

The
Church of England
Indefensible
from Holy Scripture,

George Redford

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THE
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INDEFENSIBLE
FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE,

&C.

BY GEORGE REDFORD, M.A.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

INDEFENSIBLE

FROM THE HOLY SCRIPTURES;

IN REPLY TO SEVERAL RECENT DEFENCES,

AND ESPECIALLY TO

TWO DISCOURSES,

BY THE REV. J. GARBETT, M.A.

ENTITLED

“THE CHURCH DEFENDED IN HER PRINCIPLE, CONSTITUTION,
AND EFFECTS,” &c.

BY GEORGE REDFORD, M.A.

“PRINCIPLES, NOT MEN.”

βροτοῖς ἀπασιν ἡ συνείδησις Θεοῦς.

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PREFACE.

I am solicitous to guard against any misrepresentation, wilful or otherwise, of the Title attached to this pamphlet, in laying down so bold a proposition, as some will deem it—The Church of England Indefensible—I wish it to be clearly understood, that I limit the assertion to scriptural ground. Upon other ground, and particularly upon the circumstances of the Protestant cause at the period of the Reformation, a powerful apology, I admit, may be framed for the conduct both of statesmen and divines, in adopting the principle of an alliance. If the defence of the Establishment were confined to the exigency which gave it birth, there would be in its advocates, some semblance of reason and moderation. But they are too aspiring to limit their defences to so low a ground. Nothing will satisfy their ambition but proving the whole, principle, constitution, and clerical orders—all to be *divine*. The inefficiency, hitherto, of all such efforts, and, as I conceive, the signal failure of Mr. Garbett's, have emboldened me to assume, that, from the Holy Scriptures, no defence of an established Christian Church can be extracted. It never has been; and, till it is, we are disposed to deny its possibility.

I take the present opportunity of declaiming any wish to promote a spirit of controversy, or to defend what some will endeavour to brand as sectarianism. I maintain nothing but the integrity and sufficiency of sacred scripture. My most ardent desire is to advance a general union of all real Christians, convinced that this is a sacred duty binding upon us all, and that it would most materially subserve the triumph of Christianity. It appears to me, that the way—the only way—of hopefully aiming at a consummation so devoutly to be desired, is by repudiating human authority, human legislation, and by the restoration of that primitive doctrine and discipline which cemented the early Christians into one body, though their churches owned no human head, and were subjected to no human system of control. They were, indeed, one by identity and agreement of an individual nature; not by systematic arrangement, or subordination to any universal and artificial scheme of government. Their system was perfect, because it embraced all, and yet left all free. It gave the greatest efficiency to the *divine* government, by excluding *human*; and provided effectually for universal peace and charity, by limiting itself to the means and objects accredited by Christ and his Apostles.

All attempts, however, to restore such unity, by recommending one denomination to identify itself with another, or all to merge in one, are obviously Utopian and irrational. It is not in human nature to do so, even under a gracious influence; and those who patronize such notions, do but lose their labour, and mock our hopes. Whenever there shall arise a disposition to adhere to divine authority, and enforce nothing but what is clearly revealed

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in the scriptures, then there will be an approximation toward the principle of a universal church; but not till then. Schemes for uniformity of faith, discipline, and practice—schemes for comprehension, founded upon party views, however extensive, or however lax, can never succeed. The only union desirable, is of the pious and spiritual. The first step to unity is ABOLITION, not SUBJUGATION. *Abolition* of all *non-Christian* terms of communion—not an abolition of individual opinion—but a generalizing of Christianity, in the same manner as humanity is made a common recognition, without the obliteration of individual character. Let all good men have a fair opportunity of uniting with all other good men in the Christian Church on equal terms. There might take place an abolition of sectarian peculiarities, for the sake of the common symbol of piety, without any oblivion or dereliction of conscientious principle. But this can only be realized by resorting to the simplicity, and purity, and spirituality of Apostolic times and doctrines. Christianity is bedizened by one in the attire of a harlot; by another it is defined, particularized, anatomized into fragments. One party is dissatisfied with its unadorned simplicity, and they robe it in human vestments; another party tears off its skin, that they may dissect every nerve, and are not content till they have defined and demonstrated every muscle and vessel, to the danger of the vital principle, which is extinguished under such a process.

Abolition of what is human, is, I believe, the way back to that unity which all profess to seek, but the means of attaining which appear nearly hopeless, except to the thoroughly sectarian, whose fond imaginations picture to themselves their own little party advanced to supremacy over their brethren, like Joseph's sheaf, when it stood up and received me obeisance of the others, or when the sun, moon, and eleven stars were laid at his feet.

The problem for us all to study, is, how the most entire liberty of individual conscience may be combined with a cordial and comprehensive unity in faith, discipline, and practice. Had it not been with the hope of doing something, however trivial, towards this end, I had not troubled myself to pen, nor the reader to peruse, these pages. The great principle of a universal church can never be brought to light till we have exploded the rubbish of human establishments. These are the barriers that obstruct Christian unity; over them we may sometimes shake hands, but they must be all swept away before—we can have a free and foil communion of saints. These are the clouds, that obscure the sun of righteousness itself, and from which it seems they will not be chased without some storms of controversy.

I have endeavoured, in the following pages, to guard against every feeling alien to the spirit of truth and lore. If to any of my brethren I should seem to have violated that spirit, let them forgive me, and charge it to the score of infirmity, not of malevolence, while their merited reproof shall lead me to seek forgiveness of Him who knows that I have not consciously transgressed.

Worcester, April, 1833.

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&c.

A HOST of champions have lately appeared in the cause of the Established Church, taking various and dissonant views both of its principles and prospects; but all maintaining that there ought to be a legal establishment of Christianity. So far as I have seen, few of these writers, whether in reviews, sermons, charges, or pamphlets, have treated the subject with more wisdom or better temper than Mr. Garbett. He has collected and stated, with zeal and ability, what I believe are the best arguments ever offered for the establishment. In answering him, therefore, if I succeed, I shall answer many others. His weapons, we may be allowed to suppose, were the very best the whole armoury afforded.

Though what follows may be directed principally against him, and may, in some points, merely meet his peculiar mistakes, yet I shall, as far as possible, divest the reply of all appearance of personal controversy, and merely consider Mr. G. as a type of a class, and his discourses as the cream of the best treatises upon the Established Church which modern times have produced. His two discourses bring the question of the Church Establishment, not only before the inhabitants of Birmingham, but before the nation. He must not, therefore, be surprized, if one of those *persons of common talents and education*, whom he mentions in a note, should venture to question the scriptural orthodoxy of the said discourses. *Speaking the truth—in love*, is recommended by St. Paul as a means of growth in Christ.

To begin with the title-page—“THE CHURCH *defended in her principle, constitution, and effects.*” This is a phraseology to which we are not unaccustomed. It is the style of the Catholics, who recognize no church but their own; and of the senate, where none is legally known but the established one. From a

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Protestant divine, however, and in controversy, such a collocation of words should not have proceeded. *His Church* is but one among many. Does he not know, or does he mean to deny this? If the former, he is blind; if the latter, bigotted. Perhaps he used the title *καὶ ἐξοχὴν*, as we say, to import pre-eminence; and if so, he only emblazons his own vanity. He ought to have left other *churches* to praise his own; or, if that did not please him, he ought not, even by implication, to have *un-churched* others. Had he defended the universal church, his language would have been just; but, alas! there is very little in his discourses in which he makes common cause with all Christians, or even all sound Protestants.

A title should, of course, concisely express the business in hand; so he named his two discourses, "*The Church defended in her principle, constitution, and effects.*" Had he Undertaken to defend the Church of Christ in *its* principle, constitution, and effects, I submit Whether we should not have received from him a work of a very different nature, which might have proved a more modest, useful, and becoming performance. He would reply—"True; but that was not my intention." Agreed, and therefore, *the defence of the principle, constitution, and effects of the Church of England*, is not identical with *a defence of the Church of Christ, in its principle, constitution, and effects*. Perhaps some reviewer or speculator, who may notice these pages, will hereafter resolve this problem—why we have, in these days, so many defences of the Church of England, and so few of the Church of Christ? Does the Church of England stand in need of so *much* defending, and the Church of Christ of so *little*? Assuredly it shews, that the defence of the one is a widely different thing from the defence of the other. This I think every reader will admit; and if Mr. Garbett does not, it may be made more obvious by a reference to his own definition of his undertaking. A principle must be a fundamental truth—an original postulate—a first position, from which others are deduced. Thus the principle of Christ's Church must be *divine authority*—its constitution must be limited to laws *emanating from that principle*—its effects must be *godliness*. By *principle in the Church of England*, in Mr. G.'s discourses, is meant the legal establishment of Christianity, in Co-operation with the body politic. If so, then, it follows, that these two *principles* ate, to say the least, *diverse*; and further, that the Church of Christ was without principle till the time of imperial Constantine. If Mr. G.'s church begins in what he calls *its principle*, I can only say this is a new principle, not once recognized in all the churches of the New Testament. They either had no principle, or their principle was different from that laid down by all defenders of the establishment, and so very

distinctly by Mr. G. He may take either horn of the dilemma, and comfort himself with it as well as he can. Christ had a church before the days of Constantine. If it had *no principle*, quite sure I am it was a church not worth belonging to; and if it had a *principle*, I am equally sure it was a better one than Mr. G. has adopted for his church. He will not, I suppose, venture to deny that the principle of Christ's Church, *in those days*, was not *identical* with the principle he lays down—the one supersedes the other. If it is the *same*, it needs no defence from him. If his principle is not so good, who would exchange the better one of Christ's primitive Church for it? If it is better, why not avow it manfully, and abjure the other? If he means it as an adjunct to the original principle, who will vindicate the presumption of improving upon the principle Christ and his Apostles laid down? Evidently, therefore, it must mean the principle of another church, different altogether. He might honestly have said so. However, in the next discourse he publishes, I hope he will state what the *principle* of the Church of Christ is, and defend *that*; for we cannot help thinking that this would be a more appropriate undertaking for one of Christ's ministers. And there I leave it, to notice *the constitution of the church* he and many others so zealously defend.

As far as I can learn from the preacher, and all other learned authorities upon the subject, the constitution of the Church of England consists of the Thirty-nine Articles, the Hook of Common Prayer, and particularly the three holy orders of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Then he informs us that this is "*the constitution in its principle*," (p. 21.) Now this so puzzles us "*persons of common talents and education*," that we really can scarcely tell which is the *principle*, and which the *constitution*, or whether they are not interchangeable; or, after all, whether they are not both the same. However, I will pass over his terms, and abide by the explanation.

The constitution of the church he defends, consists, he says, of the Prayer-book, the Thirty-nine Articles, and the three holy orders. This is the constitution, "*viewed in its principle*," as contrasted with its details. Now, it requires no reasoning of mine to shew that this constitution, viewed either way, cannot be the same as the constitution of the churches which Jesus Christ and his Apostles founded. Yet Mr. G., and the other defenders of Church Establishments, will not deny that those churches had a constitution; a sound, durable, and comprehensive one, too, which was attended with more success than can be boasted by any establishment, and withstood more perils than at present threaten the Church of England. History informs us, that the original constitution proved sufficient for all

the purposes that may be lawfully sought by a Christian Church, and vigorous enough to sustain itself against corruption within, and hostility without; and yet, it is certain beyond dispute, that it included neither a Prayer-book, nor the Thirty-nine Articles, nor the holy orders of Diocesan Bishops, nor ever mentions any order of Priests, and by Deacons intends something very different from an incipient or probationary Priest. Hence it follows, that this new constitution, viewed in its principle, if intended to supersede that of the first and oldest Christian Churches, wants the requisite seal of infallibility and authority which the primitive constitution possesses, and without which we shall never be reconciled to the exchange. Or, if it is alleged that this human constitution, involved in an establishment, is not an abrogation of the divine one, but merely an addition to it, then we cannot acquit its patrons of presumption; and we engage to demonstrate that their new constitution does actually nullify, in many important particulars, the Apostolic one. We ask, what Tight have any men, king, senate or synod, council or convocation, to undertake the momentous business of constitution-making for the Church of Christ? What cause has ever been shewn for altering or superseding the constitution of Christian Churches, developed in the New Testament? Is it not this very constitution of an Established Church which brings upon Protestantism the reproach of a house divided against itself, and proves the source of interminable contentions and divisions? We humbly submit to all such defenders as Mr. G., whether it is not more becoming in Christ's ministers to defend the constitution laid down in the New Testament, than to be so zealous in defending another constitution, which, to say the least of it, looks like defending another church. For, here we are driven by all these defences upon the same dilemma as lately in the case of the *principle*; either Christ's primitive Church had no *constitution*, or the Church of England has a *different* one. If not, the defence of the one would be the same thing as the defence of the other. Had our author, for instance, resolved upon defending only that constitution which the New Testament exhibits, his undertaking would have proved less difficult, and his success more conspicuous. Whether his discourses would not have taken a widely different turn, both of argument and illustration, I leave himself to judge: and whether I should have found occasion for my present strictures, let the Christian public determine. At present I must leave him, with his surreptitious—or supplementary—or corrected constitution, or whatever else he may call it; for, *identical* with the Apostolic it clearly is not, to make the best of it; while I solemnly protest, as a fellow-servant of the same master, against all infractions, augmentations, alterations, and improvements of

the primitive constitution by human hands, on any pretence whatsoever. Such attempts, in all ages, have only marred what they proposed to amend. Instead of, securing unity, they have promoted dissention among Christ's disciples; and instead of advancing, they have glaringly impeded the triumphs of the Gospel. The scriptural constitution is a self-adjusting apparatus, alike fitted for all ages and all nations, capable of adaptation to all polities, and interfering with none. It is framed by infinite wisdom for all conditions of human nature, and, like the other works of its Divine Author, attests its origin at once by its simplicity, universality, and facility. But as to the *constitution* Mr. G. and others have set up, it is such a Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold in the head, silver in the arms, brass in the body, iron in its legs, and both iron and clay in its feet, that none must wonder if some good Christians doubt its durability, and give a preference for a constitution, which boasts a higher antiquity, a purer origin, and happily includes no such mixture of materials—a *constitution*, which, for all that has ever been shewn to the contrary, is just as applicable to whole nations, as to the worshipping *twos* and *threes* to whom Christ has promised his presence.

But I pass on now from the "*principle*" and the "*constitution*," or "*the principle of the constitution*," to the third object which Mr. G., with many others, proposes to defend, and, which I fully agree with them, stands in need of all their efforts—the Church in its "*EFFECTS*." This is a term of wide import, vaguely used by most defenders of the Church, whose artifices in using it only *in bonam partem*, are just as unfair as would be the conduct of their opposers, in wholly using it *in malam partem*. Thus we find, that by defending the Church in its *effects*, which Mr. G. attempts (at p. 25), he dwells exclusively on a few results; and these all the best that could be grouped together, to impress his hearers with unmingled admiration. His plan of displaying only one side of the question is as impolitic as it is unfair, because it tempts, yea, compels an opponent to meet his description with an equally glowing description on the contrary side. The *effects* usually selected for the purposes of defence, and particularly by Mr. G., are decked and ornamented, and paraded before us, in their court-dresses, with no little ostentation and self-complacency. But as a great deal of unfairness and confusion pervades this portion of his undertaking, and as I am anxious to do his defence ample justice, I must defer a more minute examination of the results or effects of an Established Church, till I come to the body of his work; with this caveat, however, that the lawfulness of such an establishment can never be maintained on such a ground; even supposing a full and impartial judgment of effects to be favour-

able. The question is one, not of human expediency, but of divine authority. But, supposing the argument itself a legitimate one, the *effects* should be all fully noticed, and fairly estimated, or not at all. Thus, for instance, if we are to be told that the effect of an establishment of Christianity is—having a numerous clergy, well educated, and stationed all over the kingdom in separate parishes, it ought also to be stated that another effect is—having a very large majority of them utterly unfit for all the labours of the Gospel ministry; a fact which I suspect Mr. G., at least, will not deny; and then, another effect is—having to pay all, good, bad, and indifferent, generally in the inverse ratio of their merits and services; and another effect is—being compelled by law to find expensive places for such persons to officiate in; then come patronage, pluralities, oppression and persecution of poor non-conformists, with a few *et cæteras*; but another bad effect is—confounding men of all sort? of opinion, and all sorts of practice, in the general denomination of clergymen; and without swelling the detail, the worst of all is—having the great body of the population still untaught and unchristianized, while a majority, and a *daily increasing majority*, of the people, are taxed to support an establishment which they disapprove, and from which they derive no sort of advantage in return. Now, these, and many other direct effects of an Established Church ought to have been noticed, as well as those few and select topics which Mr. G. has adroitly introduced and described in such glowing colours, but which, I promise him, I will examine somewhat more critically hereafter.

Let us pass on now from his title-page to the discourses themselves. Whether he thought it prudent to display less assumption than in his title-page, or whether the sacred employment of the pulpit inspired him with more wisdom, I must leave; but so it is—he changes the phrase we have hitherto been considering into “*The principle of National Church Establishments defended.*” This is at once a more definite and a more general undertaking than the one he had proposed in the title-page. Hence, too, it appears that he intended to perform a service of a more generous kind than we had supposed. He aims at nothing short of defending the universal principle of National Church Establishments of every kind; a feat, undoubtedly, far more ambitious than merely serving his own turn. There is the danger, indeed, of defending them at all. The arguments which justify a Protestant Establishment justify a Popish one, a Heathen, and a Mahomedan one. It seems Mr. G. not only thought so, but designed it, too. He will defend the principle, braving all the consequences; and there is no help for it. So there is no resource for me but to follow him step by step in his enterprize; and, since his will was so benevolent towards all

who sympathize in the said principle, it only remains that they, on their part, Papist, Lutheran, Chinese, Mahommedan—all join in a chorus of Pæans to their champion.

Ὅτι περὶ μὲν προφρων κραιδιῆ καὶ θυμὸς ἀγνητῶν
 Ἐν παντεσσι πονοῖσι.

But to take all things in their due order, I must, of course, begin where he begins. The text—and a text is an important matter in every discourse, is selected from Isaiah xlix. 28, "*Kings shall he thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers.*"* Some texts are taken for the purpose of explanation;

* There is a little note appended to the title of his first discourse, which is put evidently with the view of making dissenters trip on the threshold. (See Note *a*.) It is this;—"I use the term *National Church Establishments* (and, when not used, would have it always understood); because Dissenters do not object to all *Establishments*; inasmuch as, according to legal definition, their own edifices are established, i. e. sanctioned in their use and property by law. Their Ministers also possess and exercise certain privileges derived to them, in their religious capacity, tom the civil government, as exemptions from military and civil offices, imposts, &c. Nay, some of them receive direct payment from the state, by participating in the national grant to nonconforming Ministers, called the *Regium Donum*. The *principle*, then, of Establishments, i. e. ecclesiastical property sanctioned by law, and legal religious privileges and support, is recognised by them. Hence they are accustomed to speak of the National Church merely as 'the *Endowed Church*;' as, for instance, Rev. G. Clayton, the respectable author of a Funeral Sermon upon an exemplary Christian, Mr. T. Preston, speaks of the preference of that good man, 'for the forms and ritual of the *Endowed Church*.' The phraseology, however, is inaccurate; for many of their places are endowed. Wherefore, it appears, that not to churches *established* by law, nor yet *privileged* by law, nor yet *endowed*, does the objection imply (*apply*). The controversy, then, is much narrowed; and I believe that, if all could view it with an accurate and unbiassed eye, it would be found to rest upon a slippery basis."—So it appears that dissenting churches are established, because they are recognized and protected; and if this were all that is done for the Episcopal Church, I will answer for the dissenters, that they would never object to its parity of privileges. This would settle the matter of fact; and as to the terms, we Would, if he pleases, never more dispute about them, and consent to call ourselves all established, so long as there was no *establishment*. Thus, it seems, we are very unfair and incorrect in styling his church the *endowed*, and Mr. G. Clayton is impeached of inaccuracy, because there is the *Regium Donum*, which some poor dissenting ministers share, and because some dissenting chapels have their endowments. As to the *Regium Donum*, so far as it is properly described by those terms, it cannot be called an endowment; having in it nothing of the nature of a legal provision, it cannot, for an instant, be brought as a parallel with tithes. In the first place it is a small sum, I believe, not exceeding a few hundred pounds, and is strictly a *gift*; no single individual having any legal claim; and it is entrusted, as any other charity, to certain persons for distribution, as a royal favour to such of their poorer brethren as they select. In the next place, it is altogether private in its distribution, being not entrusted to the body of dissenters, but to three or four individuals. Thirdly, it is disapproved of by the great majority, as it comes from the public purse; and if it were understood, on the part of the donors or the receivers, as implying *legal provision*, would, I believe, be universally rejected.

In the next place, as to *endowments* of places, Mr. G. must know that they are, in no respect, parallel to the endowments of his own church, which are partly legal exactions, and partly bequests, which the law of the land has authorized the Protestant Church to receive, contrary to their original intention, and the right to which poor rests on the laws which make the Established Church Protestant: so that, in no fair or reasonable sense of the words, can dissenting churches be designated as either

others merely as a sentiment or a title, heading an essay or a dissertation. Had our preacher told us candidly, that he intended this text merely as a motto, I should have left him to enjoy, undisputed, all the advantage that could have resulted to his argument from the ignorance or oversight of his readers; for it could only have been in such cases, that the text would have subserved his cause. But, since he has attempted to put such a construction upon the passage as would make it predict the legal establishment of Christianity, I am bound at once to examine the soundness of his comment. That he may be fairly dealt with, I shall transcribe the whole of his elucidation, so far as the sense of the words is concerned.

“The, chapter in which the text occurs, contrasts the active agency of rulers, in persecuting the infant church, with their activity in fostering it hereafter. Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers. Scripture does not use terms of lofty bearing to announce trivial things.” True, very true, Mr. G.; but we know who brings very trivial things to sustain words and pretensions of very lofty bearing.

Mais il faut les prouver; en forme: j’ y consens.
Repons moi donc, Docteur, et met toi sur les bancs;
Qu’ est ce qu’un Commentateur?

For instance, the office of nursing children, and carrying them on the shoulders, is, in the domestic economy, but a menial, trivial matter, after all; yet Mr. G.’s argument, in behalf of kings and queens, is one of very “lofty bearing”—that the king is the head of the church, *by Isaiah’s permission*; that he is to give principle, constitution—all to it—even its very being; for it must not dare to exist without him. Thus kings and queens, from being licensed by the prophet as nurses only, or carriers, have been all at once promoted into the very *heads of the family*. So easily a good and well-meaning man may slip from a trivial idea in the text, to a lofty one in the comment; from a *menial* office, to the *grandeur, supremacy, and headship* of a king or queen over a national establishment. Poor Isaiah! thy simplicity little thought, that instead of nurses and carriers serving Christ’s Church by a humble and willing consecration of their worldly greatness and riches, the clergy would extort from thy

the *established, the endowed, or the privileged*. Though we have some exceptions from civil burdens, because we are ministers, I do not know that we are entitled, strictly speaking, to any civil privileges, as clergymen are; such as sitting in parliament, becoming magistrates, presiding at vestry meetings, &c.; and as to *imposts*, I am not aware what the gentleman can possibly mean. I believe there is no tithe, tax, or levy of any kind, from which we can claim exemption. Even to build churches and repair them, we are just as liable as all our people. I have paid, at least, many pounds to this object; and if Mr. G. will point out what impost we are exempted from, we shall return him our thanks generally; for, at present, we pay all.

words a divine warrant for kings and queens assuming an absolute sovereignty over it, *changing its laws*, and giving it a *new constitution*. But such is the effect of a warm imagination, and an inattention to the letter and scope of Scripture. Let us keep by the strict idea of nurses and bearers bringing children into the church, and exclude the idea of constitution-makers shutting the children of the church out of doors, and I consent that the argument shall have all the benefit of this so valued prophecy of Isaiah; but extract from it a sanction to the supremacy of the civil power in ecclesiastical matters, and I proclaim a *non sequitur*. Before, however, I vindicate this passage from the abuse to which a loose and fanciful interpretation has turned it, let us hear Mr. G. in its further explanation. "What must be the import of expressions which imply the tenderest diligence and nurture, with interposition the most zealous and uninterrupted? echoed, as it is, by other passages of similar tendency: as, when fallen Jerusalem is bid to arise and hail the overflowing of the gentile world, it is promised, '*their kings shall minister unto thee, and thou shalt suck the breast of kings;*' phrases which, if they have any meaning, assert that civil governors shall aid in building the walls of the universal church, and in administering sustenance to its necessities; and in the words which follow the text, this is spoken of as a manifest evidence of the presiding power of Jehovah," (page 6). Now, in the first place, as to these two prophecies, I have several objections to state; which I think are fatal to the use made of them by Mr. G., and all similar reasoners; and which will, I hope, satisfy any devout reader of the scriptures, that they must be abandoned by the advocates of Protestant establishments, or, if adhered to, must be ceded to the Catholics, as the only parties who apply them consistently. But, since I find, in several places of these sermons, arguments in favour of civil interference with religion, derived from the language of the prophets, I wish, once for all, to examine the soundness of the principle involved in all such reasoning. To rest so momentous a matter, which comes second only to the great doctrines of our salvation, upon the figurative language of prophecy, to say the best of it, exposes the pinching exigency of human establishments. The foundations of the Church of Christ, its *principle*, and its *constitution*, ought to be composed of sound and unquestionable materials. These are matters of such vital importance to the purity and efficiency of Christ's Church, that they demand close examination. To lay them upon figurative language is surely not the part of wise master-builders. What! is there not one scripture in the whole New Testament to invest the cause of establishments with Christian authority? Not even a glance or a hint, in any passage, of the lawfulness of

uniting secular and ecclesiastical authority? Not one reference to the mighty advantages of an alliance between Christ's kingdom and the kingdoms of the world? Not an inference, even, that might be concocted by [the] critical alembic, out of any thing said or done by Christ and his Apostles, that might look favourably on this poor craving cause of establishments? But must it go begging to the figurative language of prophecy, to veil its deformities, and invest it with a decent covering? The conduct of such church-defenders presents an edifying spectacle, in contrast with those who advance no other claim for their church than may be derived from the Christian scriptures. Such are ready to say—why go so laboriously to work in defending what is made so simple and easy a matter by the Apostles: Verily, if your church is a Christian church, you can find its prototype somewhere in the Apostolic records. Surely you would not sanction an ecclesiastical polity that derives neither its principle nor its constitution from the founder of Christianity, or those to whom he delivered the keys of his kingdom. You can have no need, surely, to refer so obvious a matter to the hieroglyphics, and symbols, and metaphors of ancient prophets. Had THEY more insight into the nature of Christ's kingdom than himself? Well, if it must be so, and your cause really must call in such aid, we must be content to meet you on your own ground, and try what we can make out from these figures and emblems.

