I am concerned with, in my present argument, Dr. Chalmers' notions of the gospel may be, as they are thought by some, drivelling and visionary; he, Evangelical Churchmen, and Evangelical Dissenters, may, in the elegant language of the Oxford Tracts, be "a mob of tiptops, gapes, and yawns" altogether; the Church offices may be as much inspired as

the Bible; Episcopacy may not only be apostolical, but in itself the safeguard of salvation; an Establishment may be absolutely necessary “to prevent the ultimate extirpation of Christianity from the earth;” and ours, in its constitution and working, may be the purest and most perfect in the world: all these things may be for anything I aim at; but, as a defence of the “conviction” of Dissenters, showing, that it is not only consistent with religious feeling, but may actually flow from it—that it may be the result not of political” partizanship, but of spiritual adherence to fundamental truth,—and that it may be entertained in relation to a *system* without the slightest particle of animosity towards *men*: and, *as an argumentum ad hominem* addressed to Evangelical Churchmen, showing, that, *on their own principles*, Dissenters may be right in their conviction, and that, *by their own example*, they are perfectly authorized in their mode of expressing it; viewed in this light, and in relation to these objects, I calmly and confidently defy any man—lay or clerical—of the Diocese of Worcester, or any other, to answer this book.

I am,
 Reverend Sir,
 Yours, &c.

JOHN SEARCH.

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P. S. MY object hitherto has only required me to state dissenting opinions without defending them. I affirmed, for instance, that Dissenters take that view of the meaning of the Offices of the Church which coincides with the principles of the Oxford Tracts, and there I left it. I once thought, however, of attempting, in this place, to show that they are right, and that the explanations of the baptismal service by the Christian Observer, and the author of *Modern High Church Principles Examined*," are unsatisfactory. The latter also frequently refers to the *canons*: it would be important to know how far they are binding, or how far they are believed. Evangelical Churchmen often quote this one and that,—will they admit others that *we* could quote? If not, what is *meant* by their subscription to the thirty-sixth, *taken in connection with his words whom, in that, they acknowledge as their head*,—those, I mean, by which the whole are preceded and followed? They talk of producing, in Exeter Hall, the canons of the Church of Rome, that the public may judge of *it* by *them*; will they abide by the same test? Shall they and their Church be judged by her's?—Certain things, too, very different, are sadly confounded in popular controversy, so that some, on both sides, seem fighting with shadows. Dissent is identified with Independency; Episcopacy with the Establishment; and both the latter with the Church, the *only* Church—at least in this realm. Then again, feelings in theological antagonists, having reference to similarity of political condition, are spoken of as if they sprang from religious sympathy; while other feelings, originating merely in dissimilarity of political condition, are mistaken for opposition to a false creed; though they coexist with adherence to the *principle* of many of its errors. There may be seen, also, passing between the advocates of different *establishments*, the interchange of such books and language, as to shew that, *because* they agree in the principle of such political institutions, they would willingly, if they could, hold visible church-communion in services and sacraments—which communion was never longed for between some of them, when they only knew each other as agreeing in the faith!—which would involve, if it took place, communion between many who do *not!* and which is deprecated and denounced as regards others, *admitted* to hold, most tenaciously, the essentials of the gospel, because they differ on a point of political expediency.

Then there is the voluntary principle. *What is that?* By many it is said to be selfishness; it is described as a desire to be free from all moral and political obligation; their own whim, humour, caprice, covetousness, is held forth as the only law which its advocates love—as if they acknowledged no exercise, in *any* sphere, of either human compulsion or divine! Nay, by some it is identified with certain modes of church government!! Further, with respect to the diffusion of the gospel throughout “all nations,”—the grand object for which the church should live, which should be dear to every Christian and to every community, and which forms a test for the trial both of systems and men—there are “facts and reasonings,” perhaps, which go far to prove that the principle of a National Establishment is *opposed* to it, and the principle of some non-conformist systems *inadequate*; and that the adherents of both have most blessed the world, when they have practically done homage to what they have deemed the errors, but in reality the excellencies, of each other.—To all these matters, and many more, I had intended to advert, in a course of observations, different in kind, indeed, from the preceding argument, but perfectly consistent with it; and it would afford me more pleasure to aid in removing mutual misconceptions, and thus to inspire reciprocal respect, than merely to “put to silence” the clamorous “ignorance of foolish men.” As, however, space does not permit, nor necessity demand my present attention to these matters, I content myself with what I have attempted. I have sought to expose the Establishment, but I regard the *Church* as likely to become one of God’s most distinguished instruments for blessing mankind. I have defended that body of Dissenters who are principally attacked in modern controversy, but I have my own views as to the wisdom, the working, and the probable prevalence of *some* of theirs. I wish different churches could be persuaded to acknowledge and combine the portions of truth which they respectively hold; but, alas? how can this occur, while each thinks every pin of its own tabernacle apostolic, and the *whole* building of its neighbours a blunder? Extreme views on either side are wrong; the candid and catholic of both parties think more alike than they suspect, or more than they *avow*—some being fettered by the *dead* and some by the *living*.