But, first, let us try the principle itself. Look well to that; because, after all, if that is bad, even though we might interpret the figures in the same way, still we might differ as to their validity as arguments. Stated formally, then, the principle of Mr. G.'s reasoning, and that of all who bring forward prophecy in vindication of the union of church and state, seems to be this:—

Whatever the inspired prophets predict, must be thereby sanctioned; and we may argue the lawfulness of doing what they predict, from the authority of the prediction.

Thus, they predict that kings should be *nursing fathers*; therefore, any king or civil governor that chooses, may take the Church of Christ under his *government*, and plead inspired authority for so doing; therefore, establishments of Christianity are lawful and scriptural. This is the argument of a thousand volumes besides Mr. G.'s pamphlet. Without some such principle as the above, I do not see how they can logically construct any reasoning of duty and obligation upon prophecy. We are accustomed, however, to think that the divine prophecies never were intended to be a rule of duty, either to kings or their subjects. Moreover, principles are of universal application. They must not be admitted when they are in our favour, and refused

when they are against us. Will those who enforce the authority of establishments by this argument, consent that the principle on which it is founded shall be applied to all other prophecies? If they agree to the universality of the rule, then we will proceed to shew its absurdity; and if they do not, then we call upon them to explain why it is restricted to the single case in hand, or to any single class of prophecies? Either prophecy gives a sanction to what it predicts, and so we may vindicate and justify human actions of other kinds, by shewing that they were predicted, or prophecy affords no necessary sanction to what it predicts, so far as human agency is concerned—and that agency must find the root of its obligation, and the rule of its procedure, in other premises than prophecy supplies. Hence, if the prophecy had said, “Kings shall become supreme heads to the church, and give it principle and constitution,” (a thing far enough beyond prophetic language), still it would have been unsound theology to adduce such a prophecy, as the basis of the right on the one hand, and the rule of obligation on the other. Moral and religious duties must have clear documents of precept or precedent. If the prophecies in hand contained any authority to establish Christianity, then they would be a commission to all civil powers, and we should have the inspired prophet authorizing the kings of the earth in all the opposing systems of Christianity which they have set up; for the civil ruler must be final judge of this duty for himself, there being no one on earth above him. He has only to plead the authority of Isaiah, and immediately Mr. Garbett, and his co-partners in this argument, must be bound to submit to the Greek church, in Russia; the Popish, in Spain; the Lutheran, in Germany; the Presbyterian, at Geneva; and so on.

But, since we may vindicate any thing by its being predicted, might not the Jews, advantageously to their cause, use Mr. G.’s argument? It was predicted that Christ should be rejected and slain—therefore it was sanctioned, for so it was written in the prophets. But, again, there are many prophecies which foretell the humiliation of kings before the Church of Christ, and their destruction before the spreading triumphs of the Gospel. As, for instance, the *latter part* of the verse from which Mr. G. took his text, and which, somehow or other, fatally militates against his comment, says—“*THEY (kings and queens) shall bow down to thee with their faces towards the earth, and shall lick tip the dust of thy feet.*” How far this comports with the supreme authority over the Church of Christ, attributed to princes by Mr. G.’s view of the first clause of the verse, I shall not pretend to say. That is another of the *αλνοι αποριαι*, with which his doctrine of establishments has encompassed him, and from which he must escape as well as He can, while I proceed with my exami-

nation of the text. The humiliation of kings before the church is unquestionably predicted in immediate connexion with Mr. G.'s text. Does this latter prediction convey to churchmen any right to make kings and queens bow before them to the very dust? If it does not, neither does the former clause convey to kings and queens any right to become heads of the church; and if it does, then how does it comport with his view of the first clause? Undoubtedly, if his argument is valid, it substantiates and authorizes all the most preposterous and extravagant claims of the Pope of Rome, as the representative of the universal church, to the homage of all Christian potentates. Then he may lawfully claim that they should lie abased in the dust before him. So it is clearly predicted kings should do. If Mr. G. has interpreted the former part of the verse rightly, and applied it logically, as an authority for establishments, then the latter part is, at least, as valid a vindication of Rome's most arrogant assumption. If prophecy vindicates what it predicts, then I will turn Mr. G. over to the Pope, to settle the question of consistency with his holiness, who, while he admits kings to be nursing fathers, demands their obeisance upon Isaiah's authority: and for aught I can see, he has the better claim to the whole verse. Mr. G. knows very well, that our own King John, with many others, have literally fulfilled, at the Pope's summons, the prediction of the prophet. Mr. G.'s principle of reasoning seems to me fully to justify the demand on the part of the church. He must either take the latter part of the verse, as the Church of Rome interprets it, and make it a vindication of such a claim, or he must give up the former clause, and allow that it contains no *vindication* of established churches, and does not even imply that they are lawful. Let him follow out his principle of reasoning against dissenters, or abandon it. He must do the one or the other.

Having now disposed of his principle of reasoning, I come to his interpretation of the figurative language of the prophet. And here I am still further prepared to deny, *in toto*, any allusion in the text, or in the other cited passage, to a legal establishment of Christianity. There is nothing analogous between the terms of the prophecy and the nature of the service kings and queens are supposed to render to the cause of Christ, by taking it into connexion with the state, and establishing by-law, what shall be believed, what shall be taught, what shall be prayed for, and who shall be excluded from the charitable embrace of their national churches. The prophet Isaiah undoubtedly describes kings and queens as subserving the increase of the church, but it is in terms far enough from importing any supremacy in the church, or over it, but in connexion with figures, which utterly exclude the idea of any

such subjection to secular or regal power. It is quite impossible to reconcile the two clauses of the verse, if the secular power is to be advanced to any sort of domination. The thirty-seventh article of the Church of England says, "The King's Majesty hath the chief power in the realm of England, &c., unto whom the *chief government* of all estates of this realm, whether they be *ecclesiastical* or civil, in all causes doth appertain." What a valuable comment this forms on the clause we are considering! I would recommend, in the case of any divine wishing to publish scripture-proofs of the Thirty-nine Articles, (a work, let it be observed, worthy of an ambition it has never yet aroused,) that Isaiah, xlix. 23, middle clause, be referred to for the edification of the younger clergy and others:—"They shall bow down to thee with their faces towards the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet."

But let us see, now, if we can discover, after excluding all these conflicting comments, any just views of the scope of the prophet. He is representing the church, as addressed by the Messiah.

"He opens his commission to men of all nations, complaining of the general unbelief of the Jews. He declares the decree for the calling of the Gentiles. He next announces to Zion such an increase of her numbers, as should comfort, and even astonish, the previously dispersed, deserted, persecuted, and wandering church of God. 'Then shalt thou say in thine heart, who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?' (v. 21.) The two questions, 'Who hath begotten me these?' and 'Who hath brought up these?' receive their answer in the two verses that follow:—"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in *their* arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with *their* face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I *am* the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.' Both these verses must be taken together. They form one sentence, and the second part of it should not be given alone, as it almost always is, in the practice of quotation. But the sentence distinctly states the work of the Lord, and the service of his people. The Lord himself should create the increase of Zion's family; and when, as 'a leader and commander,' he should 'lift up his hand to the Gentiles, and set up his standard to the people,' the signal should be obeyed from every quarter, and by persons of every rank; from the least to

the greatest, his servants should not only flock to his standard themselves, but with zeal, fidelity, and tenderness, bring along with them (carrying one on the bosom, and another on the back, according to their different ages,) these sons and daughters, by whom the church should find her family so marvellously enlarged. To these sons and daughters, even kings should be her nursing fathers, and their queens her nursing mothers.”* The prophet represents kings and queens as nursing children for the church; Mr. G. makes kings and queens muses of the church herself.

This is a consistent view of the whole prophecy; but it attributes no such office to kings as they hold in the Church of England. In the other place, where it is said, “their kings shall minister unto thee, and thou shalt suck the breast of kings,” even with Mr. G.’s gloss, it is merely predicted, that the riches and moral influence of kings should subserve the interest of Christ’s Church, which every dissenter is quite willing to admit they might do, without selecting one party of the church, and lavishing all their favours upon it—without making laws for the government of the church—without assuming the supremacy in it, and asserting the *chief government*—as is done in Article thirty-seventh. Besides, if these prophecies signify any thing, it is the voluntary assistance of kings and their queens, in humbly devoting their riches, influence, and example, or even personal service, in bringing children to the church, not in usurping the supreme power over it. These are services at the very antipodes of each other. The prophet ought to have said, kings shall form alliances with the church—marry her—become her lord—rule over her, and be her visible earthly head. This is essential, to make the text agree with the doctrine of all who attempt to derive from it a sanction to the legal establishment of Christianity; but, instead of this, we find nothing more, in either of these passages, than a subserviency in the very inferior and menial offices of nurses, bearers, and servants. But, in the establishment, kings and queens do not nurse the children, but the mother. They do not contribute out of their own treasury to the welfare of the church, but they make the church, and the very enemies of the church, alike contribute to its sustenance. Is this sanctioned by the language of the prophets? In the sacred text they are represented as rendering a liberal and a voluntary service, without any assumption of power; in the establishment they make others do the service, while they take the rule. The prophets speak of their love and generosity, and of the spiritual accessions made to the church, through their services in sustaining the young, and succouring the weak.

* Greville Ewing’s Sermon on “The Nursing Fathers and Mothers of the Children of the Church,” p. 6.

The establishment shows nothing but the terror of their authority, and the supremacy of their power. They act in the church as in the state, by their sword, and compel all, willingly or unwillingly, to do what the prophet represents them as doing themselves, out of their own zeal and free-will. In the prophecy they are the servants and assistants of the church, taking no authority upon them; in their establishments they have always been, and always must be, the dividers of the church, and the oppressors of no inconsiderable portion of its children. Again, in the prophet they are represented as doing all these services, not in virtue of any office or authority assigned them by the head of the church in heaven; but, in their establishment, they become the fountain of all office—all power—all law, and even the offices ordained by Christ himself become powerless, without their sanction and appointment. In the prophet they are kings and queens in their personal character, dedicating their services to the Lord and his church, from a principle of piety and love; in the establishment they are legally enstalled as kings and queens, and, simply because they are such, in superiority over all church officers. Their legitimacy of birth makes them kings in the state, and the same principle makes them the head of the church. Thus, in the establishment, a new and most important office is introduced into the Church of Christ, superior, immeasurably, even to Bishops and Archbishops—an office never once alluded to, I need not say in the New Testament, but not even in the figurative language of prophecy. The office they thus assume becomes theirs in virtue of their constitutional authority in the state; but, in the prophets, their services are represented as the natural effect of their conversion to Christianity. Isaiah, in his sixtieth chapter, says, "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising," &c.; and in Revelations, xxi. 24, we read, "And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." But Mr. G. contends for a church which is constituted by regal authority, which owns the king as its fountain of ecclesiastical power, and derives its sustenance from the principle of constraint. Is there any, even the slightest, analogy between that subjection of worldly things, and consecration of regal glory and wealth, to the service of the Church of Christ, foretold by the prophet, and that assumption of supreme legislative power over the church, which utterly destroys and supersedes the power of the church itself, and absorbs the spiritual kingdom of Christ into a worldly kingdom? If this is not making Christ's kingdom of *this world*, it would be hard to shew how else it could be. Here is as complete an amalgamation as the nature of the two kingdoms admits. The church is made of the world; the world is made the church.

I shall now pass from his text, and the other passages derived from prophecy, observing, that to the legitimate use of these prophecies, as foretelling the glory and prosperity of the church—when kings and queens should, cease to be persecutors, and become promoters of the cause of Christ—when they shall modestly and humbly take their places in the Lord's house, submitting to its rule, and not setting up one of their own, I cordially subscribe; but to no supremacy—no legislation of their's. In Christ's Church the greatest of human authorities must bow to the only Lord, and serve him just as humbly as the meanest. Thus they may become teachers of all, and servants of all, and kings will then be truly nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers, to augment and succour, not divide and scatter, the family of the church, as hitherto they have done, by their establishments. It is this principle of secular authority made ecclesiastical, which has tended to drive away and harass the children of the church more than any thing else. Strange and uncouth nurses have kings and queens been, even in England. It might be an edifying subject of investigation for their defenders—whether they have not strangled and crippled more children than they ever nursed, and whether the fruits of all their nursing and carrying are not traceable in the present sickly and ricketty state of the whole family. As to other nations, where kings have assumed the same right, and upon precisely the same arguments, I will appeal to Mr. G., and all the advocates of the same doctrine, whether the royal and state-nurses have not well-nigh nursed the Church of Christ to death? Whether they have not brought a race of children into the church, that were never born of God, and will never be owned of Christ; but who have, for many centuries, been, throughout the greater part of Christendom, the great strength of the Romish harlot, and the chief oppressors and destroyers of the true children of Zion? Such always has been, is now, and must continue to be, the main effect of the principle of establishments. Even if, in the solitary case of England, it had been free from any such reproach, yet its influence upon Christianity on a large scale, and for a continuance, has been almost unmitigated evil, misery, and desolation, throughout the whole length and breadth of the Redeemer's nominal kingdom. But, dismissing the text, let us now advance to the first discourse.

He begins with a somewhat ominous statement, which leaves no favourable impression of the candour and discrimination with which he is likely to handle this controversy. "Of the controverted questions of the day, few are more prominent than those which concern the National Religion." So almost all modern writers, on his side of the subject, wish to represent the

case. It is, no doubt, thereby intended to alarm and delude pious readers. I affirm that there is no controversy about the *national religion*. There is just ground, here, to rebuke Mr. G. and many others, for confounding religion and the Established Church together. We have no controversy, that I am aware of, whether the nation is Christian or Heathen—Protestant or Catholic: but many think, that as to national religion, there would be just as much, if not more, were there no national church. The confounding of these two things is a virtual dishonesty, of which churchmen are often guilty, against their Christian brethren, and in which they are constantly detected. The controversy entirely respects the establishment as an establishment, or a human contrivance, for promoting Christianity—its lawfulness and utility, in comparison, not with infidelity or no religion, but with the simple and divine means of promoting godliness, exemplified in the history of the Apostles, and supplied by Christian principle and divine grace alone. And such writers as Mr. G. must know, that those who dissent from the church have no question with it as to religion itself, nor even as to Protestantism. They cannot be ignorant that dissenters are among the most zealous friends of the Gospel and of Protestantism, though they are unjustly held up as foes to the national religion. They are not even foes to the Established Church in any of its divine principles: with it they would be happy to live on terms of Christian fellowship, if it would purify itself from its spiritual adulteries, and come down from its human elevation, and acknowledge the voluntary principle, and the entire spirituality of Apostolic churches. They are foes, and their allegiance of Christ make them such, to the unholy alliance, the secular degradation, the compulsory support of Gospel ministers, and some other matters in the establishment, which “are not of the Father, but of the world.” To the Gospel of Christ, however, and the genuine piety of the church, they are not foes, and their calumniators know it.

He says next, “The ground of difference between churchmen and many dissenters has, on this point, been entirely changed.” That point, he says, is the national religion. I apprehend he meant rather the national church. Now, I have seen it so affirmed, in various works upon the same subject; and an extract to this effect, taken from the *Christian Observer*, has been inserted in some of the public papers. Yet the controversy does not concern the national religion, but the circumstantial of public worship—the peculiar position in which religion is placed by the secular power—the tithes, for the support of a Christian ministry—the supremacy of the crown over church affairs—the authority of Parliament above all ecclesiastical authority, &c. &c. But Mr. G. and other writers complain that

dissenters have *entirely changed their ground*; that, formerly, both churchmen and dissenters were agreed upon the lawfulness and expediency of national church establishments. It is very evident that the persons who make this unqualified statement are not well read in the controversy, otherwise, I think all they could have said, with truth, is, that dissenters formerly were much divided in their opinion respecting an establishment; the Independents maintaining that every sect should stand upon the same level, and each church manage its own affairs, without the interference of the civil magistrate; while the Presbyterians, generally, were in favour of an exclusive establishment: the Independents teaching the doctrine of free and full toleration—the Presbyterians denying it. Whereas, in the present day, the Independents adhere to the great doctrine of an equal toleration, and an exclusion of the civil magistrate from all authority over the church; while a great proportion of the Presbyterians in Scotland, and nearly all such in England, have come over to the doctrine of voluntary churches—an entire independence of the state. Dissenters have not, as a body, taken any new ground, though some of them, besides their old objections, have enlarged their ground, not changed it. The plain fact is, that the principles of voluntary church association have commended themselves to the pious of several denominations, who did not formerly see their scriptural authority; and, now, nearly all parties perceive, that the principle of an established church is contrary to the principle of the Apostolic churches, and can neither be defended by Scripture, nor by its results. And, not dissenters alone, but many even of the national church, have embraced this view of the subject, and are advocating a separation of the *Episcopal* church from the state. Among many others, I have need only to mention the very able and candid work, entitled, "*Letters on the Church, by an Episcopalian,*" which I can assure Mr. G., and all the advocates of his doctrine, is highly worthy of their most serious consideration. One short passage from that work I beg to submit to the attention of my readers. In contrasting the Jewish and Christian dispensations, and repelling the false analogies derived from the former to the latter, the author says, "On the whole, I confess myself unable to find any argument sufficient to invalidate the force of what has been said, such as I could urge to a Mahometan or a Pagan ruler; but one who professed the Christian religion, and sought to support his faith by the secular arm, I would rebuke in the words of his master, saying, 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.' I would urge that Christ himself has expressly renounced all secular authority, and *forbidden* all coercion in the cause of his religion, both by his declaration, that his 'kingdom is not of this world,' (which would manifestly be false, if he authorized the employment of force in his cause,) and by the

whole tenor of the religion he founded, by every thing said or done by himself and his Apostles, that could, in the most decided manner, confirm and illustrate that declaration. And I would point out, that the passages of the Old Testament, which have been erroneously adduced in opposition to this doctrine, afford, in truth, a strong confirmation of it, by the relation they manifestly bear to a totally different system; to a kingdom which *was* of this world, having Jehovah for its supreme magistrate, administering his government by temporal sanctions. And I would conclude, without fear of refutation, that he who calls in the civil sword to the aid of Christianity, is dishonouring and betraying, instead of serving the cause of a *suffering* Messiah, who, when those his sufferings were deprecated by his zealous, but erring disciple, solemnly reprov'd his mistake, saying, 'Thou savourest not of the things that be of God, *but those that be of men;*' and who commanded that same disciple to put up his sword into its sheath."

These are some of the scriptural positions which those, who maintain the unlawfulness and inexpediency of establishments, take up, and we shall see presently whether Mr. Garbett, or any who advocate his side of the question, can dislodge them from this ground. But we find our author next administering a gentle reproof to those who are so confident in their arguments against the lawfulness and expediency of national religious establishments. He says, "The negative side is assumed by some with a degree of confidence, which, however welcome to those who are indisposed to the trouble of cool examination, comes with no recommendation to the *calm inquirer* meaning, of course, himself: in which character I am happy to meet him: glad to find he is still an *inquirer*, and wishing he may remain so till he shall find out which side of this question, the negative or the affirmative, has received the sanction of his divine master, when I hope he will assume a little of that *confidence* which is at present so unwelcome to him, even in those who entertain no doubt as to the will of Christ upon this point. If the confidence of those, who deny the lawfulness and expediency of establishments, is unseemly and excessive, I suppose it must have arisen from perceiving that their opponents never attempt to meet their arguments, or deny their positions. If Mr. G. would lower their tone of confidence, the way is open to him. Nothing will do it so effectually as strong and clear arguments, especially scriptural ones. Let him only prove that the civil swora may be used to promote the Gospel, and that the chief magistrate may determine what is truth, and compel his subjects to receive and maintain it, and that Jesus Christ, or any one of his Apostles, ever sanctioned these principles, or did not sanction the opposite ones, and then, I promise him, the tone of our confidence will be mate-

rially abated; but, till then, we shall retain the fullest confidence in our principle, that it is unlawful and inexpedient to make the kingdom of Christ one with any kingdom of this world.

But, after all, I suspect he is just as confident himself in the *lawfulness* of his *establishment*, as any dissenter in its *unlawfulness*. Else, why appear as its public advocate—and in the pulpit, too—of all places the most sacred, and where no subject should be inculcated, of which a man is not *quite confident*? Are we to understand that Mr. G. has not quite made up his mind? Does not his preaching and publishing, in defence of his establishment, shew that he, too, is confident; and, if so, what just ground can he have to reprove others for confidence in their opinions, especially when those opinions have been formed after cool examination, and are maintained at a cost, of which persons on the contrary side know nothing? It is to no man's temporal advantage to maintain the unlawfulness of establishments. Can the same be said of the opposite side of this argument? On which, then, may we expect most cool examination and impartiality? Dissenters are made such in spite of self-interest, worldly honour, and emolument; by conscience, divine truth, and an imperative sense of duty to Christ. Can as much be said of those who write up the establishment? On which side, then, is a little confidence in the truth of their principles most pardonable? We know what our principles cost us, and we love them; nevertheless, our confidence in their high authority does not disincline us, even to further examination and reasonable debate with all who choose to question us. I trust Mr. G. and those who, with him, defend the establishment, will never find us so confident as to refuse them a candid hearing; and they may rely upon it, all we shall ask is a return of the same civility.

“The points at issue,” he moreover adds, “demand to be approached with especial caution to which I cordially subscribe, provided he adds—and with *a manly confidence in the safe conduct of the divine oracles*. So, if he pleases, we will agree at once upon the motto—

Nec temerè, nec timidè.

But, alas, how frail axe men! No sooner do they lay down rules, than they break them; for how little of that *especial caution* fell to his share, the very next sentence displays:—“*Since it involves the most important practical results, as well as THE JUDGMENT OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.*” That is a point which indeed demanded especial caution from a Protestant divine. The *judgment of the universal church!!* Truly, Mr. G., you had better take care how you plead any thing after that

rule, or else your neighbour, the Catholic priest, will remind you, with how little deference you have treated it, and in how many far more momentous matters you have set it at nought. It is a two-edged sword, and borrowed from a rusty armoury, where you had better leave it to neglect and decay; for, I assure you, it is quite powerless against the true Protestant panoply, which is all *scripture proof*. It is a weapon that will never make the least impression upon a dissenter, but may mortally wound yourself. Your Chillingworth has taught us to attach but very little reverence to that judgment, especially when it impugns, or supersedes, or attempts to add any thing to sacred scripture. If it is appealed to against dissenters, how can it be disclaimed in your controversy with the Papists? Either abjure it wholly, or adopt it wholly. You have no medium. But, pray use a little caution, or else you will prepare a net for your own feet. We disclaim it utterly as an authority, and think you should do so, too; at all events, we require it to be used tenderly, and with *especial caution*. If you can always introduce it with St. Basil's preface, we have no objection to listen to it:—

Ο Κύριος οὕτως ἐδίδαξεν ἀποστολοὶ ἐκηρύξαν, πατέρες διέτηρησαν, μαρτυρῆσαι
ἐβεβαίωσαν

We next arrive at an apology for discussing this subject in the pulpit. He says, "I enter upon this subject unwillingly, as I should upon any other that seemed to withdraw me from the preaching of the simple message of salvation." I cannot but think, myself, that he would have been better employed in unfolding the message of salvation; and, if my remarks should induce him to form the same judgment of the whole matter, and to resolve, in future, to confine his discourses to *the message of salvation*, I am sure I shall have rendered himself and others a great service. But yet, if he thought there was occasion "to guard his fold against the inroads of unbelief," then I cannot see that there was any reason to offer apologies. It might have been prudent to reserve these, for the want of caution, and other imperfections, which attend the performance of the undertaking. However, it generally happens, that what we do unwillingly is rarely well done, and makes work for subsequent regrets.

Facilis descensus averni

Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras.

Hoc opus, hic labor est.

He has already made several desperate plunges, and it will be well for him, if he grows wiser by experience, and, in future, avoids such perilous enterprises.

He speaks of the present as an occasion when the advocate

of truth is required *to defend the outworks of the temple*; “to walk about Zion, and go round about her, and tell the towers thereof; to mark well her bulwarks, and set up her palaces, that both her strength and beauty may be seen.” So it follows, that the strength of Christ’s Church consists in its being established by law, and not in HIM who has said, “I will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst of her.” “On this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Hence it follows, Christ’s Church knows nothing of that defence of which Mr. G. boasts: certainly, the bulwarks and palaces that sparkle in his eyes are not those which the inspired writers recount; consequently, the inference in the reader’s mind must be, that, since the bulwarks of Mr. G.’s church are acts of Parliament and royal supremacy, and are not the bulwarks, nor the palaces, to which inspiration invites our attention, therefore, Mr. G.’s church and Christ’s must be essentially different. But this confidence in man’s authority—this glorying in secular power, as the beauty and defence of his Zion, is neither modest nor pious. I know of no bulwarks an established church possesses above others, but such as are secular; its defence is *an arm of flesh*. Every thing belonging to it that is divine, it has only in common with us, and would retain, if it ceased to be defended by these bulwarks and palaces. Now, all such bulwarks and towers as consist in the civil establishment of the national church are *human defences*. Christ never set any such around his church. The very supposition, that it needs or admits them, is an insult upon his character. To bid us mark the bulwarks of a Christian Church, in regal supremacy, acts of Parliament, tithes, the sword of magistracy, and such like, is virtually to say, “The old walls of Zion are fallen down; she is in danger; we must set up bulwarks, towers, and palaces, or the city must yield to her enemies.” There is a scripture, however, which may serve for Mr. G.’s reproof, and for my answer:—“Thus saith the Lord, cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord.” (Jer. xvii. 5.) What grievous work do churchmen make of it, when, blind with self-complacency, they bid us to “go round about their Zion, to consider their bulwarks, towers, and palaces.” We can see no other import in such language, as addressed to us, than the security, splendour, and honour, they enjoy, through the power of the state. But, if their confidence in such bulwarks is not glorying in an arm of flesh, I know not where we shall find it.

I once thought of applying this memorable passage to the architectural splendour of the new towers and spires in the town of Birmingham, and supposed that the PALACES we are exhorted to *set up* must be for the Bishops; but then, upon reflection, I

doubted whether this would not be too common-place an interpretation to attribute to our author; and, upon re-consideration, I perceived that his heart was overflowing with love, and his imagination all in flame with admiration of the establishment, as a *human defence to Christianity*; and that his ambition towered to something far more sublime than new churches and episcopal palaces. I saw that it could mean nothing less than the great point in debate at the present moment, between him and the dissenters—the patronage, and supremacy, and endowment of a particular sect of Christians, by the law of the land. Nothing more nor less can I make of it, than that the strength, and beauty of the Christian Church consist in its being so embraced by human arms—so fortified by the civil power—so beautified by regal authority.

I ask—where, then, was the strength and beauty of the Church of Christ in the Apostles' days? Had it this strength and beauty, or had it none? Let every one of Mr. Garbett's hearers demand from him the solution of this question. If he says it had neither strength nor beauty till Constantine took in hand the defence and embellishment of it, then let them remind him, that this was the date of the decline of godliness, and desolation of the church; that it flourished while it was persecuted and independent of the state, but fell rapidly into corruption and decay, as soon as kings usurped supremacy, and drew the sword to advocate its claims. But, if he admits that the church had bulwarks and towers, beauty and strength, before those days, but that, in all these points, it was inferior to the Church of England, then let them at once profess, what I am sure all of them, that are Christians, ought to feel—that believers are better defended, in all their practices, by the acts of the Apostles and the canonical epistles, than by the Act of Uniformity, and the whole body of ecclesiastical canons, with the Thirty-nine Articles to boot; and that they are safer in the company of Peter, Paul, and John, than in that of their Graces and Reverences of York and Canterbury. Yes, Mr. G., one text of scripture, the authority of one Apostle, outweighs them all. I would rather stand within the bulwarks of Paul, and Peter, and John, than behind all your muddy and sandy defences of acts of Parliament, and had rather be found in the meanest dissenting meeting-house (and some are mean enough), with scripture, *nothing but scripture*, than in the palace or the cathedral of Canterbury, saying, "Walk about Zion; mark well her bulwarks; consider her palaces; behold the strength and beauty of our church!"

This, however, must be a very different Zion from that of which I read. "Salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks;" and of which it is said, "The highest Himself doth

establish her,” and “the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” To this church let every faithful minister and disciple of Jesus Christ adhere, divested of all human additions, whether for defence or ornament, rather than to one which identifies itself with worldly kingdoms, is strengthened in their strength, glories in their glory, and waxes and wanes as they flourish or decay. Let us, however, now quit this painful misapplication of scripture, and hear how he vindicates himself for boasting so unceremoniously of the warlike preparations he is making against us. One would think he was about to open a most tremendous battery, in defence of the towers and palaces, or to spring a mine, that was to leave not a foe above ground. We shall have something brave and decisive, surely, after all this.

“Neither can displeasure be felt, if in kindness and sobriety, we endeavour to repel the harsh attacks made upon us.” I will warrant that his defence will awaken displeasure no-where, unless among his own party, when they come to see how he has exposed the weakness of their cause; then, as to the kindness, that, of course, we cannot refuse to acknowledge, wherever it appears, although we cannot but think it would be as well to begin *with justice*, by exempting us from compulsory payments towards the support of a church of which we disapprove; and as to his *sobriety*, I very much fear it will not be greatly admired by any party. At all events, it is yet *sub judice*. I am quite willing to await, and not to anticipate, the judgment of the public.—“And to shew that we have yet with us some arguments not altogether despicable:”—that would be a deed of renown, worthy of being rewarded by a post at one of the *bulwarks*, or in one of the *palaces*, which he bids us mark well, for, of course, he does the same; but as to the shew of *arguments not altogether despicable*, I have no hesitation in saying, the muster-roll as yet looks meagre enough; and as to the bulwarks we have yet seen, they fill us with no dismay. He proceeds, “*And some few names, not of light account.*” Ah! that is quite another matter. Does he mean the names of Jesus Christ, Paul, Peter, and John? No, indeed, gentle reader, he never pretends to say THEY ARE WITH US. But the names not of light account are, I suppose, the fathers of the church, or of the reformation, or the divines of the church, or the Bishops of the present day. Now, though I will not dispute with him about these names, for I account many of them to be as respectable as any names of mere men,

Quales et quautos viros!

το γὰρ γερασ εστι θανοντων

Yet I must say that they are of light account, when weighed against those I have mentioned, and that the whole of them shall

never induce me to set them above any one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ. At the same time I remind him, that this is not at all a question of names or men, but of divine authority. Produce such names as carry that authority, Mr. G., or you have done nothing whatever to defend the principle of national church establishments. He next says, "that in a contest of this nature, we may fairly seek for a temper more moderate, and an opposition more sanctified, than that with which we have at present to contend." Now, as there are three parties at present opposing the establishment, all very different in their principle, temper, and reasonings, he should have defined which of them he meant, and not left all under the implied censure of immoderateness. There is the infidel party; they, to be sure, oppose the church because they hate Christianity, and I have nothing to say on their behalf. I disclaim, for myself and all orthodox dissenters, any sympathy with them. I am not aware that we ever coalesce in their opposition, or combine in any of their movements. Mr. G., and many other defenders of the church, have spoken of dissenters as if they were identified with this class of men. But, if infidels adopt some of our views of the Established Church, can we help that? Are we to forsake our scriptural objections, because they come to the same conclusions, from different principles, and totally opposite motives? They may seek the overthrow of the establishment, as a means of overthrowing Christianity;—if we seek its separation from the state, it is with the firm conviction that such a measure would accelerate the triumphs of Christianity, and prove one of the most effectual means of weakening the cause of infidelity. But, with such opponents of the church we have no sympathy—we hold no co-operation. We have joined in none of their enterprizes, and are in no sense associated with them, except it may be in the imaginations of some churchmen, who are prone to denounce every man as an infidel who opposes national establishments of Christianity. We appeal, however, to the fact, that we make as firm a stand as our friends of the establishment, against infidelity and irreligion; and that, as a body, we are as guiltless of combination with the infidel party as Mr. G. himself, and more so than some members of his church, whom I could name. *Dissenters*, *radicals*, and *infidels*, are words that sound well together, in a sweeping sentence against all opponents of the national *religion*, alias *establishment*, whether in a review, a visitation sermon, or a newspaper; and it is a combination of terms that may serve to scare some poor ignorant people from all acquaintance with dissenters. But the artifice is altogether disgraceful in men who are conscious that we fight side by side with themselves, in every cause that concerns our common Christianity, and our common Protestantism, and who

must know that it is impossible to produce any evidence of such a combination as they would *insinuate*, but durst not affirm, exists among the parties. Against the gross injustice of all such insinuations I protest, and pass on to observe further:—there is a considerable number within the church, including many of the clergy, and along with them nearly all the leading daily papers, &c. &c., who are clamourous for church reform. Many of them are for an entire separation of it from the state. The temper of most of them is, I confess, far from moderate; but, yet it is excusable, from the inveterate obstinacy of the sinner whom they wish to reform. But, with them I have no concern at present. They call themselves churchmen, and I leave them to their brother-churchmen.

The third party is composed of dissenters, who, though they disapprove of the establishment from head to tail, as an establishment, have never sought, and do not now seek, its destruction as a Christian society; but rather its improvement. Now, I am not aware that dissenters have lately made any great or unusual movement. I am quite prepared to prove, that if the contention of sect against sect is a sin, they have been rather sinned against than sinning. The monthly, and weekly, and daily press teems with attacks upon dissent. I will engage to point to ten pamphlets in defence of the church, to one in defence of dissent. And I will prove that the Society for Christian Knowledge circulates vastly more—perhaps many hundred-fold more—tracts against dissenters, than the Ecclesiastical Knowledge Society does against the establishment. What, then, is all the fighting to be on one side? Is it lawful for our enemies to wear swords, but must we be proclaimed murderers and assassins, if we wear them too? No, no; Mr. G., let us have fair play; and, before you charge upon your opponents, an immoderate temper and an unsanctified opposition, look at the scurrilous productions of your magazines, the pointless fulminations of your episcopal charges, and the Popish jargon and profound ignorance of your Religious Knowledge tracts. If immoderate temper and unsanctified opposition could have crushed dissent, it had long ago been suppressed—for these have pursued us long enough; and, if your church is occasionally paid in her own coin, she has no right to complain. Still I have no wish to apologize for any breach of courtesy, and shall endeavour to satisfy every candid and pious reader, that I have resolved to keep within the limits of moderate and sanctified controversy; though I claim the right of free discussion and liberty of speech. Yet, if more feeling is displayed by one party in this controversy, than by the other, let it not be forgotten, that a churchman, after all, is only contending for a human institution; whereas, dissenters contend for the integrity and

completeness of the divine institution—for the sufficiency of the New Testament. The one contends for the honour of Christ in his own church; the other for the supremacy of the King and Parliament: the one for the exclusive spirituality of Christ's kingdom; the other for its secularity: the one for the dominion of reason, and truth, and love; the other for the dominion of human authority, and the coercion of physical force. I greatly fear that our zeal, though in an infinitely better cause, has not kept pace with that of our opponents.

But we must advance now to the field of battle, and prepare ourselves to feel the force of his heavy artillery. He is determined no longer to skirmish about trilles, but to begin in good earnest. The following sentence is designed to admonish us of what is to come, and to let us know that we are to meet no "person of common talents and education," but a practised logician, that will admit of no sham-fighting. Well, let us hear: "*The arguments are so trite, as to leave little room for exercise of imagination.*" There ought, indeed, on so grave a subject, to be none. What! would he now turn the contest into a mere display of fireworks? But, let us proceed: "and the difficulty consists in selecting and compressing the most obvious." That is more to the point. And now, since our arguments are to be the most compressed and obvious, and the results of *close study and impartiality*, we shall either be convinced and led captive by the cause of the establishment, or the issue will supply a Salutory warning to all, who in future, should feel ambitious of engaging in the same enterprise; for, if, after compressing and selecting, exercising the imagination to its utmost stretch, studying the question closely and impartially, every argument should be proved utterly worthless and despicable, what hope can remain of ever defending the bulwarks, towers, and palaces of an Established Church? However this may be, my only desire is, that the cause of divine truth may be promoted, whatever system of church government may stand or fall. He then tells us, that "he has met in company with some who neither want talent nor decision to give force to the opposite view; but he must say, that the result has ever been a conviction of its utter inconclusiveness." That is very likely; for it is a rare case for any disputant to be convinced in the heat of debate. And, then, he does not tell us whether he fairly challenged these persons to state their strongest objections to the Church, and to defend their dissent; or whether it was only some slight exchange of remarks, casually occurring, when he had met dissenters upon other business. On their part, at least, it would have been rude and uncourteous to introduce a full and vigorous discussion of such a subject into a friendly party, or an assembly convened for any general purposes of benevolence. I

have, myself, often met Clergymen on both such occasions, and have sometimes exchanged a few words upon die Church, but I never dreamt that they would construe such incidental observations into a fair specimen of our views and reasonings; and as little should I have thought of judging of their logical resources by such mere skirmishes. Mr. G., however, thinks to prejudice this question by letting us know that he has disputed with some dissenters, whose arguments he found utterly inconclusive. He does not tell us how *his* appeared to those dissenters; and my opinion is, that he had better said nothing about it, as, possibly, some of those dissenters may be alive, and yet tell the world how utterly inconclusive all his arguments appealed to them. This passage does not bespeak much discretion, and most readers will probably doubt whether it ought to be set down to the credit of *sobriety*, or even of *moderation*; at all events, it affords no proof how *closely* and *impartially* he has studied the subject. But now we tread on firmer ground, and I am happy to find that he takes a nobler bearing, and promises better things than the casual remarks of an incidental conversation. "It has appeared to me, that while the arguments for an establishment are those of scriptural evidence and duty, the arguments against it are those of theory; or that, whilst the one rests upon the use and advantage of the thing, the other relies upon the abuse or perversion of it." We may now expect to see him girt with a panoply all divine, and performing deeds of unrivalled valour. Dissenting churches, all founded upon the voluntary principle, cannot but totter and disappear under the force of his scriptural appeals. I submit, however, that the word *or*, connecting the two principal clauses of the above sentence, should have been *and*; for he cannot mean the latter part of the sentence to be taken as expletive of the former, but as an addition to it; because the opposition, designed to be set forth between scriptural arguments and theoretic, is quite distinct from the latter contrast, set forth between use and abuse, advantage, and perversion. They are two different views of the arguments, for and against. However we take this sentence, it is no very commanding evidence of close and impartial study. We cannot help thinking that the state of the controversy, of which he aspired to give us such a bird's-eye-view, would have been more lucidly and fairly exhibited if he had said—the argument for established churches merely aims to shew that they are not explicitly forbidden in the New Testament, and are analogically sanctioned by Judaism. While the argument against them aims to shew, that the silence of the New Testament is their condemnation, and that voluntary churches carry with them the sanction of Christ and all his Apostles. The argument on one side is negative, on

the other positive—establishments are not forbidden, neither are they countenanced, by the New Testament: voluntary churches are countenanced, sanctioned, and regulated, by the express authority of that same book. We shall, however, receive clearer light upon this subject by and bye.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT, STATED BY MR. GARBETT.

“*The sum of objections,*” he next says, “*may perhaps be compressed in these propositions:—civil states and religious communities are essentially distinct. Human kingdoms are of this world. Christ’s kingdom is not of this world. Governments, therefore, cannot interfere with Christianity without polluting it; and, in fact, all history shews that they have done so.*” (p. 3.) Whether he made this summary of objections for the occasion, or whether it is the result of his extensive acquaintance with dissenting authors, we are not informed. I have only to say, that whether manufactured to serve his turn, or obtained by the perusal of some treatise, it certainly does not impress us either with the author’s *close study* or *impartial temper*. I suspect that, in compressing, for our benefit, the dissenting objections into this brief sum, he pre-determined to leave as little pith in them as possible. Why have we no reference to the objection against establishments, derived from the silence of the New Testament, and their utter want of Apostolic sanction; while the opposite kind of churches possess that sanction in the amplest measure? Was it because it did not admit of compression, or because the author had never met with it? In the one case we impeach his *impartiality*, in the other his *close study*. But, such as the statement is, he does not venture to examine it in detail. For instance, it alleges that civil states and religious communities are essentially distinct: does he prove that they are not so? Human kingdoms are of this world—Christ’s kingdom is not of this world: does he reconcile these opposites? Does he deny or disprove it? Governments cannot interfere with Christianity without polluting it, &c.: does he shew that they can, or prove from history that they have? I expected that, at least, he would have controverted and laboured to destroy all these objections; but I cannot find any attempt even to invalidate them. The reader may well ask, why not explode them? He would, doubtless, have done so, if he could; but we are left to infer that the task was hopeless, and so he passes them all by, and begins again with telling us the true gist of the whole dispute—“*it is scriptural authority alone.*” That is exactly what we demand for esta-

blishments, and never is it complied with. We can shew it for voluntary churches. Away, then, all ye defenders of the Established Church—away with your theories, and abstract propositions, and analogies of Judaism, and tropes of prophecy. We demand explicit scriptural authority alone, or clear Apostolic precedent. Mr. Garbett lays down the rule, and we will keep you to his terms, and promise you devout attention in all your reasonings from scripture. As to the propositions just stated, he says, "*we are not called upon to reply to abstract propositions, however easy it were to do so.*" But we cannot help putting a *query* to the word *easy*, and replying, why, then, not dispose of these sweeping assertions by a dash of your pen, and go on? The ground would then have been clear, and your argument would have proceeded smoothly. Abstract propositions, if false, are indeed easy to reply to; but, if true, they are formidable impediments to the march of reasoning. They stand like unsubdued fortresses in the route of an invading army. They are not the country to be conquered, but the country cannot be conquered without reducing them. There they stand in Mr. G.'s third page, stated, but unanswered. I feel no temptation to enlarge upon them, as I am merely, at present, hanging on his rear, and directing my movements by his. I shall, however, very shortly accompany him into his own chosen arena, "*scriptural authority*," to which, I see, he is wishing to narrow the controversy, having an instinctive dread of abstract propositions. Now, let it be observed, that, without replying to these objections, he is hurrying us on to those direct proofs from scripture, on which he places the whole fate of the controversy. I have not the slightest objection to place it there. By "*scripture authority alone*," I say, let established churches and voluntary churches stand or fall. I will never tempt him to a lower ground, *nor* refuse to meet him upon this; all I wish is, that he himself may neither change nor abandon the held which he has chosen for the conflict.

But, on he goes towards scriptural authority, not without some consciousness of having left us in possession of the sweeping propositions which it were so easy to reply to. "*In defence of such sweeping assertions, which appear to place rulers and legislators out of the pale of divine influence*"—where does that appear in any of the above propositions? I will engage to prove such an inference is not involved in any of them, and that no dissenter, who ever used them, had any such intention. I cannot conceive what they have to do with the divine influence operating upon rulers and legislators. As far as I can see, they neither imply nor affirm any thing upon the subject. Rulers and legislators may, or may not, be within the pale of divine influence, for all that these sweeping assertions contain; and, as

far as I know, dissenters believe that rulers and legislators are as much within the pale of divine influence as any other human beings, but not more so. To be sure, we do not, as a matter of course, assume that any king, and every king, who ascends the throne, is a "*most religious and gracious king,*" and roundly teach our congregations to utter so glaring a falsehood in the face of Almighty God twice or thrice every Lord's-day; but, at the same time, we do not exclude any ruler, high or low, from the pale of divine influence. Mr. Garbett's imagination has evidently turned these mole-hills of abstract propositions into mountains of presumption, and these windmills of compressed assertions into Titans assailing the skies, and usurping the throne of the Supreme. To exclude from the pale of divine influence rulers and legislators, is a new sin laid to our charge, very aggravated, if true, since we constantly pray that all such may enjoy that influence. But, I suspect Mr. G. thought this a good opportunity for giving a little play to his imagination, which, formerly, he regretted could find so little room for exercise in trite arguments; and so, out of the last of these propositions, alleging that the interference of governors had always polluted Christianity, there seemed to start before his pious fancy the daemon of disloyalty and impiety, which also *seemed* to say that kings and queens were an ungodly race, who had almost uniformly stood up and taken counsel together against the Lord and his Anointed, or had sought to commit fornication with the church, thereby polluting the spouse of Christ; and, "in fact, all history shews that they have done so." Now, if Mr. G. means to deny that such is the testimony of history, and of all history, then let him honestly say so. But, if he cannot, and must confess, that, with some rare exceptions, which the proposition, even as he states it, might admit, then it is history, or fact, that seems to place rulers out of the pale of divine influence, and not the dissenters, who merely refer to what history records. His loyal heart is quite shocked at the insinuation that those kings, who have created or maintained established churches, were not under divine influence. Well, to say nothing of pious Constantine, who was never in the Church of Christ, even by baptism, till he was dying, we will merely refer to a few of our own Protestant kings. To such a sample he cannot object. Facts are stubborn things, very stubborn things. King Henry VIII., Edward VI., Elizabeth, James I., Charles I., Charles II., James II., William and Mary, Anne, the Georges Four!!! Here are fourteen kings and queens, in succession, reigning over the Protestant Church of England; how many of them does Mr. Garbett believe evinced, by their exemplary lives, that they were living within the pale of divine influence? One, two, or three? Can he venture beyond this?

But, suppose they all lived within that pale, would this alter the proposition, that rulers had generally polluted Christianity by interfering with it? That they might have done, had they even been within the pale of divine influence. Let the crying pollutions of every Christian national church in Christendom answer the question; yea, let the pollutions of the purest of them all settle this point of our controversy. Is not the Church of England so polluted by what rulers have done for it, that its imminent danger is proclaimed by its fondest sons, and the necessity of an extensive reform is every where admitted. But what need of any reform, if it is not polluted? Indeed, the only doubt which seems to pervade the mass of the nation is, whether any reform can go far enough to save it from a hasty and dishonoured overthrow—whether its corruptions are not too far gone to admit of remedy? Dr. Arnold, in his “Principles of Chinch Reform,” says, “the changes proposed are great, because the danger threatening us is enormous,” “if the reform of the church be impracticable, its destruction, unhappily, is not so.” (p. 87.) Others hold similar, and even stronger language.

Let us now return to Mr. G., and his abstract propositions. He says that they “appear to forget that the Gospel is committed to human agency.” Here he has fallen into a charge against dissenters still more preposterous and absurd than the former; for, not only can nothing be found in these propositions that involves any such oversight, but we can appeal to the fact, that these principles excite, and bring to bear, in every department, a much larger share of human agency in the cause of Christ, than the principles of an established church. Forget that the Gospel is committed to human agency! No, indeed, Mr. G.; you know better yourself; for the active agency of these very principles is the thing that awakens your anxiety for your establishment, and induced you to go round about your towers, and mark well your bulwarks. Forget that the Gospel is committed to human agency! Who originated the modern Missionary Societies? Who conceived the plan of the Bible Society? Who the Tract Society—the schemes of general education—Sunday schools, &c. &c.? In all these cases the most active agents were the men who hold this very principle, you are wishing to stigmatize as forgetting that the Gospel is committed to human agency. Indeed, gentle reader, the dissenters neither forget human agency, nor do they idolize it, as those seem to do, who make it the first principle of their Church. They do not, however, think that human agency, to be effectual in the cause of the gospel, must carry with it the authority of Acts of Parliament or the sanction of Civil Rulers. But is there no medium between’ having our Churches establish-

ed by Acts of Parliament, and despising human agency? Does every Church despise such agency in the cause of the Gospel which refuses to be allied to the state? It is only one species of human agency, and that employed in the form of coercion, that we abjure; and Mr. G. cannot but know it. Then why criminate our principles upon a charge of despising human agency, when our sin, if sin it is, consists exclusively in refusing the agency of human laws, and the unchristian agency of the sword. If dissenters forget that the Gospel is committed to human agency, then how is it that they prosper so? It would hence seem, that if they despise human agency, they are not destitute of the divine; and that at least might compensate for all losses. We wish those who advocate church establishments to take heed, lest, while they magnify human agency, they should become guilty of overlooking the divine.

Our author says "We may fitly ask for some declaration of holy writ which has escaped the notice of the Christian world for so many centuries." If he means that such a request would be fit to be made, I think it would be very unfit; and if he means that the Christian world has not observed the bearing of those Scriptures alleged by dissenters, then I deny his assumption; for a very large body of the Christian world has observed them, and admitted their force. But, how could he add that those persons who discovered no such passages in holy writ, had "neither predilection nor interest to bias" them? No predilection nor interest—when good livings—rich bishoprics—stately palaces—court influence—seats in parliament—a perfect scramble after secularities—and yet free from all bias and interest in searching the Scriptures upon this controversy! While, on the other side, proscription, contempt, and poverty would follow the full and fair admission, that the silence of the New Testament upon establishments is a virtual prohibition of them, and that its recognition of voluntary churches affords them at least a positive divine preference. And since the two principles are repugnant to each other, and voluntary churches and established churches cannot be made identical, the only question that can remain is, which shall we prefer—the established, which possess no divine sanction, or the voluntary, which do possess it in abundance? Yet, strange to tell, a considerable proportion of the "Christian world" have perceived all this, and, rather than sacrifice scripture and conscience, have braved all consequences. How many at this day do actually discern in the sacred volume no sanction to national establishments! And are not they learned, pious, simple-minded? Have they any interest or bias to pervert their judgments? Mr. G. admits that one passage is pleaded, "My kingdom is not of this world," yet asks, with an air of

astonishment, "Is it not a free exposition of the Redeemer's language to apply it to such a topic as this?" If he mean by the word *free*, an unjust exposition, I reply, can these words be explained in their context without applying them to the secular establishment of Christ's kingdom? We affirm that they positively prohibit such an alliance between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world, as involves the employment of human legislation, and the civil sword for the maintenance of Christianity. We affirm that this text cannot be faithfully explained and applied without maintaining the independence of the church of Christ upon the power and authority of the civil state. We challenge Churchmen to try it: but, like Mr. G., they are mostly shy of enlarging upon it. He says, "do establishments set up temporal dominion in *opposition* to civil power?" This is merely obscuring the point in debate; the dominion set up need not be in opposition to the civil power: if it is in alliance with that power, it comes within the meaning of the Saviour's words. If Christ had sought for his kingdom an alliance either with the power of the Sanhedrim and Herod, or with the Romans under Pontius Pilate, in either case his kingdom would have been of this world, and his words under consideration would have been falsified. The dominion set up by established churches is the dominion of the civil power in matters of pure revelation. To constitute such a dominion, one *of this world*, it surely is not necessary that the church should become a party to rebellion and treason against the existing civil power. Their alliance with that power, for the purpose of using it in Christ's church, is as strictly a violation of the Saviour's words, as if the church set up a civil dominion of its own, in opposition to the civil government. Established churches do demonstrably make Christ's kingdom of this world, their first principle, as we have seen, upon an authority which Mr. G. at least must admit, is human legislation; the king, their head—liturgy—canons—prayers—articles, all subjects of legislative enactment and enforcement. They are built on the rock, not of Christ, but of the civil government—their advocates constantly plead that their church is a part of the national Constitution—their bishops are temporal legislators in virtue of their office—they enforce the support of their church by temporal taxation, and human laws are the Alpha and Omega of church establishments. The King virtually ordains every bishop, for he determines who shall be one. If the Pope of Rome had the power of nominating all the bishops and archbishops, would he not be virtually the spiritual governor of the Church? It is the King that says, not indeed directly, but by compulsory order, "receive the Holy Ghost for the office of a bishop." The clergy of the church and the people of the church have no power over

their own church; they cannot alter the liturgy or other formularies when they are convinced it is needful to do so; but the secular power can alter all these whether they need it or not; Thus I think it is manifest, that established churches are essentially “of *this world*,” as far indeed as it is possible for religion to enter into combination with the elements of civil states. The powers of the world are the cement of the whole fabric—secular legislation is the nerve of their strength—they would be nothing, have no existence as establishments without it—and whatever they are, they are by it. So that Mr. G. has completely failed to expound this passage out of its natural and inevitable hostility to a temporal church: and his sophistry, as contained in the phrase “in opposition to the civil power,” will not serve his turn. The Saviour’s words which follow those already alluded to, are perhaps still more distinct and explicit than the text we have been considering, “Now is my kingdom not from hence”—not from this world—“else would my servants fight.” I would employ secular power to maintain my cause against my enemies; but I forbid it utterly, for my kingdom can neither commence in, nor be promoted by, secular power. Can any established church make such a disclaimer? Origen said of Christians in his days:

ουκετι γαρ λαμβανομεν, ουδε μαθηνομεν επι πολεμειν
γενομενοι δια τον Ιησου υιοι της ειρηνης.

Can the ministers of the Church of England say, “Now is our church not from hence”—the sword of the civil magistrate? Are not its servants always armed with the power of the state to enforce tithes, rates, and dues, for the maintenance of the Christian ministry and Christian temples? Is not the sword at the present moment drawn to enforce the kingdom of Christ, through the maintenance of her ministers in the Sister Island? Let his conscience answer; or if he is silent, or denies that the sword of the magistrate maintains the kingdom of Christ in the established church, then let him ask the first tithe-payer or rate-payer he can meet with, whether he would pay his tithes and church-rates unless the law obliged him? He adds, “the relation of it (this text) to the question whether Christian governments are to exert Christian influence in establishing the Gospel, is not very evident.” Indeed, that is not the question, and here again he shews how closely he has studied the subject Who objects to *Christian* influence?—who ever quoted this text to prove that civil rulers must not use *Christian* influence?—that is supposing they are themselves Christian. I know not how else they can use a Christian influence. But I will ask him a plain question. Is the sword Christian influence? Is human legislation Christian influence? Are tithes a Chris-

tian influence? Prove that, Mr. G., and you will convince at once every refractory dissenter in the kingdom. The question is, the relation of that text, not to the exertion of Christian influence, for if only such were used, we should have no establishments, but to those influences already recited, which flow from the supremacy of the King, the Act of Uniformity, the legality of tithes, and the demands of tax-gatherers. Why did you not prove that *Christian* influence, used by Christian governments, was identical with these things, instead of using words which either have no meaning or a bad one?

Mr. G. promised us scriptural arguments, but in less than a page he dismisses this important passage, without any attempt to parry its force, or expound its meaning fairly. It is true we are referred to Dr. Doddridge, a *part* of whose paraphrase is introduced, but the whole of which, if consulted by the reader, will appear to put a sense upon the text utterly irreconcilable with the maintenance of Christ's cause by coercion. But, since Mr. G. seems familiar with that eminent dissenting expositor, I would recommend him to consult the paraphrase on Mark x. 42, and Luke xxii. 15, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them," &c. And if he will look to the latter part of the comment on the text in hand, he will find these words: "if I would have entertained such views, I might have found support and encouragement from the very persons who are now my accusers: and if I had asserted that my kingdom was of this world, and have favoured such methods of defence, my servants would resolutely have fought, &c., but now my kingdom is not from hence, not to be erected here; and therefore I have been so far from arming my followers with secular weapons, that the guard who came to apprehend me know that I forbade their making use of those they had." I shall here leave him in the hands of Dr. Doddridge, and pass on to his next observation.

"*Unable to discover any declaration that will disprove the principle of establishments;*" was it for that our *Protestant* divine searched? Is it not enough for him that Scripture is silent on any point, must it be in plain words absolutely forbidden? * Is every thing then lawful which Scripture does not condemn? This is exactly Rome's logic. Must dissenters disprove, by strict letter of holy writ, the principle of establishments? These were hard terms, and would make a multitude of things lawful which Mr. G., in common with ourselves, would utterly disclaim. Let him, then, if he can, disprove by the sacred text, transubstantiation, holy water, purgatory,

* Grotius says, "Multum refert ad retinendam Ecclesiarum pacem, inter ea quæ jure divino præcepta sunt, et quæ non sunt, accurate distinguere."

prayers to the Virgin Mary and the Saints, and ail the hated corruptions of the Papacy. I, too, am "unable to discover any declaration" that will literally disprove the principle of the universal supremacy of the bishop of Rome. But does the legitimacy, the divine authority, of that usurped dominion follow, as a matter of course, from the silence of Scripture? According to his reasoning, all these matters being not forbidden, do undoubtedly become lawful. Indeed, Mr. G., we can diprove the principle of establishments by undeniable testimony of Scripture, and by the universal practice of Apostles and Evangelists. But if we could not, it would not thence follow that such a principle must be lawful, unless you at once leap into that gulf of error and superstition, out of which all the abominations of Popery have proceeded. That very gulf is the fatal abstract proposition involved in your above sentence—that what cannot be disproved by the sacred text, is, therefore, lawful. Either renounce your logic, or fairly embrace its consequences. I give you full liberty to make your election; but you must make it for one side or the other of this dilemma.

After the notable words above cited, we read, "*I proceed to shew that none such can exist?*"—no such declaration, that is, as will disprove the principle of establishments, *can exist*. His *proceedings* hitherto have been very ominous and unpromising: nevertheless, we must accompany him on this new and bold proceeding. It is certainly a work of peril at any time to shew what cannot exist; but really for a Churchman to promise that he will shew that no declaration against the principle of establishments *can* exist in the whole Bible, is an enterprize for which I was not prepared. We have already been so often deceived by his promises, that I have little expectation of seeing this new one made good: however, he shall *shew it*, if he can: remember, it is, that "no such declaration can exist." Why not? let us hear Mr. G.'s reason for this impossibility: "inasmuch as it (the establishment) may be defended from Scripture—which is never inconsistent with itself." The last clause of this sentence is almost the only true one he has yet delivered, and that is grievously misapplied and unguarded. *Circumcision* may be defended from the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, but can it be defended from the Scriptures of the *New*? Many things may be defended from one part of Scripture which are condemned by another part of Scripture, and yet "Scripture is never inconsistent with itself." "*Establishments* may be defended from Scripture," he says. I know of only one establishment that can be defended from Scripture, but that is also *condemned* and *abrogated* by Scripture; and yet "it is never inconsistent with itself." Establishments may be defended from Scripture—so may transubstantiation, so may image-worship, so may pur-

gatory. But how? that is the material question. What may not an ingenious mind, aided by the abstract principle that *whatever is not condemned is lawful*, not defend in the same way? But to defend any thing from Scripture, my theology requires, that express warrant, or clear example, or fair reason should be shewn. *Nothing* can be defended by appeals to sacred commands which have been *abrogated*; for, to all purposes of reasoning, they are as completely nullified, as if they had never existed. Hence the defence of the Jewish establishment and of circumcision must terminate with the abrogation of the commandments on which they were founded. If it is attempted to defend a Christian establishment from the Scriptures which formally defended a Jewish establishment, then we must defend circumcision under the new covenant, from the laws which made it obligatory under the old. If he who once authorized an establishment subsequently annulled his command, who shall dare to retain it; or even to reason analogically from it, without being chargeable with as direct a violation of divine authority, as if he had rejected it while it remained in force? And in point of reason, what force of analogy can be derived from that which, whether as a precept, or a precedent, is utterly extinguished? In all respects, as to Christian obligation, the whole Jewish economy stands in precisely the same relation to us, as if it had never existed, consequently, it can never be made the basis of any obligation, the fountain of any authority, or the source of any legitimate sanction, either by transference of its laws, or the derivation of binding analogies. A very learned authority of our author's church once reasoned thus: "His design (*Christ's*) was to ease men of their former burden, and not to lay on more; the duties he required were no other but such as were necessary, and withal very just and reasonable. He that came to take away the insupportable yoke of Jewish ceremonies, certainly did never intend to gall the necks of his disciples with another instead of it. What ground can there be why Christians should not stand upon the same terms now, which they did in the time of Christ and the Apostles? Was not religion sufficiently grounded and fenced in them? Was there ever more true and cordial reverence in the worship of God? What charter hath Christ given the church to bind men up to more than himself hath done?"* Mr. G. believes I presume that Judaism was wholly abolished by him who founded it, and yet he would remove only the superstructure, but retain the old foundation, for the support of a new church, just as if he could not find one inch of solid ground any where in Scripture; no, not one single rock, but secular power, on which to

* Stillingfleet's Iren. Pref.

rest the Gospel church. This proceeding, therefore, must be classed among the many unsuccessful ones in which he has already engaged, and his flattering promise has turned out as I foresaw, another total failure.

ARGUMENTS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT.

Having disposed of the negative side of the argument, as he deemed, he begins, at page 5, his regular scriptural defence of the principle of establishments by the following condensed statement.

ARGUMENT I.

“Placing ourselves at the close of the New Testament, it is apparent that the blessed volume can give us no historical view of the state of the church when acknowledged by the rulers of the world; because at that time the kings of the earth were its virulent persecutors”! I hope the world will give him credit for the valuable discovery made in the above sentence, and lest they should pass it over, as a mere truism; or common place, I beg leave to place a note of admiration close to it. It is doubtless a specimen of unexampled sagacity! The book of the Acts closes its narrative about sixty years after Christ’s birth, and, therefore, can give us no view of the state of the church at the commencement of the fourth century!! He might just as sagely have observed, that it gives us no account of the nineteenth century, and of the Protestant Church of England. We gravely thank him for the information, and set the credit of it down to his close and impartial study. But was that what we wanted? Why inquire into the state of the church in the fourth century? It would have been more satisfactory by far, to inquire *what its principle was at its primitive institution*. We did not want to know what principles men had introduced into it, but whether the principle of an establishment received any sanction from Christ and his Apostles. He is to defend the principles of establishments from holy Scripture, and to do so he places himself at the close of the New Testament, and tells us we can there learn nothing upon the subject; but must descend to the ecclesiastical history of the fourth century, not one item of which is to be found in the New Testament, consequently, not one single word of which can be enchanted into a *scriptural argument* for the principle of establishments. Still, however, before being in such a hurry to place himself at the close of the New Testament, and take a leap down the stream of time to so distant a point as the fourth century, he might have had the kindness to tell us,—that innumerable churches were founded by Apostles, and apostolic men, of which we may read accounts before we get to the close of the New Testament; all of which

were founded upon the *voluntary principle*, and *not one* upon the principle of establishments; and all of which were regulated and governed according to the directions contained in that New Testament, without the intervention of any civil legislation, or any magistrate's sword. Without disputing the truth of his statement above cited, but observing, that it is altogether impertinent to the question in hand, we will advance to see what discovery of Scripture proofs for establishments remains yet to be made.

He says, "*prophecy is history*:" mark that—it is worth all that we have heard before; if we go on making discoveries at this prodigious rate, we shall surely get to the principle of establishments. It is enough to give any one a *vertigo* in the brain only to think of it. "Prophecy is history, not in all its details." I suppose he means not in all the details of history; but it is not very obvious whether the *details* refers to the history, or to the prophecy; and since our grammars can afford us no assistance in this difficulty, we must guess at his meaning, and pass on. He adds, "but in those grand features which are to be looked at in controversies of this kind thus starting upon the back of a clumsy paradox, he is borne away from the question of direct Scripture proofs, something in the manner of a crab going backwards, to read the history of Christian churches in the metaphors of ancient prophecy. He shall, if he pleases, call *prophecy history*; though, I confess, I cannot perceive any particular advantage which his cause will derive from such a *license of speech*. Yet if prophecy may be called history *in one part*, it must be equally so in *all parts*. Thus, if he will, he may place himself in such a position as to view another piece of history through the glass of prophecy, and that, too, without retrograding so far as the prophets of the Old Testament. In the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, ii. 30, he may read "the man of sin, the son of perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped." Through the same medium he may also see "the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters, with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication." (Rev. xvii.) Now, what will he say to these histories which represent the corruption of the church of Christ by its connection with the civil power? "He that now letteth," commentators tell us, signifies the heathen Roman power; and when that hindrance was removed out of the way, the *prophetic-history* tells us the wicked was revealed—and forth came *establishments*, secular power raised itself above the divine authority. Constantine sat in the temple of God—the supremacy of the Emperor in Christ's church was admitted, the bishops did obeisance, the mystery of iniquity was clearly revealed, the temple of God was defiled

by temporal power given to the church, and persecution, which has been the body and soul of the man of sin, and is so still, in every established church throughout Christendom, commenced her dark and bloody reign. Sacred prophecy which Mr. G. says is history, depicts the end of this foul alliance between the cause of truth and the sword of state; but I will not trouble him with that, just now; neither do I wish to press upon him too severely, the *details* either of prophecy or history; or my own views of these particular prophecies; I merely wish to shew, how easily all his magnificent ideas of a secular establishment, derived from prophecy, may be put to flight by other prophecies which no less clearly describe the destruction of that principle of alliance between church and state, out of which the most fearful corruptions of Christianity have grown. I could heartily have wished that his speculations upon prophecy had terminated with what we have already witnessed: for, really, if we are to go *zigzag* through the prophecies, to find the principles of New Testament churches, and dig among figures of speech for *scripture proofs* of the principle in debate, most of our readers will grow impatient. However, the fault is not mine; he leads the way, I only follow.

Thus he says "prophecy gives us sufficient light to perceive the outline of the church in her future and purer state." It is not evident, from this sentence, whether he means, by the word *future*, future to the prophecy, and that might refer to what is now past, or whether it alludes to what is *still future and purer*; and, therefore, cannot, by any possibility, be made to include the *existing* establishments of Christianity. It is of little moment which of these senses he attached to his terms: he shall have it either way he pleases:—"and to vindicate the lawfulness of secular establishments of religion aye, that is quite another matter. How far prophecy, which he says is history, affords a *vindication* of the facts it records, demands a deeper consideration than he has yet given it. It is doubly provoking that the good man will have it, first, that prophecy is history, which can only be vindicated as a figure of speech; and next, that because it is so, it "*vindicates*." Now, though I wish to be as lenient toward him as possible, and to allow him a few figures of speech, yet I am reluctant to admit conclusions which have no better ground than such figures, and to accede to inferences which seem to want the necessary premises. He should here have favoured us with the intervening link between the prophetic discovery of future establishments, and the *vindication* of them. I suppose that connecting link of reasoning must be this,—because they are foretold they are vindicated, on the ground, that whatever prophecy foretels it sanctions. He has my full leave to reject tins proposition, if

he pleases; but then he must substitute another in its place; for I am quite at a loss to conceive how his inference would follow without some such peg to hang it on. At present, I beg to assure him, his *vindication* hangs in the air. But, though "prophecy gives us sufficient light to perceive the outline of the church in her future and purer state," Mr. G. will be puzzled to find any outline of its alliance with the kingdoms of this world; and, consequently, he will be equally puzzled to extract any vindication of that which no prophet has ever foretold, except as an injury and disgrace to the church, a thing to be put away in the future and purer age.

But let us proceed: we shall soon enter the regions of true sublimity. "Referring to prophetical *emblems*, we find in the mysterious vision of Ezekiel's temple (which is unquestionably predictive of the glory of the latter days,) the prince or civil government prominently introduced as acting the part which is now reprobated." Would any body but a debater at the very last gasp have thought of this? I had no idea of the sublime flight he was about to take into the midst of these mysterious visions; and could not have believed that his placing us at the close of the New Testament was preparatory to such an adventurous enterprise. ☞ N.B. I suppose we were placed at the *close* of the New Testament, and not at its *beginning*, because he foresaw that the search *within* it would not be so pleasant as a flight to the mount of prophetic vision. It is a very significant circumstance, that the clergy, whenever they argue upon this subject, are in a hurry to get to the *close* of the New Testament, almost before they have examined any of its *contents*. Why should Mr. G. so hastily close the New Testament, and plunge headlong into the mysterious vision of Ezekiel's temple, busying himself among mysterious emblems, like some necromancer or magician? Does not this betray a secret? Is the New Testament a dumb witness about Christian churches, their principle, constitution, and effects? Is there no model, no precedent, afforded us *there*, that we must so suddenly—crab-like again—go backwards, or sideways, or any way, rather than straight forward? O yes, there are numerous churches mentioned in the New Testament, developed in their *principle, constitution, and effects*. But we may easily guess why no notice whatever is taken of them. After all this flourishing about not discovering any thing to disprove the principle of establishments, it now comes out, by inevitable inference, that *neither can he find any thing to sanction them, save and except only mysterious visions and emblems*. It is well, Mr. G., that you have closed the New Testament. I shall make quick work with you in the Old.

Begin we with Ezekiel's temple; if so, you will. Matthew Henry

seems to be a favourite commentator with our author, and *he* says, upon this mysterious vision, "it resembles the waters described in it, that rose until they became a river that *cannot be parsed*;" and adds, "of this vision of the temple—which is justly looked upon to be one of the *most difficult* portions of Scripture in all the book of God"—what a place must this be to search for the principles of established Christian churches! Matthew Henry further observes, "the dimensions of these visionary buildings are so large, the new temple bigger than the old Jerusalem, and the New Jerusalem bigger than all the land of Canaan, plainly intimates, as Dr. Lightfoot observes, (an authority which I am sure must command Mr. Garbett's respect,) that these things cannot be *literally* but must be *spiritually* understood." The commentator adds: "under the type and figure of a temple and altar, priests and sacrifices, is foreshewn the *spiritual* worship that should be performed in Gospel times, more agreeably to the nature of God and man; and that perfected at last in the kingdom of glory—in *which perhaps these visions will have their full accomplishment, &c.*" So much for their authority, according to Matthew Henry, in the present controversy.

But, setting Matthew Henry and Lightfoot aside as novices, who saw but a little way into these mysteries, let us try Mr. Garbett's skill in the interpretation of them. He begins by referring to mysterious emblems, but ends by making the greater part of them *simple matters of fact*. He says, "we find the prince, *or* the civil government here I am stumbled at his first effort of interpretation. Who can the prince of this mystical temple possibly be, if he is to be identical with some civil government? I had always supposed that the *prince* of this New Jerusalem could be no other than Jesus Christ himself, at least if the vision regards the whole church in its most perfect state. What other prince over the whole church in its most perfect and purest state is ever to be acknowledged besides him, I am perfectly at a loss to guess; unless it is to be the *Pope of Rome*. But what a very magician is this, to turn Jesus Christ, the prince of the New Jerusalem, into a civil governor!! for it seems, according to the laws of his interpretation, that these are *synonymes*. So set is he upon finding civil government and a secular prince in the church, and over the church in its best and purest state, that he even forgets the reverence due to the spiritual character of Christ, and makes the prince of the New Jerusalem identical with civil government!!! This is the first of his trips at the very threshold of this temple, and I fear it will not be the last.

But we shall proceed: "We find the prince or civil government prominently introduced as acting the part which is now

reprobated, viz. settling the affairs of the church,”—(the prince or civil power settling the affairs of the church!—I thought they had all been settled long ago by the divine prince; but it seems I have been mistaken, and our *most religious and gracious kings* are to have this honour), “and allotting to its ministers a stated subsistence from the land.” Tithes I tithes! nothing but tithes! *Jure divino*, and Ezekiel’s vision subpoenaed to prove it, against every unbelieving dissenter! But let us go to work with these mysterious emblems a little more critically. “Referring to prophetic emblems,” says Mr. G., “we find the prince or civil government allotting to its ministers” (of course only the established ones—the *others* that serve the prince of this New Jerusalem may starve, for all that appears from Ezekiel), “a *stated subsistence from the land:*” that is delightful!—if we could but *prove* that the prince of this new temple had but done so. But what will our preacher say, when I remind him that he told us just now, he was *referring to emblems*, and put that word in italics? What will he make of *emblematical* tithes? And, further, he is quite unsupported by the text of the prophet, in saying that, “*we find, the prince or civil government allotting to the ministers a stated subsistence from the land.*” We find no such thing*: the allotment is made by *divine* authority; and, like the whole vision, is, of course, only an *emblem*. But now Mr. G. turns it out of an *emblem* into a *reality*, and attributes to the civil government what the prophet attributes to the Holy Spirit. Was it too good a thing to allow it to remain an *emblem*? What, a stated subsistence from the land an *emblem*? It is the reality itself; and no vision, no figure, no mysterious emblem—as *we* know who *pay* tithes, and those who *receive* them. But we are reasoning as theologians, and I am bound to ask what becomes of the *consistency* of Ezekiel’s whole vision, if we are to interpret the *governing part* and the *tithing part literally*, and the other parts *emblematically*? I am for all emblem or all plain letter. Mr. G. shall choose whichever of these he pleases; it will equally confound *his* argument and answer *mine*. But no shifting of the scenes for the mere sake of introducing secular power, and a sanction to tithes, under the Gospel. If the tithes and the secular prince are literal, so is every thing else in the vision—the land of Judea, the immense temple, the city as big as all Palestine, &c., real sacrifices, &c. &c. Now, Mr. G., which way will you take it? Emblematical tithes, and a spiritual prince?—or a literal city, prince, civil government, river, temple, sacrifices, priests and levites? If you still adhere to your own terms, *mysterious vision, prophetic emblems*, then away with your

* See Ezek. c. xlv. ver. 28–30; xlv. 4, 5, 8, 9.

secular power settling the affairs of the church—prince, tithes, and all:—or, if you adhere to literal tithes, and literal secular power, then you must accept one universal prince over the whole church in its purest state, one civil government, one material temple, sacrifices of bulls, lambs, and goats, and all Judaism over again—for you know who has said, “Scripture is never inconsistent with itself.” This is what your meddling with mysterious visions and prophetic emblems has brought us to. I could have predicted all this, as soon as you closed the New Testament, and tempted us to wander so far back into the dark ages of prophecy, to lose ourselves among mysteries and emblems. Do you intend this as a choice specimen how closely and impartially you have studied this subject? Disdaining the road of plain argument, and simple texts of Christ’s word, your imagination probably became inflated with an ambition of meriting that high compliment which Aristotle pays to those who manage metaphors well:

ΕΥ ΜΕΤΑΦΟΡΕΙΝ ΕΣΤΙΝ ΘΕΩΡΕΙΝ.

Your ill success at this delicate work has thrown the whole vision of Ezekiel into confusion, and brought your own argument into irretrievable ruin.

But the inference which our author draws from the discoveries he has already made, is, he says, *obvious*. Now, for all the benefit he has derived from Ezekiel’s vision, I think he might just as well have been searching for arguments in Trophonius’s cave, or spelling them out from the Sibyls leaves. “If the general effusion of the Spirit, at the era announced” (I was not aware that any era had been announced,) “be to direct all Christians to their proper duties, it follows that this cannot be unlawful now, which shall be characteristic of religion in its triumphant days. That which will then be *glory*, cannot now be shame; and Christian rulers may *most safely* take the most perfect pattern for their guide.” This was well said, had it but been pertinent; and quite aphoristic, had it but been true. *Question 1*: is Ezekiel’s vision the *most perfect* pattern for Christian princes? and are they to be schooled in Judaism and the prophets, in preference to Christ and his Apostles? *Question 2*: if they are to go by the outline of this *most perfect pattern*, then must they not commence a new crusade to recover the holy land, for that is undoubtedly the first step to the realization of Ezekiel’s vision? *Question 3*: when all Christian princes get to Palestine, and have built the temple and city, what method is to be resorted to, for determining which of them all is to be the prince or civil governor, to whom all the rest must submit, who must *settle the affairs of the church, and allot its ministers a stated support from the land*? *Question 4*: when the affairs of the

church are thus arranged, will Mr. G. consent to take his tithes literally from allotments of land *within Judea*, where, according to Ezekiel, interpreted by Lightfoot, the city is to fill the whole country? If he will, I object no further. *Question 5*: supposing Mr. G. to demur to these literal applications of the prophecy, and to adhere to a spiritual interpretation, will he be content With a spiritual prince and emblematical tithes? If so, I am perfectly content, and need trouble myself no further with the argument thence derived for a secular prince in the church, and literal tithes from the land, vindicated by the authority of Ezekiel's vision.

I think it must now have become pretty evident that the only prince represented in the prophecy must be Jesus Christ; and, if so, what becomes of Mr. G.'s argument for the secular power settling the affairs of the church, seeing that Christ has already settled all the affairs of his church, without noticing either tithes or a secular prince, and without giving us any reason to expect any new settlement of these matters in the purest and best age of the church which is yet to come? But Mr. G., I know, will be constrained to confess, that the whole vision, temple, &c, are *emblematical*; consequently, he is as far off as ever from any sanction to the introduction of secular power into the affairs of the church, and equally so from the divine right of tithes.

ARGUMENT II.

The second head of discourse is introduced as follows: "II. Having seen this principle in the victorious age of Christianity." I suspect nobody has seen this principle but himself; and, perhaps, by this time, I have succeeded in making him doubt whether he sees any thing clearly in this vision of emblems. "*This principle in the victorious age of Christianity*"—viz. the principle of establishments and tithes. No, I had really thought that the only age of Christianity, deserving the epithet *victorious*, had either been the age when Christ gained his great victory, or that in which his Apostles went forth to war against the powers of darkness, and win such victories as have never since been rivalled; or, at all events, that it must be confined within the first three hundred years of the Christian era. But, it seems, in neither of these periods could he find this principle of his—*the prince or civil government settling the affairs of the church, and allotting its ministers a stated support from the land*. The victorious age did arrive, it appears, as soon as the prince began to settle the affairs of the church, and allot its ministers a stated subsistence, &c. The origin of the principle of establishments, is, therefore, in Mr. G.'s reasoning, identified with the victorious age of Christianity. What an idea must this gentleman

entertain of the victories of the Gospel, if none of those won by Christ, and his Apostles, and their immediate successors, nor all of them put together, could induce him to denominate any part of the three first centuries *victorious ages!* His victorious age commences with, and is characterized by, the great principle of establishments, the prince or civil government settling the affairs of the church! Now, since I cannot discover this principle in the only victorious age of Christianity with which I am acquainted, and can discover it in all the dark and disastrous ages which have succeeded that of Constantine, down to the present, he must permit me to entertain him and my readers with the following query,—was the victory, to which he alludes, gained by Christianity over the world, or by the world over Christianity, when the emblems in Ezekiel's vision were fulfilled? O, ye poor ignorant Apostles, what a pity you did not learn, from Ezekiel's vision, "that, what now is glory, could not in your days have been a shame!" Why not ask the prince or civil government to settle the affairs of your churches, which were disturbed enough in those days? why not obtain a stated subsistence from the land? To have been without these, to have never sought them, to have *despised* them, is the shame of *your* age; while, to have them, is the glory of *ours*. To have been destitute of them, compels Mr. G. to exclude your age from that victorious one, in which he sees the prince or civil government settling the affairs of the church, and allotting its ministers a stated subsistence from the land! *Corollary*,—the glory of the Christian church in its victorious age consists in the above principle: see Ezek. c. 45, and Mr. Garbett's discourses, page 6.

Having now done with the victorious age, and Ezekiel's vision, we will proceed to the proposal which he makes after having told us that he had seen the principle of establishments in the victorious age of Christianity. "We will ascend," he says, "to the cradle of that merciful dispensation the *cradle* of a dispensation!—I dare say no one of his hearers guessed, till he explained it, what this new figure of speech could mean:—but, in plain English, it signifies "*we will go back to Judaism.*" Although we have had almost enough of nursing fathers and nursing mothers, yet we must not refuse to accompany our author to the *cradle* of Christianity. "Our Lord and Master was born and lived under an establishment in union with the State." Here then *Judaism* was the cradle of Christianity, Herod and Pontius Pilate, Annas and Caiaphas, with the Seventy Elders must have been the rockers and nurses;—and fine work they made of it. Christ was nursed in an established church, it was his very cradle! but having got out of this cradle, and out of the hands of his nurse's, yea, dashed

them in pieces like a potter's vessel, and the *cradle* too, why should we lay his dispensation in a similar cradle again? I cannot find that any such directions were ever given to his Apostles, nor that, after the destruction of the old cradle, they were ever commissioned to prepare a new one. It is very evident that the merciful dispensation had to struggle with serpents all the time it was in its cradle; but after they were strangled and the cradle forsaken, it grew to a gigantic stature, till state nurses officiously carried it back, and laid it in another cradle, filled with worse serpents and vipers than infested the days of its first nursing. Ever since that time it has dragged on but a sickly existence, and has, for the most part, lost all the features of a *merciful* dispensation. It threatens, however, now, by dint of its own energy, and in spite of all the nursing fathers and mothers, and serpents to boot, to leap from its cradle, and emancipate itself from all its swaddling bands and sweetmeats, and to go forth free and vigorous upon its high and heavenly behest.

Mr. G. adds, "against its corruptions he often inveighed:" and I shall only add, *its overthrow* he distinctly *predicted*, and "*prophecy is history*." "But neither then nor upon any other occasion did he assert or imply that an establishment was unlawful in itself, or that it would be so under his Gospel." We think that he did; for he disowned all alliance with the civil state of Judea, and no less so with that of Rome. He forbade the use of that weapon in his cause, without which no establishment could exist. He forbade exaction and extortion, commanded all his disciples *to do as they would be done unto*—prohibited all distinction of ministerial orders by express command—condemned all human lordship and human authority over God's heritage. In fact, he has distinctly prohibited every one of the principles involved in an established church, as distinguished from a free church.

Next, Mr. G. says, "its abuses he would have eradicated; its carnality he would have spiritualized; but he destroyed it not" True, he came "not to destroy, but to fulfil." He did not destroy Judaism by leading an army against their city and temple; but he did destroy it, by superseding the whole economy. He and his Apostles did *destroy* it, by announcing the divine will that it should *vanish away*; by foretelling its doom, and giving it up to the hands of its enemies, as no longer, either in church or state, an object of divine complacency or divine protection. Must I quote St Paul, to prove that "he taketh away the first that he may establish the second"—"Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away"—"There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before." And did not the Saviour himself say, "there shall not

be left here one stone upon another," &c.? I am at a loss to know how Mr. G. will reconcile these Scriptures with his declaration, "but he destroyed it not," unless he restrict the import of the word *destroyed* to the physical violence employed in its overthrow. Surely he will not deny that its destruction was the subject of many prophecies; and since *prophecy is history*, we want no other proof that Christ did virtually destroy Judaism, both in church and state. Will Mr. G. deny, that both in principle, in fact, and in right, Judaism, as an establishment, was totally abolished by the death of Christ? Into the new dispensation he transferred many of the religious principles of the old, but not one atom of *its secularity*. The Apostle Paul says, "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second from which it appears that God ESTABLISHED it, in a very different way from that in which Mr. G. would have it *established*. But, for my part, I cannot perceive that it needs any further *establishing*, or that we have any right to improve upon the establishment of Christianity, as Christ and his Apostles left it,—or that we can assume such a right, without a high degree of presumption.

But Mr. G. proceeds: "its figures were accomplished—its walls were extended into one universal fold of Jew and Gentile; but the establishment sank not, save in the general ruin of the country" That is enough—it *did* sink; it sank by the decree of Providence—it sank by the withdrawal of the divine sanction—it sank by the decrees of prophecy, which, alone, with Mr. G., is a conclusive authority. This, I confess, looks very much like *dissolving the establishment*; yet he says of the Jewish Church, "Christ dissolved it not" Have the Jews ever since possessed any established church united with the state; or can it be said, that the principle of an alliance between church and state was transferred by Christ to Christianity; and that his universal fold of Jew and Gentile was ever placed by him or his Apostles under the authority of any Jewish or Gentile civil governor, or in any legislative connection with Judea, or any other country? But he admits, that the Jewish establishment did sink in the general ruin of the country; which, I conceive, is tantamount to its being *dissolved* by that same authority which reared it at first, and protected it, till it was superseded by the more perfect and spiritual economy, which consisted exclusively in a kingdom not of this world. Prophets, Apostles, and Christ, all tell us much the same thing, "that the law was a schoolmaster, to bring us unto Christ; but, Christ being come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." "Jerusalem, which is above, is free; which is the mother of us all." "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again; with the yoke of

bondage." But Mr. O. would entangle us again, under the Gospel, with that very yoke of an established church, which was found so oppressive to the people of Israel. The total failure of his attempt to shew that the Jewish establishment was never dissolved, and the ample evidence of the contrary fact, leave us, as yet, without a single scriptural argument in favour of national religious establishments.

Let us now examine his success at more general reasoning. "Not only in Judea, but throughout the world, establishments were universal." Of course, he means the establishments of idolatry. Is it come to this? Must your establishments go a begging to heathen idolatry for their sanction? The one in Judea, which alone could plead a divine sanction, was miraculously introduced, and divinely sustained, till it was, by the same authority, *dissolved*. Yes, I insist upon it, Mr. G., it was totally and for ever abrogated. Church and state were dissolved. A new church set up, without any state-alliance; consequently, as to any divine authority, the whole law became as though it had never existed. Not an iota of it remained in force, except so much, as, by the authority of Christ and his Apostles, was *expressly* transferred; and, therefore, by the same authority, all that was not transferred was repudiated, and, among other matters, your favourite principle of establishments. There is not to be found, in the New Testament, a single pretext for exempting this horn the common dissolution of Judaism. If you insist upon retaining it, how can you shake from your shoulders the whole yoke of Jewish ceremonies, of which this is the first principle? If the whole was abrogated by *the bringing in of a better hope*, then, why this desperate clinging to the beggarly elements of a secular power and a temporal sanction? Surely the Kingdom of Christ stands in no need of such a foundation; otherwise, he would have laid it: and if he has not done so, is not this a sufficient precedent for our rejection of it, and a sufficient sanction to the opposite principle of voluntary churches?

Again he says, "not a syllable was uttered by the preachers of truth, to refute a principle, which, however obvious the error of it may be to some, has been so universal—so apparently sanctioned by Christian doctrine," &c. But, was not a syllable uttered by Peter, Paul, and John? Did not some of them say to the ecclesiastical rulers, "whether it be right, in the sight of God, to hearken unto you," &c.? Did they not openly disregard civil rulers, act without seeking their sanction, and form and regulate churches upon principles, which not only overlook the civil power, but which cannot be preserved where that power is introduced? Did they ever display any anxiety to connect their churches with the civil government of states?

Did they, not, throughout their whole procedure, preserve, and teach the churches to preserve, a dignified independence of human nature, and maintain an exclusive attention to the Saviour's words, "My kingdom is not of this world"—"now is my kingdom not from hence"—"they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword"—"render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God, the things that are God's?" How the practice of these commands comports with the establishment of Christianity by human laws, the coercion of the sword to maintain it, and the supremacy of Caesar over the Church of Christ, I know not. It is one of the problems I do not find solved in any part of these two discourses, or any defences of the Church, which have appeared of late in the *Christian Remembrancer*, *Guardian*, *Observer*, or *British Magazine*. I must, therefore, leave it for the future examination of Mr. G. and his friends.

He will have it, that this principle of an establishment was "sanctioned by Christian doctrine, by the conduct of our Lord and his Apostles, and by the Jewish dispensation; that the Church never entertained a doubt about it, and that the vast majority entertain no doubt about it at present." If any sanction was yielded by Christ and his Apostles to the principle in question, beyond their submission to Judaism, and prior to the death of Christ, yet it is equally clear that, with that event, their submission and their sanction both ceased together. And as soon as Christianity became the new dispensation, and Christian churches were formed under it, all submission to Judaism was withdrawn, and all sanction to the principle of an establishment thenceforth uniformly withheld. He says "the church never entertained a doubt about it." If he mean the Established Church, of course we should not look for doubts from its advocates; if he mean the church, in the extended sense, of all true Christians, we allege that a very considerable proportion of them do entertain very serious doubts, amounting to a rejection of the principle altogether; and if he mean the early church—that is, within the first three hundred years—it is absurd to seek for doubts upon a subject which had never then been broached, and which was as foreign to their thoughts as the re-establishment of Judaism. But, if we find no doubts among them, neither do we find any wishes for it, or any overtures towards it, although the churches multiplied daily, and gave to that age very much the appearance of a victorious one for Christianity. It is quite enough, in this argument, for us to shew, that the principle of establishments was not sanctioned in the first establishment of Christian churches; the burden of proof, that human legislation is compatible with the nature of Christianity in the abstract, and with the principles of Apostolic

church government in particular, lies with our opponent. But he adds, "the vast majority entertain no doubt at present." How he knows that, I cannot divine. Perhaps he has some secret method of ascertaining how many entertain doubts upon this principle. I could quote some authorities of his own church, who greatly fear the extent to which these doubts have spread within the Church itself; but I advise him not to be too confident in the undoubting state of the public mind upon this subject

ARGUMENT III.

But we will pass on to graver matters; and now we arrive at the III. head of his discourse: he thus proceeds, "I have alluded to the Jewish dispensation. That was a national establishment, instituted by God himself." Granted. Established by miracles; which shews, that without them a similar union of church and state ought not to be formed. If human authority is sufficient to settle so momentous a matter, then the miracles which sanctioned the Jewish establishment were superfluous. Let the friends of established churches only procure the same sanction for what they do, as Moses gave to what he did, and we yield. God did establish Judaism; therefore, *we* may establish Christianity. Is this good theology, or sound logic? God did establish Judaism, in connection with the state. God did establish Christianity, but not in any such connection. Shall man presume to form a state-connection with this religion, which God himself has omitted? Is not this putting your hand to the ark? Can there be any pretence for it now, which did not exist, far more forcibly, at the origin of Christianity? Can the Gospel ever be said to need the sanction of any civil power, to give it the force of truth, or secure its success in die world? Can it be shewn, that since the civil power took it under its care, it has advanced at so quick a pace as formerly? Cannot we, on the other hand, prove that the linking of the Gospel-chariot to your state-waggon has made all its wheels drag heavily, sometimes stand still, and not unfrequently sink deep in a quagmire of corruptions? It would, indeed, have been very singular, if God, who formerly took such care to have the principle of an established church laid firmly upon the basis of a civil and temporal sanction, should have taken no such care, supposing it desirable, in reference to the far more glorious, comprehensive, and lasting dispensation of the Gospel.

But let us hear Mr. G. again; for he is fond of dwelling in the region of Judaism. "It was at first a theocracy, Jehovah Vouchsafing to be regarded as their national king: With the accession, however, of Saul, this ceased; and Israel, though spiritually distinguished above other nations, became as they

were, a secular kingdom." This is one of the most extraordinary passages that I ever saw. It would scarcely have escaped the pen of any of those persons of "*common talents and education*," of whom Mr. G. makes mention. "It was at *first* a theocracy." I say it was always a theocracy. "Jehovah vouchsafing to be regarded as their national king." This seems to imply that he condescended to accept that title when they were pleased to bestow it upon him. "With the accession of Saul, this ceased!" Marvellous error! Did God cease to rule?—did he withdraw his divine sanction?—did he rescind his divine law?—did he refuse to go forth with their armies?—did he refuse miracles for their protection?—did he take away his spirit from the prophets, and the glory of the Shekinah from the midst of them?—did he not choose their kings, and make them his vicegerents?—were not the ages which followed the accession of Saul the most splendid, both for the spirit of prophecy and the glory of the nation?—Jehovah no longer their king!—the theocracy at an end!—a secular kingdom, as other nations!—what a string of errors! No, Mr. G., the covenant was never broken—never dissolved, on God's part, and they never ceased to be the nation whom he had chosen for himself, to rule over them, till they rejected the Prince of Peace, whom he had set upon his holy hill of Zion. Then they were cast off: then the theocracy ceased: then they became a secular kingdom, as other nations: not till then. Then their glory, and their temple, and their established church, all fell at once. The theocracy was at an end—the power of the worldly prince in the affairs of the church, ceased—and the Jews became as other nations, or rather, no nation—no church of God, any longer; but yet scattered among all nations, seeking a refuge everywhere, but finding a home nowhere—a people, but not a nation.—"Judaism and Christianity," he says, differed importantly from each other; yet both proceeded from the same God." If so, I ask, was the one less perfect in its principle, constitution, and laws, than the other? If so, then how dare men interfere with the one any more than with the other? It had been no less rebellion against God, to *dissolve* the union of the Jewish Church with the power of the civil magistrate, than it is to *form* that union under the Gospel. The Apostle says, "Moses was faithful in all his house, as a servant; but Christ as a Son, over his own house." Was Christ less faithful towards his house than Moses? And has he left his church in a less perfect state? It is our supreme reverence for the authority of God, the honour of Christ as the Head of the Church, and the integrity and completeness of all his arrangements for its welfare, which impels us to resist the introduction of an authority, which, if it possess a right to add,

may equally assert a right to abolish; and if, at one time, it amends, is liable, at another time, to corrupt the simplicity and purity of the church.

Our author observes, "that principle of duty, which is declared to be good, and just, and right, in a Hebrew monarch, can never be evil, unjust, and inequitable in a Christian ruler." Is he prepared for the consequences of so unguarded and blundering a statement? I hope not. It was a principle of duty, good, just, and right, to enforce the observance of the divine law by the sword. Does Mr. G. believe that Christian magistrates may righteously do the same? Would he have sabbath-breakers—blasphemers—adulterers—treated by the Christian magistrate as by the Jewish magistrate? If not, why not? If all the principles of duty, good, just, and right, in a Hebrew monarch, are equally so in a Christian ruler, then he must wish to see the law of God enforced under the Gospel, by the same awful sanctions as under Judaism. But, for the credit of his benevolence and Christian pity, I firmly believe he wishes no such thing. And that, in consequence, his transference of the rule of duty from a Jewish prince to a Christian one, was an entire oversight of the different circumstances in which Providence places the different parties. The rule of duty for a Jewish prince was absolute obedience to the will of God, and to those divine laws which were restricted to that single nation. But those rules of duty have never been laid upon Christian princes, therefore, I conclude it would be "unjust and inequitable" in any Christian ruler to enforce them upon his subjects, and obviously cruel and unchristian to enforce any of them by the same awful sanctions.

He adds, "it is dangerous to speak lightly of a faith, whose code was the eternal moral law of heaven, and whose spirit was the supreme motive of a responsible creature's action." I am not aware that any objectors to church establishments do so; and, notwithstanding the impenetrable obscurity of the above sentence, and the apparent anxiety of the author to rekindle in our breast a flame of love for Judaism, I am constrained to bow to that authority which says, "ye are not under the law, but under grace." And Mr. G. must allow me to add, that it is far more common, and far more injurious, to plead for the detention of the abrogated principle of the Jewish establishment, than it is to affirm any thing derogatory to the honour of that system which once possessed, but no longer retains, the divine sanction.

The reader will think it is now manifest, from all we have seen, that churchmen must be at their wits' end, when they resort to abrogated Judaism, for their only scriptural argument in favour of establishments—an argument which turns

out to be a mere fanciful analogy, and an analogy derived from that which no longer exists. To plead rescinded principles, is like pleading repealed laws. It was once the will of God that his church should be identical with a particular nation, and that all his laws should be enforced by the sword. Is it not enough to satisfy all reasonable men, that God has himself rescinded that constitution, and introduced another, which admits no Such alliance, and which works by love, instead of coercion?

Nimium ipse est durus: præter æquumque et bonum:
 Et errat longè meâ quidem sentiâ,
 Qui imperium credat gravius esse aut stabilius,
 Vi quod fit, quam illud quod amicitia adjungitur.
 Malo coactus qui suum officium facit,
 Dum id rescitum iri credit, tantisper cavet:
 Si sperat fore clam, rursus ad ingenium redit
 Ille quem beneficio adjungas ex animo facit:
 Studet par referre, præsens absensque idem erit.

TER. *Adel.*

There is in the Gospel “an annulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.” “The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.” None but Jehovah himself can imitate the principle of Judaism. Away, then, with all your analogies; Christ’s Chinch owns no head but himself—no law but the New Testament—no sword but the sword of the Spirit—no bulwarks but his presence—no principle for the maintenance of its ministers but the love of his people, and the care of his Providence.

But, again, the very attempt to imitate the principle of the Jewish establishment tends directly to destroy the purpose of Christ, in selecting a spiritual people, by incorporating nations into Christian churches. Men born in a certain kingdom are constituted members of the Established Christian Church, simply because they are subjects of a certain king. Thus a principle of membership is introduced in direct contravention to that laid down by Christ, and everywhere practised by his Apostles. Establishments annihilate the very first principle of Christian fellowship, and carnalize the Church of Christ, by annulling that separation, required in “a peculiar people—a chosen generation—a holy nation,” and enforced in such scriptures as these, “come out, and be separate, and touch not the unclean.” “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?—what communion hath light with darkness?—what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” &c. But in an established church, an infidel king may settle its affairs, irreligious counsellors may frame its constitution, unconverted legislators may prescribe its formularies, unbelieving patrons may dispose of its pulpits, and worldly-minded prelates may

lord it over God's heritage; yet Christ has said, "it shall not be so among you." All this is the fruit of the Jewish principle of our Established Church, imitated by the clumsy hand of mortals.

But, again, the very nerve of our Established Church is a legally enforced maintenance for the ministers of the Gospel; and, without fearing the force of Mr. G.'s argument from Ezekiel's vision, I will meet the advocates of tithes upon their favourite ground of divine right. Judaism had its tithes; Christianity must have them, too. If so, why did not he, who established the second covenant, allot to his ministers "a stated subsistence from the land?" The reason is, because he could not sanction the principle of coercion in that church, where love was to be the bond of perfectness and faith, to supply the place of sight. But it appears, that not only does our establishment introduce the principle of a stated subsistence from the land, but carries that principle considerably beyond the example of Moses. God gave the Levites and Priests a settled maintenance; but then, he commanded the people to pay it out of reverence to his authority, and not the priest to take it, whether the people were willing or unwilling. It was his law that tithes should be paid, but, as in the case of Abraham and Melchisedec, where the tithe was a voluntary offering, so, under the law, it was required to be presented *willingly*, and from the fear of God. Will Mr. G. or any other advocate of the Established Church, point out in the law of Moses any commission to *exact* the tithes? Can they shew us a case of any defaulter being prosecuted?—of any son of Aston going to distrain for non-payment? Was it not left with their own conscience to obey or refuse, and had the prince or civil magistrate any right to punish those who withheld what the law required? If there was any punishment for the robber of God, and his sanctuary, and his minister, God himself appears to have kept this power in his own hand. It was put to them, "honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase." Malachi says, "ye have robbed me, even this whole nation—in tithes and offerings: *bring* ye all the tithes into the storehouse, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not ppur you out a blessing," &c. All this gives a very different aspect, even to Jewish tithes, from that which they have assumed for the maintenance of Christ's ministers. All the *coercion*, is under the Gospel dispensation. It was, I believe, unknown under the law. Not a case of prosecution for non-payment is ever mentioned. The divine law upon the subject was left to conscience alone. Frequent failures and non-compliances are alleged against them; but the threatenings are always those of divine judgments, without any

permission to the priest to seize what God had given them, or to call in the civil power to procure it for them. Such, at least, is the opinion of the learned Michaelis. He says, "THE PAYMENT, AND THE APPRECIATION OF THEM, HE LEFT TO THEIR CONSCIENCES, WITHOUT SUBJECTING THEM TO JUDICIAL OR SACERDOTAL VISITATIONS. *The conscientious accuracy of the people, with respect to the second tithe, he secured merely by the declaration which they made every three years before God.*"* What, then, becomes even of that flimsy pretence, derived from Judaism, for compelling all men to pay tithes for the support of Christian ministers? The stated subsistence from the land, enforced by the terrors of the sword, and frequently distrained for, to the cruel oppression of the people, can, in no way, be sanctioned either from the New Testament or the Old. It has not the shadow of support from the analogy of repealed laws. What would Paul have said to a forced maintenance?—the Apostle, who would not even accept the free-will offerings of some, "lest he should make the Gospel of non-effect;" but refused "to be chargeable unto any and added, "no man shall stop me of this boasting in the regions of Achaia." Moreover, when they took *wages*, as they called them, they took them exclusively of the church, and these offered voluntarily, and not imposed as a rate. The Apostles would all have disdained, even as Jews, such a system of maintenance as the established clergy have adopted. How those, who live by a tithe, extorted from the believing and unbelieving population, exclusively by the terror of the laws, will hold up their heads in the presence of those Apostles, I am utterly at a loss to conceive. Even the worldly-minded sons of Aaron never lived by so base a principle.

I think I have now said quite as much as may be necessary, and more than maybe agreeable, but no more than is true, upon the argument from Judaism for the support of Christian ministers by tithes. This oft tried analogy is found, in the hands of Mr. G., and all who use it, to be utterly unmanageable, imperfect, and inconclusive; the whole tendency of it is adverse to the letter of the ancient law, and still more obviously so to the spirit of the New Testament; for love, not the sword, is the fulfilling of the law Christ has ordained—that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, and not of the law; but the clergy of Mr. G.'s church live neither of the principle of the Gospel, nor of the law.

Having now searched in vain in the Jewish economy for any sanction to an established church, and to tithes, we shall see what is to be learned upon the subject from some other quarters

* Smith's Michaelis, vol. iii. p. 145.

still farther a-field. To be sure, heathen princes are rather dubious authorities for a Christian argument; but, in the extreme exigency of the case, they may be thought better than none at all. So, at least, Mr. G. deems; and, therefore, of these notable supporters of national establishments he marshals a formidable host. Thus they are set in battle array against all squeamish objectors to secular princes settling the affairs of the Church, and all exclusive adherents to the New Testament. "*But we are not limited to Judaism.*" That were sad, indeed! I cannot see that we have any thing at all to do with it. But he proceeds: "for, not to dwell upon the cases of heathen princes, Cyrus and Artaxerxes, who were actuated by the Holy Spirit in the restoration of the fallen church." It is well, he says, "not to dwell for, if he had, he would have found the dwelling very uncomfortable, very insecure, and, probably, the whole a barren speculation. So he passes on: "what does the striking example of Nineveh present, when a Pagan monarch, alarmed at the threatened judgment of Jehovah, humbled his whole people by the command of a general fast, and thereby suspended the vengeance hovering over a guilty city." This is a discovery in the argument worthy of a red letter or a prebendal stall. A new establishment, I suppose, at Nineveh! or Nineveh, at least, an adjunct to the national church of the Israelites—Cyrus, Artaxerxes, Nebuchadnezzar, and nobody knows who, settling the affairs of the church, or founding new churches. It is a long excursion to be sure; but arguments for established churches are rarities; and, therefore, no wonder we have to go to the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh to dig them out. I wonder much who constituted the hierarchy of Nineveh?—whether the priests and prophets had any regular support allotted to them from the land?—whether they had any church historians in those days? What a pity it is that the model of the church establishment at Nineveh has not been preserved! How sad to think that it so soon fell into corruption and decay, and was scarcely erected, before the prophet Nahum was sent with the *burden of Nineveh*, to say, "he will make an utter end—there is one come out of thee that imagineth evil against the Lord, a wicked counsellor." (Nahum, i. 11.) I should not wonder if Mr. G. finds there some enemy to the Established Church; but so it was—there came an utter *end* to poor Nineveh and its establishment. How grievous to think that the destruction has been so complete, that no man can find where the city stood! Else the ecclesiastical antiquaries might dispatch Mr. G. to dig out from its ruins some fragments of its churches, and, perchance, to catch a glimpse of some mouldering inscriptions, that might ascertain the nature of its hierarchy, and determine the disputed question, whether the clergy were

allowed to coerce a maintenance from the land? But it is all gone; and with it, as far as I can see, goes the argument of our author.

Surely nothing but a most desperate necessity could have driven him to this extravagancy of setting up the King of Nineveh, under the direction of an immediate message from God, as an example for Christian princes; none of whom have any such directions as Jonah gave to the King of Nineveh, and, consequently, can plead no such authority for their interference. Let them shew any analagous message from heaven, to settle the affairs of the Christian Church, and we bow submissively at once. But, let not general obligations be inferred from special cases; otherwise we shall be driven into all manner of absurdities. We must have better arguments than these to induce us to allow any civil governor to settle the affairs of the church. We must have clearer cases, and cases applicable to Gospel times, before we can abandon voluntary churches, which are Apostolic in their principle, for established ones, which are not so. All the churches of the New Testament were voluntary, and received Apostolic sanction. Established churches are not voluntary—are not Apostolic, but directly militate against those that are. All the cases referred to by Mr. G., as Cyrus, Artaxerxes, the King of Nineveh, and I know not who besides, involve, as he himself admits, inspiration and miracle: as soon as the same foundation can be laid for Christian establishments, our argument will be at an end. Miracle and inspiration attended the establishment of voluntary churches, and imparted to them an authority, of which all national establishments of Christianity have been destitute.

ARGUMENT IV.

Mr. G.'s fourth argument is thus stated: "I adduce, on the same side, the judgment of the universal church." As far as I am able to judge, this is an argument quite inconsistent from, the pen of a Protestant divine, and quite powerless against Protestant dissenters. I feel little disposition to intermeddle with it further, though I take it to be my duty, respectfully to admonish him, for the sake of our common Protestantism, to leave this appeal entirely to Roman Catholics, and confine himself to the Bible—the Bible alone. An author, whom he is bound to respect, says, "the dispute is one of those which are to be decided by scriptural authority alone." (Garbett's Discourses, page 3.) In the hands of which authority I Leave his fourth argument.

ARGUMENT V.

I pass on now to his fifth, "arising from Christian duty."

“Every man, be he ruler or subject, who is converted to the faith, is bound to strengthen his brethren.” The sum of all that is advanced under this argument amounts to this—that a Christian king, as well as a Christian private man, is bound to do his Christian duty; to which I subscribe fully, but require that the Christian duty of kings be, at least, as clearly defined, and as expressly taught from Scripture, as the Christian duty of a private man. I beg leave to state further, that the Christian duty of kings, and the Christian duty of their subjects, should never interfere with each other. Kings are not enjoined, any where in the Bible to establish the Church of Christ; therefore, it cannot be their duty to do so. For positive duty, let us have, at least, positive law—clear example—or inevitable inference; of which Mr. G. quotes neither. I maintain, if it had been the Christian duty of kings to establish the Church of Christ by their authority, and maintain it by the sword, that *ultima ratio* of kings, this duty would have been expressly defined or sustained by precedent, or involved in some principle of the Gospel dispensation. But no such reason for it is pleaded by our author. His whole reasoning under this head proceeds upon the assumption, that there is no medium for the duty of pious kings between the principle of an established church and a total disregard to Christianity. They must either sustain it by their sword, or become infidels; but, surely pious kings might promote the Christian cause, without assuming a legislative power in the church, and without levying tithes for the support of its ministers—powers which they cannot arrogate, without invading the province of Christ himself, outraging the peaceful spirit of the Gospel, and interfering with the rights of conscience. All that Mr. G. alleges under this head, is either derived again from the pious kings of Israel, or our young King Edward VI.—ceases which minister no support to his argument, because they do not define authoritatively what is the Christian duty of Christian princes, nor shew that their duty extends properly to the legal establishment of Christ’s Church. Unless, therefore, the case of Jewish princes had been scripturally set up as a pattern for Christian princes, or the conduct of Edward VI. had received the stamp of inspired approbation, the line of duty could not be determined by a reference to such facts. All other points of Christian duty are explained in the New Testament with sufficient precision; this is never noticed, and can, therefore, be no duty; otherwise the rule of duty is defective in a point which concerns the very nature and the universal welfare of Christ’s kingdom. Rather than infer any thing so discreditable to the Christian revelation, I am constrained to infer, painful as it is, that Mr. G.’s fifth argument is irrelevant and baseless.

Even our author himself seems to have little confidence in its validity; for, by one fatal sentence which has escaped him, he completely nullifies the force of all that he had previously urged. At page 10 he says, "it is, indeed, melancholy to reflect how often rulers and legislators have abused the principle here contended for, *and built upon it a fabric subversive of every right of God and man.*" Not to press him severely upon this sentence, let it only be observed that this expression, "how often," really means, in plain English, *almost always*; and even where the fabric, built upon this principle, has not been *subversive of every right of God and man*, it has uniformly been *subversive*, and is so at the present moment, even in England, of many of the rights both of God and man. What a *questionable*, not to say *pestilent*, principle must that be, which, in point of fact, has always proved subversive of some divine and human rights, and almost always *of every right!* Can any partial advantages, resulting from this principle in a few cases, prove a compensation for its frequent and extensive trespasses upon the rights of God and man? Surely the possibility of such abuse, and especially the admitted fact of its *reality, frequency, and extent*, may well justify the doubts which we entertain of its lawfulness, and induce its patrons to re-consider the consistency and expediency of combining such a principle with the Gospel and Church of Christ.

Evidently aware of the possible inferences which his readers might draw from this admission, Mr. G. thus endeavours to anticipate and prevent them. "But the inference drawn from it against establishments is not allowable, unless it be also allowable to argue against Christianity, from the *few* that have faithfully received it, compared with the *many*, of every class, that have held it in unrighteousness. Has not the Gospel itself been the perverted instrument of the misery here deplored? Is, then, the Gospel no longer glad tidings to a fallen world?" Our author is peculiarly prone to analogical reasoning; but his success in it has hitherto been far from distinguished. What parallel there can be in these two cases I am at a loss to understand. In the majority of instances, in an immense majority of instances, kings have, by establishments, subverted every right of God and man. It is a question, whether they ever did any good to their subjects by these establishments, which would not have been done without them. Now, Christianity, on the other, hand, has been a blessing to all those that have faithfully received it; but, though it has been no blessing to the many who have not received it, yet it has subverted none of their rights. Are the cases, therefore, parallel? Might Christianity be condemned by the same argument which condemns establishments, when the one has proved the source of unmixed good, the other,

upon Mr. G.'s own shewing, of extensive evil, and evil of a most malignant character, alleviated only by some partial and occasional good? But his analogical reasoning totally fails, when it is remembered that Christianity is a *divine institution*; establishments are *human institutions*. The Gospel must not be tried by our judgment of its effects, but must stand exclusively on the authority of its divine origin. The same thing is not to be said of national church establishments—they are human institutions, and are to be tried by their effects. Mr. G. seems aware that, in the majority of cases, they have been productive of the most deplorable results. Here, then, by the test of expediency, the principle is shewn to have produced more evil than good, and ought, therefore, to be abandoned by all friends of mankind, and all fair and candid reasoners. The doctrine of expediency, or the trial of any thing by its effects, is *applicable* to all that originates with *man*, but wholly *inapplicable* to whatever originates with *God*—not because the doctrine of expediency would condemn any thing that he has done, if properly applied, but because we are utterly incapable of applying it on so vast a scale as his works and ways require.

Mr. G. proceeds: "but it is contended, that if one government has this right, all governments have it; and that, therefore, Heathen magistrates are bound to promote Heathenism. Did this follow," he says, "it would be no answer to the argument." (p. 11.) That would be strange, indeed. If a principle, applying to human institutions throughout the whole world, would justify, among three-fourths, or more, of the population, systems of idolatry, and vindicate rulers in upholding such systems, and their people in submitting to them, shall it not be denominated a principle more injurious to mankind than otherwise? Shall the whole mass of wickedness and corruption, which it would thus be made to justify, be preserved for the sake of the modicum of good, which, in one or two cases, is supposed to flow from it; and which, to the ocean of evil, becomes as the drop of a bucket? Would it not, by shewing that the argument proved too much, shew that it was good for nothing? If it required us to admit, that Christ and his Apostles were guilty of invading the lawful province of the civil magistrate, who had established the national religion—would it not involve a consequence from which every Christian should shrink? If the argument requires us to admit that a Heathen magistrate ought to maintain Heathenism—that a Papal magistrate may, lawfully before God, establish the church by the sword, and doom heretics to death—does it not prove too much? Here we should be involved in the absurdity, which Mr. G. seems not to have anticipated, of a ruler's duty and a Christian's duty in direct conflict. How will Mr. G. remove this difficulty?

If the governor may lawfully maintain over all his subjects his own religion, and that be Heathenish, or Popish, how is a Christian subject—how is a Christian *minister*, to demean himself toward such an establishment? I apprehend a Christian man's duty, and the lawfulness of a Heathen or Popish national establishment, cannot be made to harmonize. They did not harmonize in the days of the Apostles, for *they* refused submission to the rulers of national establishments, even the Jewish; and, in defiance of their authority to maintain the national religion, admitted by Mr. G., proceeded in their Christian duty of preaching the Gospel, and establishing voluntary churches, in the face of all perils and all objections. They treated this pretended right of the civil magistrate with no respect. They could not have considered it lawful for the magistrate to interfere with religion, otherwise they would not have interfered with the magistrate's lawful province. I do not see how the general principle of the *lawfulness* of all national establishments of religion can be maintained, without implicating the Apostles of Jesus Christ in the sin of rebellion against the civil power. The moral lawfulness of such establishments must be abandoned, or the conduct of the first teachers of Christianity must be condemned. He may take either side of this alternative; but must, as I conceive, take one. I am aware that it has been attempted, by many writers on Mr. G.'s side, to limit the right of the civil magistrate in the establishment of a national religion—to Christianity. He has a right, they maintain, to establish Christianity; but nothing else. Thus Mr. G. says, "it can never be duty to do that which is evil in itself, as the promotion of false religion is." But this does not meet the rule of duty for a Heathen, Mohammedan, or Popish prince: it does not shew us whence originates the exclusive right of the *Christian* prince to establish *his* religion; and how the other princes lose their right to do the same with their religion. If one prince has such a right, surely all have it—if they have it in virtue of their civil station, and because it pertains to their legal or legislative province, naturally, reasonably, and *jure divino*; then, of course, it is a universal right. But if kings and rulers have it not in virtue of their civil station, and if it forms no part of their lawful province—then, of course, it attaches to them in virtue of becoming believers in Christianity; and I see that, after Milner and others, Mr. G. limits the right to *Christian rulers*. I may, therefore, reasonably call upon him to shew *how*, and by what law or principle, human or divine, they thus acquire it. Such a right, restricted to Christian rulers, to settle the affairs of the Christian Church, being a superaddition to the ordinary rights of kings and governments, would require an express divine warrant. The advocates of

this doctrine must shew nothing less than heaven's own patent for carrying the authority of kings, in this one particular case, beyond the universal limit of their authority. Such a patent of right is not conferred upon them by any part of the New Testament, and as little by the Old. Does it arise out of their own conversion?—and is no prince to legislate for religion, but in virtue of being a true Christian? Then this, again, involves us in inextricable difficulties: for how few, in this case, ever possessed the right! And if it attaches to all kings who are only nominally Christians, then how shall we condemn them for their establishments of Popery, and how shall we dare, without incurring the guilt of rebellion, either to impeach such establishments, or withhold submission when we live under them? Mr. G., and many others, think to cut this Gordian knot by alleging that “it never can be a duty to do that which is evil in itself.”—True; but, then, who is to be the final judge of the evil? Is each prince, or each subject's private conscience, to claim this prerogative? It must rest somewhere, and a judge of what is evil in itself must be selected by those who advocate this principle. If each private conscience is the judge of what is evil in the establishment set up, this would overthrow the principle advocated, and reduce it to an utter nullity; but if the prince is constituted the sole judge of what is good, and what is his duty, he would be thereby empowered to establish what he thought truth, and this might be Heathenism or Popery: and thus it would be his “duty to do that which is evil in itself.” If it is a ruler's duty in the abstract to select and maintain a religion for his people, and he selects what he judges to be the best, he does his duty; but he establishes and enforces upon them a false religion; and all who resist it, and dissent, reject the lawful power. This is the inevitable consequence of admitting that Caesar may lawfully establish religion—that is, interfere with the things that are God's. But if the appeal is again made to the inspired standard of good and evil, *that* is utterly silent upon the question of Christian establishments, and affords neither prince nor people any authority to establish, by human law, any one form or doctrine of Christianity. Thus Christian princes would be saddled with a duty said to be peculiar to them, but for which they can find neither rule nor precedent in the Christian revelation. This appears to me very much like reducing their duty to no duty at all.

We read again, “whatsoever is not of faith, is sin then I am quite sure the establishment of Christianity by the civil power is *not of faith*; for we may defy all the ecclesiastics of Christendom to find a single command involving it. Faith can have no existence without a divine warrant It must obey a precept—trust a promise—or believe a doctrine; but under

none of these forms does the state-establishment of Christianity appear, consequently, faith can have nothing to do with it. A national establishment is not of faith, for revelation is silent respecting it; therefore it is not of faith, and must be sin, because "*whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*" Sol cordially and heartily believe. Mr. Scott, the excellent commentator, says, in contradiction to our author, "if no way of defending establishments can be devised, which would not, if fairly applied, defend the establishment of Popery—of Mahometanism, or Pagan idolatry, by the authority of kings and rulers, *I must acknowledge the case to be desperate.* Yet, if it be the right of kings and rulers to prescribe the creed and manner of worship, with its appendages, to their subjects, and to enforce their concurrence, it must be equally *the right of all kings*; for they all think, or profess to think, their own religion to be the true religion. Again, if it be the duty of kings and rulers to prescribe these things to their subjects, it is equally the duty of all kings, and for the same reason. This is the *palladium* of those who oppose establishments; and how shall we deprive them of it?" How, indeed?—that has never yet been shewn. Thus it seems the venerable commentator had studied this subject more closely and fairly than Mr. G.; and before he again ventures to preach and publish upon it, I recommend him to read, and *endeavour* to answer, the dispassionate and invincible arguments contained in the fourth book of "Protestant Nonconformity," by Mr. Gonder.

Mr. G. further says, "of establishments defended by unchristian means, there is no controversy then, surely, we shall soon shake hands. Withdraw only your *unchristian* means, and where would be your establishment? Yet, tell us who is to be the judge of Christian and unchristian means? I suppose no establishment in Christendom will admit that it is defended by means of the latter class. To what, then, shall we appeal, in order to distinguish *Christian* from *unchristian* means? If Mr. G. will appeal to, and abide by, the letter and the spirit of Christianity, I will pledge myself to prove that his establishment is defended by *unchristian* means, and that there ought to be no longer any controversy upon the subject. *Christian* means must be such as were used and sanctioned by Christ or his Apostles; *unchristian*, such as they never used—such as are abhorrent from their spirit. Tithes are unchristian means; acts of uniformity are unchristian means; distraints for tithes and church-rates are unchristian means; lordship over God's heritage—secular legislators—a regal human head of the church—civil penalties for nonconformity—are unchristian means. Deny it in the face of Christianity, if you can. Your establishment, the very best in Christendom, I admit, is defended,

and defended *only* by unchristian means. Take away tithes—rates—secular legislation—the supremacy of the king, and your establishment is at an end. You know—we all know—that the sheet-anchor of the Established Church consists exclusively of human power—the terror of the sword—the enforcement of tithes;—slip this anchor, and your vessel is instantly wrecked. Thus I call upon you, from your own admission, to give up an establishment, which is defended by unchristian means.

Our author next expatiates upon the duty of every one to bring the Gospel into contact with every sinner. I can assure him that, upon this point, I have no controversy with him. But he should have shewn that the performance of this duty inevitably required legislative authority to effect it I conceive, the duty arises out of the Gospel itself, and must be restricted, in its discharge, to such means and instruments as the Gospel sanctions. The duty unquestionably respects rich men—great men—rulers and kings; but by no means involves the exercise of their official power. Christianity admits the use of none but *moral influences* in bringing the Gospel into contact with every sinner. In ministering these influences, no exercise of human legislation is required, and no violation of any moral principle or natural right must be tolerated. Now it is a violation of several Christian precepts, to employ the sword in the maintenance and promotion of the Gospel of peace. Coercion, in every degree, is hostile to the spirit and letter of Christianity. But national establishments cannot be maintained without such coercion; if, therefore, no man is warranted to employ coercion for the support of Christianity, the moral precepts of the Gospel are violated by the legal support on which established churches rest, and they ought not to be maintained. Moreover, no man, on account of his civil station, possesses any right to interfere with the constitution, the worship, and the discipline of Christ's Church. Worldly and carnal legislators ought especially to be excluded from such a power. The moment a prince or civil government oversteps this limit, and assumes what belongs to the Divine Head, or to the spiritual body alone, it trenches upon the things that are God's, violates the rights of conscience, and invests the Gospel with carnal weapons.

Our author speaks of the Church, at page 14, "as identical with the constitution of the land, and with the eternal interests of our fellow-subjects." For a church to be identical with the civil constitution, is precisely the same as saying Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of this world: his ministers hereby make common cause with princes, legislators, shields and swords.—"*Identical with the constitution!*" Would Jesus Christ approve of this identification? Is not this rendering unto Cassar the things that are God's? At page 15 he speaks of "the

church which the wisdom of martyrs has conveyed to us, cleansed and sanctified through the instrumentality of the sufferings and death." First, "a church conveyed to us"—what that is, I cannot tell. The Seventeenth Article dehnen the church "a congregation of faithful men—is that what the martyrs conveyed to ns? Were they cleansed and sanctified by the blood of the martyrs? *How* was this *congregation* conveyed to us, and of whom does it consist? Does the church spoken of consist in the formularies and creeds? I cannot determine; for how can formularies and creeds be a church, or how could they be cleansed and sanctified by the sufferings and death of the martyrs? And, if by *church* he means these formularies, creeds, and articles, what need had the martyrs to cleanse and sanctify these, or convey them to us, when Jesus Christ had previously conveyed to us the *Holy Scriptures*; "which are able to make us wise unto salvation?" If by the *church*, which he says was conveyed to us, is meant the *clergy*, then I cannot understand how they ever were cleansed and sanctified by the suffering and death of martyrs. And, if by *church* he only means the body of Christian doctrine contained in the Word of God, then, I am quite sure this never needed, and never received any sanctification by the sufferings of martyrs. I am, therefore, here quite at a loss to understand what he can possibly mean by the word *church*. He says, at page 49, "*the Church of England is the Protestant Christian nation of England*:"—is this what was conveyed to us? Was this Cleansed and sanctified by the sufferings of the martyrs? If it was, I could almost wish for some more martyrs to cleanse and sanctify it again, for it stands in deplorable need of such another purification. He chides a prevalent error in page 19, thus: how customary is it to speak of the *clergy* as if they alone were *the church*!—whereas, they are no more the church, in any proper sense of the word, than the people." Tertullian, however, says, "ubi tres Ecclesia est licet Laici." So the church must consist of clergy and people; and this must be, after all, what the sufferings and death of the martyrs sanctified, and what has been conveyed to us. The sentence, however, which has called forth these remarks, must either be convicted of containing no distinct idea, or such an one as ought only to have come from the pen of a Papist. My good opinion of Mr. G. forbids me to attach any such idea to him, as this view of it would seem to imply; and his readers, with me, will, therefore, charitably infer, that at this point he gave his understanding a holiday.

λοξων ες διεξοδους επων.

Melliti verborum globuli.

I have now noticed all that is argumentative in his first discourse; and, though I could point out many other passages inconsistent with, sound doctrine and sound sense, I must release myself from the obligation of noticing all his errors, and be content to animadvert only on such as are of glaring magnitude and pernicious consequences.

DISCOURSE II.

Is entitled “*of the expediency and benefits of the English Establishment.*” Here he commences by recapitulating the argumentative exploits of the preceding discourse; such as the example of the Jewish Church—the conformity of Christ and his Apostles—the prophetic emblems of Ezekiel, &c.; together with the universality and identity of obligation upon rulers, as well as people. The worth of these arguments the reader is now prepared to appreciate, since it has been shewn, that Judaism was abolished by divine authority; that Christ and his Apostles conformed to it only whilst it was divinely authorized; that, after his death, they acted in direct opposition to the principle of establishments; that the declarations of prophecy give no countenance to the introduction of secular power into Christian churches; that prophetic emblems must not be made realities, and are too obscure to permit any satisfactory argument upon this subject; that prophecy conveys no necessary sanction of what it predicts; and that the argument of duty and obligation, in all orders, to promote the Gospel, may be fully complied with, without such interference as is implied in the *ultima ratio* of kings. Several of his arguments I have answered by the *reductio ad absurdum*; and the whole sum, taken together, does not possess the weight of a feather against the letter and the spirit of the New Testament, which *both* authenticate to us the *principle of voluntary churches*. In short, I have shewn that the precepts of the New Testament cannot be complied with, except in such churches as are voluntary, and that many of those precepts are necessarily violated by every national establishment.

EXPEDIENCY OF ESTABLISHMENTS.

He next enters upon the slippery question of *expediency*. Let us, therefore, calmly and respectfully hear what he has to advance upon this doctrine; premising, however, that if the preponderance of good results were as clearly in favour of the Church Establishment, as the preponderating evil results are

clearly against it, the question of scriptural authority would still remain untouched. Established churches would still lack New Testament sanction, which voluntary churches enjoy, and the enterprize of proving them *scriptural* would still be hopeless. Mr. G. shall, however, if he pleases, try his hand at the argument from expediency.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

He says, "but the arguments for the lawfulness of establishments are of a kind to include the *expediency*, and humanly speaking, *the necessity of them; and it is in theory alone that these considerations can be severed me from another.*" That is most extraordinary. Not content to tread in Dr. Paley's steps, he advances to a deed of far higher renown, even to shew, *humanly speaking*, the *necessity of establishments*. Necessity to what? Necessity to states, or necessity to Christianity? Had he lived in Paul and Peter's days, he would, I suppose, have taught them, that they could not move a step without an establishment. It was *necessary*, absolutely *necessary*, for Christianity to be established by law, and there is an end of it. However, without any establishment, they contrived to preserve Christianity pure and vigorous, to spread the Gospel to an unparalleled extent, and to bring in innumerable converts to the church. Mr. G. says, "*it is in theory alone that the expediency and necessity of an establishment can be severed.*" Why not in practice, he fails to state. Thus an establishment might, all things considered, possibly be expedient; but, yet, it is neither necessary to the being of states, nor to the being of Christianity. Though the expediency of such an institution might commend itself to *our* very imperfect views of expediency, still it might not be necessary to set up an establishment, because it might appear, in its principles, inevitably to interfere with the principles of the New Testament churches. One thing, however, is certain, according to our author's hypothesis, that if establishments cannot be shewn to be expedient, they must be unnecessary; and if they cannot be shewn to be necessary, they must be inexpedient; for, he says, these two things are inseparable in practice. But, if the Apostles had considered them necessary, they would have said so, and not have left us to judge of them by the very unsatisfactory test of expediency; ana, on the other hand, if they had deemed them expedient, they would not have left us to doubt of their necessity.

After alluding to voluntary religious associations in a very partial and unjust manner, he adds, "It is, however, contended, with a force of experimental reasoning, which appears to admit of no adequate reply—that as such effects are, even under the best circumstances, partial, limited, and desultory, they never

did, nor ever can, provide for the preaching and ordinances of salvation, in a degree commensurate with the wants of a whole nation." (p. 17.) This requires no other answer than what is supplied by the history of Christianity, through the three first centuries. The effects, purely voluntary of Christian bodies in our own age and country, though labouring under immense disadvantages, the rapid multiplication of voluntary churches in the presence of that *incubus* upon all our movements—an establishment; the spread of religion throughout various parts of the world, by voluntary societies; the flourishing state of religion in America, where even the youngest settlements enjoy an ampler supply of Christian instruction than numerous parts of England—all contribute to rebut this statement. In his view, a national sanction of religion is alone adequate to the spread of the Gospel. But a national sanction to Christianity by no means implies the establishment of a particular sect of Christians, to the exclusion of all others. And if it did, I would ask, what has the establishment done for the promotion of pure Christianity, either at home or abroad, in any degree comparable with the fruits of the voluntary system? Try it by this test. It has had all the support of the civil power, the monopoly of the seats of learning, royal favour, and an immense revenue for nearly three centuries;—and what have been its effects? Are not vast masses of the people as ignorant as Heathens?—and would not a far larger portion have been sunk in the same ignorance, but for the effects of voluntary associations? The total number of professed Christians under the voluntary system is greater, throughout the kingdom, than of those taught by the Established Church. This is proved by the statistics of the different bodies. But, again—will the actual state of religion in the voluntary churches, compared with the state of religion in the Establishment, satisfy him? He will not, I presume, venture to suspend the question on the state of spiritual religion in the two different classes of churches. He knows that scarce a fifth of the parishes in the Establishment ever hear the Gospel from the pulpit; and that, in the remainder, there is scarce any semblance of spirituality. Here, again, the voluntary system has an unquestionable superiority. But, to try the doctrine of expediency, on behalf of national establishments, *fairly*, we must not confine our views to our own establishment; We must extend our views to all the established churches of Christendom: just as in trying different forms of civil government, to ascertain which is the best for mankind at large. We must not limit our examination of monarchies to a single monarch—he might be an unusually mild and wise one; or, in estimating republics, we must not look exclusively at that which has been the best conducted, but we must contemplate them

generally, and arrive at the results of our comparison by.—as aggregate of results. So, the doctrine of expediency, in reference to national establishments of religion, is to be decided by an appeal to the case at large, and not to the effects of the solitary establishment of England. If this general view of the question does not shew, that such. institutions have almost uniformly been “*subversive of every right of God and man* have been, and still are, the very body-guard of the scarlet lady of Babylon—then all history belies them. But ifj upon a large scale, the results of estabUshments have been decidedly unfavourable both to the purity and extension of the Gospel, then I ask, what becomes of the vaunted doctrine of expediency? It must assuredly fall to the ground, under whatever view, or under whatever fair induction of cases it be examined. The very best establishment is less productive of spiritual results than the opposite system; and, taking all Christian establishments together, from Constantine down to the present-day, they may be shewn to have been as hostilq to the welfare of mankind, as inauspicious to the Kingdom of Christ. Without them persecution could have had no existence in connection with Christianity. Their Protestant defenders, with Mr. G. in their van, will scarcely be able to deny these facts.

ARGUMENT I.—FOR THE EXPEDIENCY OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

But he passes on now to view the Church of England in her membership, constitution, and results. First, he says, “*the Church of England, viewed in her ostensible membership, is the Protestant Christian nation of England.*”—A pretty membership, indeed!! Sixteen millions and a half of people, all members of the Church of England. When they are all viewed in the mess, what an extraordinary *church* do they constitute! With what feelings must the great Head of the Church regard them! I am almost ready to think I can hear him say, “I will spue thee out of my mouth.”

But this comes of making the Church of Christ identical with the nation. Such a church resembles nothing so much as Noah’s ark. This confounding of the church with the world is one of the points on which we affirm the Church of England contravenes the first principle of the Church of Christ The principle of the one is *separation* between the church and the world; the principle of the other is the *identification* of the world with the church. The Jewish Church was a national Church; bnt the principle of the Apostolic churches was *not* national, but *spiritual*. They received, on principle, only such as were spiritual men; their churches, therefore, never could, without an abandonment of their first principle, become, in this

sense, *national*. We challenge the advocates of *national* churches to shew us any pattern of them in the New Testament, or any text of scripture, out of which the principle of their membership can be extracted. Such a church, recognizing such a mixture of members, is called, in sacred scripture, “a synagogue of Satan.” (Rev. iii. 9.) The Rev. Mr. Riland, a minister of the Established Church, appears to view this doctrine in a very different light from our author. He, with dissenters in general, considers the principle of national church membership a disgrace, and a violation of the letter and spirit of the New Testament. He says, “these inconsistencies refer to the indiscriminate and gregarious manner in which the members of a national church—gathering, as a matter of course, within its fold the very dregs and refuse of mankind, both socially and spiritually—are addressed in our services. *All* sponsors are believers; *all* the baptized are regenerate; *all* the confirmed are forgiven; *all* the catechumens elect; *all* kings, religious; *all* the dead subjects of thankfulness—to the total oblivion of the present and eternal distinction between the saved and the lost. The consequence glares and blazes in the feelings of self-satisfaction which our poor deluded victims enjoy, as supposing all their sins to be blotted out—not by having boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, by *that* new and living way—but as obeying the demands of the church; and in such demands, seeing nothing to disturb a guilty, nor to soothe a penitent, mind: I mean, seeing nothing of this with such *distinctness*, as would be the case, if liturgical language were as clear, cautionary, and guarded, as we adopt in protecting our worldly interests.”*

We next come to a very singular remonstrance: he says, “how customary is it to speak of the clergy as if they alone were the church!” But, with whom is this common? Certainly, with the clergy themselves; not with dissenters. This is an error against which we continually protest, as anti-scriptural—as destructive of the authenticated rights of the people of God, who are put in trust, by the divine Head of the Church, with the administration of its discipline, and with the choice of its own officers. Can the injunctions laid upon Christian churches by the Apostolical epistles be obeyed by the members of the Establishment? Are they not robbed of every vestige of their ancient and scriptural rights? And do they not become mere passive instruments in the hands of the Parliament, the King, and the clergy? The Church, as a spiritual community, is utterly powerless. The civil authority could transform the Church into Roman Catholic—could alter its

* Errors of Romanism, p. 70.

doctrines and creeds, with all its principles and laws, tomorrow. In the civil state this power is exclusively vested, and the people have no constitutional right to resist. Just as once the same sovereign power turned it from Popish to Protestant, from Protestant to Popish, and from Popish to Protestant back again. These are the fruits of allowing the prince a right to settle the affairs of the church. *The Church of Christ* is the only authorized conservator of the word and ordinances: and to it is committed the duty of propagating through the world the pure Gospel, the laws, and ordinances of Christ, without appealing to civil authority to determine what these really are. The Church of England makes the church and the nation identical. Mr. G. urgently pleads for the same thing, and insists that the nation, *as a nation*, constitutes the Church of Christ in this realm, and glories in that very fact; out of which, it is abundantly manifest, all the corruptions of his church, and every other national church, have arisen. And this he does in the face of our Lord's declaration, "*My kingdom is not of this world—now is my kingdom not from hence.*" Is this modest?—is this Christian like?—is this maintaining the spirituality of Christ's kingdom? Where, in all the Church of England, are we to find the practical recognition of its XVII Article, "the Church is a congregation of faithful (*believing*) men?" I cannot find it. Mr. G. cannot shew it. The late writer in the *Christian Guardian* cannot shew it; nobody can shew it,—because, practically, the church is made of this world. The nation is the church, and the church is the nation. There is no separation on the principle of faith—no requisition of a spiritual character to church-membership. Upon the shewing of all defenders of the Church, and it is the verity of the case, the XVII Article is worse than a dead letter—it is a condemnation of the practical principle upon which the Church is founded: All who are born within the British nation—born under the dominion of a secular prince—born within geographical boundaries, are *members of this church*. Is such a principle Christian? Has it any sanction whatever, besides what it pretends to derive from abrogated Judaism—an analogy false in itself, and hostile to every principle of the Christian Church? Where else can they find it, but in Judaism? Once the principle had the sanction of the divine law; but when that sanction was withdrawn, it ceased to be lawful; and to introduce it again in to the Church of God, is pointedly to contradict and annul both the precepts and the practice of Christ and his Apostles. Can Mr. G. wonder that we should detect the discrepancy between *his* definition of the Church as the *nation*, and the *Church* of the XVII Article? Yet we acknowledge Mr. G.'s definition contains the practice of the case, while the XVII Article con-

tains the scriptural theory of the subject, and that upon which dissenters act.

Let us hear his vindication of *national church-membership*. "Should it be said that the above description of the Church comprises in it a number of ungodly persons, who are, in truth, members of no church: it may be answered, that, *therefore*, the description is more accordant with scripture, which does not restrict the title or communion of a church to a select assembly of supposed holy individuals." This passage, I confess, has tilled me with painful astonishment: probably, by this time, it has filled many friends of the Church of England with similar grief; and happy should I be to find that the reconsideration of it had covered Mr. G. himself with shame.

First, I allege that this view of a Christian Church stands forth in cool, but determined opposition to his own article, which excludes, from the definition of a church, all unfaithful persons, and says nothing of its advancement towards perfection, in proportion as it comprises within it *ungodly persons*. The article, at least, recognizes not such a church as Mr. G. defends.—*Secondly*, if it is lawful to argue from prophetic description, which Mr. G. and many others allege, then it is said, "there shall no more enter into thee, the uncircumcised and the unclean,"—"thy children shall all be taught of the Lord,"—the wicked shall be shaken out of it," &c. Even the famous vision of Ezekiel, which supplied our author with so *notable* an argument for the civil power and tithes, restricts the fellowship of the church, in its *victorious age*, to the holy: "Thus saith the Lord God, no stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter my sanctuary,"—"and they shall teach my people the DIFFERENCE between the holy and the profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean." (Ezek. xliv. 9–23.) The Apostles addressed their churches as the *elect of God*—called to be *saints*—beloved of God—beloved brethren—predestinated to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ—faithful brethren, and such like. To the *church-members and officers*, Paul says, "put away from among you that *wicked person*,"—"purge out, therefore, the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump,"—"know ye not that the *unrighteous* shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" Can it be that Mr. G. is ignoranter that he denies the distinction between the principle on which the Jewish and that on which the Christian Church was founded—the one *national*, the other *exclusive*—the one *carnal descent*, the other *spiritual regeneration*? Can he deny that the whole scope of Apostolic precept and instruction tends to the exclusion of ungodly persons from church-membership; and is designed to maintain a pure and spiritual *communion of saints*? Let him

read and expound to his parishioners the Epistles to the Corinthians, and inform them that he intends to carry into effect the principles there developed:—let him, if he *can*, put away from the fellowship of his church each wicked person—let him refuse “to company with fornicators.” The Corinthian Church had in its fellowship unholy and profane persons; how they had obtained admission we are not told; but the fact of their being in the fellowship was a violation of Christian principle, and induced the Apostle to call upon the whole body to *reform their communion*, by separating from themselves the unbelievers, unholy, and ungodly—*whom* Mr. G. boasts are members of his church, *and make it more accordant with scripture!!!* St. Paul addresses his First Epistle to the Corinthians “unto the *Church of God* which is at Corinth—to those that are *sanctified in Christ Jesus*.” So it appears that a *Church of God*, and *sanctified in Christ Jesus*, are, with St. Paul, interchangeable, and equivalent phrases for any particular congregation of faithful men. But in Mr. G.’s vocabulary, Church of England, and nation of England, are the proper correlatives; and he insists, that the comprehension of *ungodly persons in the church* (☞ Query:—to what extent, and in what proportion?) makes it more accordant with scripture. Here, again, I see he is only labouring at the old and fruitless analogy from Judaism; for he defends a membership at complete variance with the Apostolic churches, and all for the love of an establishment. He supplies us with significant proof, not of the authority of any such principle, but of the direful consequences of a Christian divine groping among the *beggarly elements*, and preferring a Judaical pedagogy to that of Christ and his Apostles. But, why should the principle of church-membership, in the old dispensation, be imitated by us, who have a totally different pattern tinder the new?—the superiority of which was assumed by the Apostle, when he said to the Corinthians, “even that which was made glorious, had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory which excelleth. For, if that which was *done away* was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious.” (2 Cor. iii. 10, 11.) This, however, is the disastrous consequence of leaving the plain letter of the New Testament, and following a false and fanciful rule in Mosaic institutions. Be assured, Mr. G., your doctrine of national church-membership derives no recommendation from its genealogy. It subverts the Jerusalem which is from above, which is free, and the mother of us all. You must abandon this doctrine, or abandon the Apostles. They would disown the vast majority of your church-members, and would, very likely, admonish sharply the pious minority for ever forming such a coalition with the ungodly, or for not separating themselves immediately from so

unhallowed a church—even though schisms should be the consequence. In their eyes such a schism would be an eternal honour to the separatists. But, as your church is now constituted, and as you reason in its defence, all the Apostles are against you; the Holy Spirit, in the Epistles to the Seven Churches, is against you; Jesus Christ, both theoretically and practically, is against you; for he set an example of the first spiritual and voluntary church, even while the old system of national church-membership was in force, by separating his disciples into a distinct community. We can shew further, that Christian antiquity is decidedly opposed to the favourite principle of Episcopalians, and that, so late as the third century, the principle of separation, and of a consistent and credible profession of Christianity, was uniformly the rule of membership. A strict discipline was in force in the time of Tertullian. He says, in his *Apology*, “We form a body, being joined together by a community of religion, of *discipline*, and of hope. We meet to offer up our united prayers, &c.; *to pronounce censures, cutting off from communion in prayer, and, in every holy exercise, those who have been guilty of any flagrant offence?*” Origen says, “we do our utmost, that our assemblies may be composed of good and wise men; so that none who are admitted to our congregations and prayers are vicious and wicked, except very rarely it may happen, that a particular bad man may be concealed in so great a number;” and again, speaking of the time that candidates were kept on their probation, and why it was, he names first, their instruction in the faith, and then, “that they might give demonstration of the reality of their intentions, by the change of their lives, and the holiness of their conversations.” (*Contra CELSUM*, lib. iv.) Such was the strictness of discipline in the early age, that not only were unholy professors expelled from the church, but even unholy bishops or pastors were excommunicated by the congregations over which they had presided. A synod of bishops, in the year 258, held in Africa, approved of the conduct of a church in Spain, which had deposed two bishops from their office, and chosen others in their places. Cyprian was president of that synod, and the letter which was addressed by it to the Spanish Church says, “that it was according to the divine law, which was express, that none but those that were holy and blameless should approach God’s altar: that if they had continued to communicate

* Corpus sumus de conscientia religionis, et disciplinæ unitate, et spei fœdere disciplinam præceptorum nihilominus inculcationibus densamus: ibidem etiam exhortationes, castigationes et censura divina: nam et judicatur magno cum pondere ut apud certos de Dei conspectu: summum que futuri judicii præ-judicium est, si quis ita deliquerit, ut a communicatione orationis et conventus et omnis sancti commercii relegatur.”—*Tertul. Ap. c. 39.*

with their unholy bishops, they would have been accessaries to their guilt, and would have contradicted those *examples and commands in scripture which oblige a people to separate from their wicked and ungodly ministers*; that they had not acted irregularly in what they had done; since, as *the people had the chief power of choosing worthy bishops, so also of refusing those that were unworthy.*"

But our author pursuing further the *ignis fatuus* of his national church-membership, even among the parables of our Lord, falls into a very extraordinary blunder. "The *visible church* is described by our Lord himself as a field where the wheat and tares grew together until the harvest." There is such a confusion in this gentleman's ideas between *church* and world, and he is so determined to read them as synonymous, that even where he meets with the one in holy scripture, he insists upon it that it is the *other*. Our Lord says, (Matt. xiii. 38.) "The field is the *world*." Mr. G. says "the *visible church* is described as a *field*, where the wheat and tares," &c. I do not fear being reproved for affirming, that our Lord is a better commentator on his own parable of the tares and the wheats than Mr. G. But Christ says, by the *field* he means the *world*. Mr. G. says he means the *church*. The reader may believe which authority he esteems final and best on this important subject. But, moreover, our Lord says, "he that sowed the wheat," or "good seed," was himself "the son of man," and that these (the wheat) are the "children of the kingdom;" but he that sowed the tares is the wicked one." So it seems, from this parable, that to *mix* the wheat and the tares together is *the work of the devil*. Christ disowns the deed: let Mr. G. only bear in mind to whom the Saviour attributes the introduction of the tares. Mr. G., if I understand him aright, glories in such a mixture, ascribes it to the Establishment, and affirms that, on account of it, the Church of England is *more accordant with scripture*. If so, his church is quite welcome to all the honour of it; but let him, at the same time, remember to whom the Saviour, in the parable, attributes the act of mixing the godly and the ungodly. To us it appears a humiliation, that such a mixture should exist in any Christian Church, and a special reproach

* *Desiderio vestro divina præcepta respondent quibus jam pridem mandatur voce cœlesti et Dei lege præscribitur quos et quales oporteat deservire altari.—Nec sibi plebs blandiatur quasi immunis esse a contagio delicti possit, cum sacerdote Peccatore communicant. Propter quod plebs obsequans præceptis dominicis et Deum metuens, a peccatore præposito separare se debet, nec se ad sacrilegi sacerdotis sacrificia miscere; quando ipsa maxime habeat potestatem vel elegendi dignos sacerdotes vel indignos recusandi.* (Epist. 68, Ap. CYPRIAN.)—This passage will, I apprehend, enlighten Mr. G.'s mind on several other points, besides the one for which I have introduced it. I could quote much more to the same effect, from the early Christian Fathers; but this must suffice.

that one of Christ's ministers should ever have said, that this union of godly and ungodly persons, this *identity* of the church with the world, "*makes it more accordant with scripture.*"

Pudet hæc opprobria * * *

Et dici potuisse, et non potuisse refelli.

Next he gets entangled in the meshes of the fishing net—the subject of another parable. This appeared a sweeping sort of figure, and struck his lively imagination as another propitious *analogy* for national church-membership. "The visible church is described as a net, which gathered both good and bad, until the fisherman sat down to make a separation." I should be quite content with his use of this parable, if he would but copy this act of the fisherman; but where does Mr. G.'s church imitate this separation? The fishers in the parable "cast the bad away the national church-membership, which draws all into its net, puts both bad and good into the vessels, and resolutely retains them in that perilous connection. Does the parable afford any sanction to this?"

But he proceeds: "The visible church is that ark of safety which incloses alike the disobedient and dutiful child of Noah." The visible church an *ark of safety* to the *disobedient!!!* The whole of Mr. G.'s reasoning upon church-membership is at variance equally with scripture and Christian antiquity. Origen says, οὐ παντὶ καθήκει μὴ χρῆσθαι τῷ ἄρτῳ, καὶ μὴ πίνειν ἐκ τοῦ ποτηρίου, "*it does not belong to every one to eat of this bread, and drink of this cup?*" and Justin Martyr says it was for him οὕτως βιοῦντι ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς ὠραεδῶκεν, "*who so lives as Christ has commanded.*" But, instead of the principle of separation formerly maintained by the Apostles and their successors, we have analogies again—nothing but analogies—deceitful analogies, which have not yet taught us one single truth! This is the consequence of indulging imagination, forsaking the plain letter of the New Testament, and the admirable XVII Article of his own church. Is it thus we are to be edified with scriptural proofs of national church-membership? But, let us see—Noah's ark undoubtedly was a striking emblem (though I cannot find that Christ or his Apostles ever exactly said so) of the principle of church-membership in all national establishments—it is *gregarious* enough. There were "clean and unclean beasts, four-footed beasts, fowls of the air, and creeping things," as well as the "disobedient and the dutiful child of Noah." And what is more, and more to Mr. G.'s purpose, they were all put into that ark of safety by divine authority: *ergo*, the principle of church-membership, which puts alike believer and unbeliever, godly and ungodly, into the ark of the church,

has a *parallel*; and so far as such an analogy goes, Mr. G. will, perhaps, think it has a divine sanction also. And, moreover, to make out the proofs, that the ark was an ark of safety to the disobedient, as to the dutiful son of Noah, he may refer to St. Peter, who says, “wherein eight souls were *saved* by water;” whence, to complete his analogy, he may, and must, consistently, infer with the Romish Church, that all who are found within the *ark of safety*, that is, the *Established Church*, be they *dutiful* or *disobedient*, godly or ungodly, must, of *necessity*, be *SAVED!!*

But, now we have got out of Noah’s ark, we may hope that he will tread *for once* on *terra firma*, and not keep us so constantly on the wing, or on the water, in pursuit of analogies. He says, “hence it is, that those who, for divers reasons, satisfactory to themselves, at least, communicate not with the church, *do not, therefore, cease to be members of the same.*” This is perfectly consistent with the Jewish doctrine of church-membership, and carries out the analogy strictly enough. No member of the Jewish Church could ever cease to be a Jew—church and nation were one thing. So Mr. G. says of the Church and nation of England. As an Englishman can never cease to be of the nation, so he can never lose his church-membership. A large proportion of the nation have renounced their church-membership; another large portion are utterly ungodly, and disown it; but, notwithstanding, Mr. G. insists, that dissenters of all sorts, together with the whole body of the ungodly and the unbelieving, are all *still members of the national church*. He adds, “the Church has never excommunicated them, neither would it be valid if she had.”* What, Mr. G., an act of the Church not valid?—no: Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist, Wesleyan, &c. &c. &c., all who have had the one baptism, belong to the Church of England.

Mussat tacito doctrina timore!

Well, we did not know this before, and now, recovering a little from our surprize, we are ready to think that here are divisions enough to shake any house, and no wonder, with such a church-membership, that the Church itself is endangered; “for a house divided against itself cannot stand, but is brought to desolation.” But we must now quit his doctrine of national church-membership, to enter upon his

* Are the canons, then, not valid, which do formally pronounce a sentence of excommunication upon various sorts of persons, and, in particular, upon *all dissenters*! See particularly canons 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, &c.

ARGUMENT II.—FOR THE EXPEDIENCY OF THE ESTABLISHED
CHURCH.

“From this weighty point I proceed to consider the Church in her *constitution*. This is comprised in the Thirty-nine Articles, and in the Book of Common Prayer; which recognizes, in the rule and ministration of the same, three holy orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, perpetuated from the Apostles.” He has, however, very conveniently omitted to tell us *where*. I cannot find any such orders in the New Testament, and am inclined to think none such did exist in the Apostles’ days. The New Testament knows nothing of bishops who have no pastorship, and peremptorily enough prohibits all LORD-BISHOPS. In “a declaration made of the divine institution of bishops and priests,” issued in the reign of Henry VIII., and subscribed, 1587 or 1538, by Thomas Cromwell, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, eleven bishops, and many other doctors’ and civilians, it is asserted, “that, in the New Testament, there is no mention made of any degrees or distinctions in orders, but only of deacons, or ministers, and of priests, or bishops.” St. Jerome’s opinion, that the scriptural bishop and presbyter were the same office, is expressly approved by Bishop Alley, in the reign of Elizabeth, (*Poor Man’s Library*, vol. i. p. 95,) and by Bishop Pilkington, “healing attempt,” (p. 16.) It is vindicated more at large by Bishop Jewel, in the defence of his apology against Hardying; in which he cites Austin, Chrysostome, and Ambrose; as additional testimonies in favour of the identity of the order of bishop and priest.*

Next I aver that the New Testament knows nothing of any order of priests, except as all believers are called “a royal priesthood,” and are constituted “kings and priests unto Gold,” unless it signifies the same as bishop, pastor, or elder, and then it is an unscriptural and highly improper term to substitute for either of these; and as to *deacons*, the New Testament recognizes them as ruling and overseeing the church, jointly with the bishop, but not as junior or inferior ministers of the word. In the Church of England they may be properly described as priests in their novitiate, who have power to preach and pray, but not, I believe, to administer the other ordinances. Is this scriptural? Does Mr. G. derive his holy order of deacon from the sixth chapter of Acts, or whence? Are the deacons chosen in the Church of England by the people, and are they ever admitted to joint rule with the bishops?—they evidently were so in the days of the Apostles. But, *supposing* these three holy orders

* James’s Church and Dissent, p. 51, 52.

to be scriptural, which it has been shewn they are not, then I allege that our author gives an inadequate view of the constitution of the Church of England in its officers, because it has many more officers, just as essential to its constitution as these, and which he, as well as most other defenders, take care to conceal in their defences, because they are conscious that not one of them can derive the slightest sanction from the New Testament. What are archbishops, chancellors, deans, archdeacons, prebendaries, vicars, &c. &c. &c.? Surely a constituency of church officers, made up of such persons, must be as much at variance with the constitution of a New Testament church, with simply its bishop, or presbyter, and deacons, as if it included a pope, an archimandrite, or a mufti. So I leave this part of the subject, assuring Mr. G. that his three holy orders are wholly unknown to Peter, Paul, and John. If he still doubts, I recommend to his attention the Epistle of Clemens Romanus, and Bishop Stillingfleet's *Irenicum*, p. 310, in both which he will see, that in the earliest and best use of the terms, bishop and presbyter were nearly identical; and that, in the Apostolic age, there were but two holy orders constituted in individual churches. Clemens says, "they (the Apostles) preaching through countries and cities, appointed their first-fruits to be bishops and deacons of those who should believe, having tried them by the Spirit. Neither was this any new thing; for it was written, many ages before, concerning bishops and deacons; for thus saith the scripture, I will constitute their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith." (Ep. *ad Cor.* sect. 42.) His particular view of Isa. lx. 17, is of no importance; but his view of the holy orders, as then existing, and his knowledge of what officers had been appointed in the Christian churches by the inspired Apostles, assists us to understand the New Testament, and proves that, for ages, the churches had no officers but *bishops* and *deacons*.

Next Mr. G. advances to the *Thirty-nine Articles*, and says, "as concerns *the faith*, they are allowed by all, who hold the Gospel in its purity, to comprise the most unexceptionable summary of revealed truth in any existing church; the most catholic in spirit—the most evangelical in doctrine and phraseology; neither omitting what God hath required, nor deciding what he hath left undecided; nor putting asunder what he hath joined together. And as to the Articles which relate to *discipline*, even they who differ from them will admit the charitable temper in which they are expressed." Now, not only are the *Thirty-nine Articles* exceptionable, but several of them are *highly* exceptionable; and even Mr. G.'s cautious distinction between those that relate to *faith*, and those which relate to *discipline*, avails nothing in the present argument, since

subscription is required to the *whole*, and they are all placed upon a footing of equal importance, and no one is allowed to be excepted against by any churchman. I am, moreover, quite sure that many within the Church have exceptions to some Articles relating to the *faith*; while all out of it object to those relating to *discipline*. How, then, can the Articles be said to be "*unexceptionable, most unexceptionable*"—when so few can be found who make no exception to these Articles? It is evident that Mr. G. himself excepts to the XVII from what I have before shewn, and I suppose there is scarce a clergyman to be found but takes exception to some part of these Articles in their plain, grammatical, and historical sense. Has he not heard of Mr. Prebendary Wodehouse, who lately petitioned the House of Lords to be released from his oath and subscription, because he "cannot now say that the Liturgy and Articles are agreeable to the word of God?" Is he unacquainted with Mr. Riland's numerous and weighty exceptions to nearly all the formularies of the Church? And does he not know that Mr. Riland's views of this subject carry with them the concurrence and sympathy of a very considerable number of the best class of clergymen? Or, if these facts have not yet reached him, surely he is acquainted with the elaborate work of the Rev. J. Jones, Vicar of Alconbury, entitled "Free and Candid Disquisitions, relating to the Church of England;" there he will find a formidable array of exceptions against the Liturgy, Creeds, and Articles of the Church, which I suspect it would puzzle him to remove. Away, then, with this vapid boast about the unexceptionable Articles. They do not contain an unexceptionable summary of the faith once delivered to the saints. I have shewn that Mr. G. himself contradicts the XVII. I apprehend also that the VI., authorizing the reading of the Apocrypha for the edification of the Church, must be exceptionable to him, as I know it is to a great number of his brethren. The orthodox dissenters have exceptions against the III., the VI., the VIII., the XX., the XXI., the XXIII., the XXV., the XXXII., the XXXIV, the XXXV., the XXXVI., and the XXXVII., and this without being over-scrupulous or critical. What, then, becomes of the assertion, that these Articles are "allowed, by all who hold the Gospel, to comprise the most unexceptionable summary of revealed truth in any existing church?" Like most of his other statements, it falls to the ground, sealed in its fate by this indisputable fact, that all must be subscribed together, as of equal importance, without the admission of a single scruple to any one of them. Is not this a term of admission into the ministry of his Church, palpably differing from the terms of admission developed in the New Testament? And were the Articles as

unexceptionable as Mr. G. says, where is any warrant for requiring subscriptions to them, or for restricting the exercise of the ministry to those who can subscribe them? Are there not many Articles there to which St. Paul would neither have given nor required assent? He has laid down some *articles* in his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, as to be required of ministers before ordination; but they are vastly different from the Thirty-nine.

Next we find a paragraph upon the Common Prayer-Book, in which we are treated with Mr. Robert Hall's famous eulogy upon it—a brief sentence, which has been perpetually re-echoed by churchmen ever since, as if it were calculated to fill all dissenters with admiration, and allure them to the adoption of the book; or, as if it were intended by its author to express an unqualified approbation. But is not such a sentence perfectly in unison with that admiration of much in the book, which is common to all pious dissenters; and yet, with those exceptions to its use, and to parts of its contents, which the author of that eulogy, in common with the whole dissenting body, was well known to entertain? That "*greatest of modern dissenters*," with ourselves, admired it in the main, but yet entertained exceptions to some of its doctrines, as erroneous, and many of its expressions, as unscriptural—while, to the whole, as a form for public worship, he cherished invincible objections. The primary question with us, and it ought to be so with all Christians, is, not what Mr. Hall, or any other eminent person, may have said concerning the general excellence of the Book of Common Prayer; but does the New Testament sanction or enforce a form of prayer for public worship at all? And, if not, then our reply is, it does sanction free prayer. Moreover, it may be shewn from history, that liturgies were not used by the early Christians, and were never thought of but in connexion with established churches, which have always sought to substitute a verbal uniformity for that spiritual unity, which was more perfectly preserved without such standards and formularies, than it ever has been since they were introduced. It is a question worthy of consideration, whether their use, in the first instance, did not arise out of the incompetence of clergymen for their office, and whether they have not always proved—the means of filling national churches with such men, and of keeping them such? How far their use, as it respects the people, is practically expedient, let the lamentable state of piety in the Established Church of England, and in all similar establishments, where liturgies are prescribed, be taken as decisive proof. The perpetual and exclusive use of the Liturgy of the Church of England is a dead weight upon the piety and spirituality, both of the clergy and the people

under their charge. Dr. Arnold, in his "Principles of Church Reform," says, "in order to overcome their *disadvantages*, something more attractive is needed than the mere uniform reading of the same prayers, and going through the same forms, day after day, both in the morning and evening. Nor should I think it an evil, but a great good, that different services should be performed at different times of the day and week, within the walls of the same church. Not only do the various tastes and degrees of knowledge amongst men require varieties in the form of their religious services, but the very same men are not always in the mood for the very same things:—there are times when we should feel most in unison with the deep solemnity of the Liturgy; there are times when we should better *enjoy a freer and more social service*; and, for the sake of greater familiarity, should pardon some insipidity and some extravagance; and he who condemns this feeling, does but lose his labour, and can but ill appreciate one great attribute of God's works—their endless variety." This from a D.D. of the Church of England, and Head Master of Rugby School!!

Our author next indulges us with a glowing eulogy upon the Articles and Liturgy conjoined: "they have been rendered, by divine grace, a bulwark of the faith of the Church, and in her, of the nation. Compared with other churches and societies (*query*, what other?), which have no such test, the contrast is striking," Shall we adduce the internal state of the Church of England in proof of this statement? Is the predominance of heterodox over evangelical truth—the predominance of secularly over spirituality—the predominance of formality over grace—an illustration in point? Shall we compare the minority—the inconsiderable minority—of the evangelical, to the three-fourths or four-fifths, who are made up of Pelagians, Arminians, Antinomians, Arians, Socinians, and Swedenborgians? Are these the bulwark of the faith? Is there any other Christian denomination, in which the pious and evangelical, whether clergy or laity, bear so small a proportion to the main body? Indeed, if it had not been for the influence exercised over the Church Establishment—the salt borrowed from dissenting sects—the spiritual life infused into her decaying frame, from the neighbourhood of a more healthful atmosphere, she had, in all probability, become as noxious a mass of corruption as her sister establishment of Rome. Dr. Chalmers, though a devoted admirer of establishments, in many places confesses, that dissent keeps the Church alive: and, in one place, compares the national establishment to a heavy vessel, towed by dissenting steamers.

"Wherever heresy or error has crept into the fold—here has been a criterion to detect its hypocrisy, and denounce its

guilt." But we are prone to ask, as we think, with unanswerable reason, what advantage does your criterion confer, not already conferred by the Holy Scriptures? Is it above the scriptures?—is it plainer than the scriptures?—is it not subscribed to by persons of as great a variety of opinions as are found to acknowledge the scriptures? Has it served any purpose not much better served by the scriptures? Does it keep out heterodoxy, in its various forms and degrees, from the Church?—does it convince any by its authority?—does it effectually separate the heterodox from the orthodox? Is not the whole business of subscription a mere matter of interest, connivance, official ceremony, mental reservation, chicanery? If not, hast is it that evangelical doctrines are, in your formularies, but heterodox doctrines, proclaimed from the majority of your pulpits? And how is it that your Church presents, at the present moment, a much greater variety and latitude of doctrinal sentiment, than is to be found in any other professedly evangelical denomination? The reason, we conceive, is, that willingness to subscribe a given document of human contrivance, as a preliminary to ordination, is made a substitute for the evidence of genuine faith, and the practice of the Gospel. The scriptures, and the scriptures alone, honestly understood, and conscientiously practised, supply, we believe, a much better test of the ministerial character, than all the formularies to which so solemn a subscription *ex animo* is demanded in your Church. We are at a loss to determine the following question, but feel that it places us in a dilemma, one side of which must be embraced:—which party in the Church is correct? If the evangelical denomination in the Church are correct in their view of the formularies, &c., then the majority who differ from them must be decidedly erroneous, and erroneous upon points involving the essentials of the Gospel. If the main body, who are any thing but evangelical, are honest in their interpretation of the formularies, then the evangelical party are decidedly wrong. The views of both parties cannot be reconciled to the standards—if the one party has subscribed *ex ultimo* to all and every thing, they can hardly believe that the other party has done the same, and *vice versa*. If, therefore, the Holy Scriptures are not sufficient to preserve orthodoxy, and reprove hypocrisy, the world has an ample proof how little additional help is to be expected from subscription to formularies of human origin. If men will not hesitate to pervert, distort, and explain away the words which are stamped with the awful authority of inspiration, is it reasonable to expect that they will pay a greater deference to the words of fallible man, or feel a more salutary thread of falsely or inconsiderately subscribing to them? In the language of that

greatest of dissenting authorities, to which Mr. G. has referred in one place with so much glee, we beg leave to say, "whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical history, must know that public creeds and confessions have created more controversies than they have composed"—"in which of two given situations will a doctrine last longest, where it is believed without being subscribed, or where it is subscribed without being believed?" But, notwithstanding much that is excellent in the Liturgy, many things that are undeniable in the Articles, yet we aver that the Creeds adopted by the Church of England are the very worst that could be contrived for preserving orthodoxy and reproofing hypocrisy. They contain the most inadequate delineation of the great doctrines of Christianity, that any orthodox Protestant Church ever held forth, as a summary of its principles.

But we will put the whole together, Articles, Liturgy, with the creeds, &c., and try their efficiency for the ends which they are said to attain in so unexampled a manner. Let any one ask himself whether these devices of human wisdom and authority have been found efficient means of Christianising the British nation? Surely, if they are so effectual for the promotion of the Gospel, over and above the Holy Scriptures, their virtue ought to have been evinced in the enlightened and evangelized state of the whole population; or, at the very least, in the superior orthodoxy, spirituality, and zeal of that Church itself, which has enjoyed the undisturbed influence of these formularies for nearly two centuries. But, can the state of the Church of England, after so long and fair a trial, sustain a comparison, for purity of faith, in its clergy or laity, with the other acknowledged evangelical churches in Great Britain, which own no such standard? Is the declining, tottering, convulsed state of your Church, at this moment, a proof of the efficiency of formularies to produce unity of sentiment in the clergy, or inspire piety and reverence into the people?—or, are the spreading numbers, the growing usefulness, the advancing popularity, of voluntary church associations, in all the world, evidences of the defects and inconveniences under which they labour, through not adopting your tests of heterodoxy and hypocrisy? Our author says, "the contrast is striking but, alas, it turns out to be striking in a sense the reverse of that which he intended.

So much for the *bulwarks of the faith*, which admit more heresy than sound doctrine, and preserve that truth in the documents of the Church, which is constantly decried from its pulpits: It is now as it always has been in the Church of England, its door is too strait to admit a tender conscience, but is flung wide open to admit those who have no conscience at

all. Hence there is a strictness of uniformity in worship, creeds, and orders, far beyond any thing which Christianity demands—while there is less real unity of faith and love among its members, than in any other Christian denomination, together with as many doctrinal diversities as among all other sects put together. Such, we conceive, are the inevitable effects of human bulwarks of the faith.

But let us hear Mr. Garbett again: “the power of the ministry is derived, not from man, but from Christ—not through the medium of civil rulers, but by the hands of the prelates of the Church.” If he intends that civil rulers do not stand in a line of regular succession from the Apostles, he utters a truism—but if he means that the clergy, in whole or in part, are not made clergymen by the state—then I deny it *in toto*. Who makes the priest? the bishop: who makes the bishop? the King, or counsel, or both—or the prime minister more commonly than either. It is perfectly true the civil power does not officiate at the ceremony, but the ceremony is only a ceremony; and neither makes nor qualifies the man. The selection of the *person*, which is the most material part of the whole business, rests with the civil ruler, who usually makes it subserve his political views; and Mr. G. knows it. Were the civil ruler so disposed, he might select persons to the office of bishops, not, as at present, on account of their political bias, but on account of their predilection for some theological tenet—as for instance, unitarianism, or any other *ism*: and Mr. G. knows it, and knows, moreover, that there exists no bulwark to impede such an exercise of royal authority over the heads of the Church. Would such persons derive their authority, not from man, but from Christ? In short the whole authority of all ecclesiastical persons resolves itself, as says the XXXVII article, into the supreme power of the sovereign prince.

Mr. G. expresses his *surprise that any thing should be said about lording it over God's heritage—no ministry is so independent of human control.* Comparisons are *odious things*; and he should not have tempted me or any one else to make them in any such case as the present! Has not every clergyman human control over him, or does Mr. G. mean, that the power of the bishops over the clergy is divine control? Every true minister of Jesus Christ ought, unquestionably, to abjure all human authority over him in the discharge of his ministerial functions. No one minister of Christ, can exercise power over another, without violating the letter and the spirit of that Scripture which says, in reference to the princes and heads of the gentiles, “*it shall not be so among you.*” What he says, however, is perfectly true, if “*independence of human control,*” means that no human power can dispossess him of his benefice.

But if he means that in forming and in inculcating his religious opinions, he is more independent than the ministers of dissenting churches, he must allow me to deny and attempt to disprove his statement. For while no clergyman is independent of the very burdensome laws and canons, and cannot, even to save his conscience, refuse the performance of all the offices for the dead and the living, and is never independent of his diocesan, but may be summoned, annoyed, brow-beaten, and oppressed in many ways; no such power exists to destroy the independence of any dissenting minister. He professes and maintains his sentiments because he BELIEVES them; is chosen by his people for the sake of the sentiments he professes, and as long as he consistently maintains them, may reckon upon the support of those who chose him. But should he materially swerve from the principles which led to his first union with his Church, it is perfectly right that the Church should make him feel that he is not so independent as to be able to retain his station, in violation of all the terms expressed or implied in the original compact. An independence beyond this is incompatible with honour and liberty—with the interests of truth and with the promotion of Christianity: and in so far as the *people* in the Established Church have no power of remonstrance against the errors, or the insufficiency of the ministers, I maintain that the independence of the clergy has absorbed the independence of the Church. Its ancient rights, accredited alike by Scripture and ecclesiastical history,* have been abolished for the sake of maintaining a hierarchy absolutely independent of the congregation of faithful men, but dependent enough on the King's Majesty, the prime minister, and the lord bishop. But how can a man, who is dependent, first of all, upon the sole will of an individual, irresponsible in the exercise of that will, for his *ordination*; next dependent on the will of a patron for a living, or the will of a brother-clergyman for a curacy,—and finally, dependent on the will of his diocesan for the quiet pursuit of his duties—how can he *presume* to compare his independence, in the spiritual, ecclesiastical, or theological application of that term, with the independence of dissenting ministers?

Mr. G.'s succeeding pages are filled with miscellaneous topics, some historical, some pecuniary. Thus he speaks of church property: "be it remembered the mass of church property was not derived from the state, but from individual bequest." Here, if I understand Mr. G. correctly, he in effect affirms, that the annual amount of endowments, apart from the tithes, is more than the tithes; and next that the state did not give the Protestant Church its property: if so, this only

* See p. 80, and Bingham, Sir P. King, Bp. Kay on Tertullian, and all other writers on early ecclesiastical history.

proves that the Church of England has robbed the Church of Rome of them. If our author disowns the right of the state to dispose of such property—if he insists that it was not by a national legislative act, that the whole property was transferred from the one church to the other, then he must shew that his church came honestly into the possession of its present treasures. Does he forget that the church which first possessed them was still in existence when they were some how or other *transferred*? Does he forget that that church still survives? If there is any inherent right a national church can have to what it calls its property, independently of the state, then that right must remain inviolate with that particular church—and must not be wrested by one church out of the hands of another. If what is called *church property*, consisting of endowments and tithes, belonged to the Church of Rome, it must belong to it still; for there are abundant representatives of the original donor and possessor still in existence. From the Church of Rome these gifts originally came, by her they were long enjoyed, from her they were taken by the civil power, and if this were not by a solemn legal act, then certainly spoliation and robbery are upon rife face of the deed. If he is not content to derive the property of his church from the power of the prince and a national active act, it will be impossible to escape from the charge of robbery. If the right of the Church of England is an indefeasible right, the right of the Church of Rome supersedes it; she is the original possessor of the church property, and if the clergy of the Church of England do not hold their possessions simply in virtue of a legislative act, then they hold them by furtive hands.

But we are now advancing to the summing up of his argument. His quiver is nearly exhausted, and we have felt as yet nothing but the *telum imbelie sine ictu*. “Thus far,” he says, “I have adverted to the Church in her membership, constitution, and establishment; and of which, I would ask, is the principle unscriptural or inexpedient?” I answer—OF ALL. Her membership; upon his own shewing; is national, not spiritual; not founded upon regeneration, nor a credible possession of faith—not voluntary, but geographical and carnal. This is demonstrably unscriptural, not because the principle is not found in Scripture, but because it is Jewish, not Christian, not Apostolic, but decidedly contrary to the doctrine of Christ, and practice of the Apostles. The constitution of the Church is human not divine: her Articles are in many respects *unscriptural*—the supremacy of a secular prince over the Church, and its *identification* with the state; is a violation of our Lord’s doctrine concerning his church. *Many* of its Articles are at variance, with, the letter and spirit

of the New Testament. Its *use* of a liturgy is unsanctioned by Apostolic authority, and the *liturgy* used is, in various respects, erroneous and objectionable, upon the confession of many who employ it. And the Establishment itself, or the principle on which the whole rests—secular legislation—has not the slightest sanction from the New Testament, but tends to subvert the principle, corrupt the doctrine, and annihilate the discipline which characterised all the churches founded by the Apostles. If this is not enough for our author, let him go to work again, and I am ready at any time to meet him on scriptural ground—let him confine himself to the New Testament; but no more Judaism, no more mystical emblems, no more history in prophecy, no more misquoting and misrepresenting of parables.

ARGUMENT III.—FOR THE EXPEDIENCY OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

At page 25 he expatiates on the advantage of having a civil government flowing from the divine law—with which, as it is irrelevant to the present controversy, I shall not intermeddle, farther than to observe, that all such advantages might be secured by a simple recognition of the Bible without any national establishment. Neither can I see that we are indebted to the Established Church for the advantages of the sabbath, these being attainable on the ground of social arrangement and civil legislation; an abstinence from secular business, and the prevention of disturbance, with the security of a right to a day of rest, being the limit beyond which legislation ought not to proceed. No human power has any right to compel persons to the religious observance of the sabbath, but simply to secure to all the possibility of so using the day, without any detriment to their worldly circumstances, or any annoyance from those who do not religiously use it. It is to the state, and not the church, we owe the degree of security and advantage at present enjoyed by the legal protection of the sabbath; and it is to the state we now look for such improvements in the law, as may tend to the utmost possible suspension of worldly business on the day of rest. But perhaps he forgets how very little the Church of England has ever done towards the promotion of this object, and how much it once did towards the desecration of the day by piously supplying its members with a BOOK OF SPORTS for the Sunday; and this might be further illustrated by a reference to the sabbath-reading supplied by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—among whose publications may be found the adventures and exploits of his grace the Duke of Wellington, Robinson Crusoe, &c. &c. &c.

But waving all controversy upon these topics, as irrelevant

to the business in hand, we come at page 26, to the following somewhat ominous passage—"to make it (the Church) answerable for every abuse which has crept into it, in violation of its constitution, would be far more uncandid, than to make dissent answerable for the heresy, schism, and perversion, by which many congregations are distinguished, who bear that comprehensive name." I think no defender of the Church can allege that I have taken advantage of *creeping abuses*—although it might be alleged that such abuses are far from inconsiderable or few; and that, instead of being violations of the constitution, they might be shown to be the natural results of it; and instead of being incidental, are so glaring and numerous as to have aroused the whole nation in one common cry for reform. I have dwelt on none of these abuses, but have gone to the principle of the whole business—convinced that it is of little use to prune out a rotten limb, when the axe ought to be laid at the root of the tree. The argument is wholly one of Scripture: to that ground I wish to confine it; on that Mr. G. has challenged us, and by that let it be decided. How little support our author has hitherto extracted from it let our readers judge.

As to his making dissent answerable for the heresy, schism, and perversion by which many congregations are distinguished, I beg leave to observe, that dissent is merely a common predicament in which all sorts of sects equally stand to the established one. It implies nothing in common, beyond the mere negation of an established church. Hence it would be absurd to charge upon the main body of dissenters, evils which attach only to a few. Let him charge upon every church its own proper sins, and we cry not his mercy. But, were he to charge upon orthodox dissent the sins of heterodox dissent, he would be guilty of a flagrant act of injustice. Let all defenders of the Church Establishment remember, that dissenters, as such, are *not a church*: if they were incorporated into one body *ecclesiastical*, then they ought truly to be chargeable with the heresies and sins to which Mr. G. alludes. But such persons ought to know that with us, every church, like each of the seven churches mentioned in the Apocalypse, has its own separate character, and stands upon its own individual responsibility. No one can be made answerable for the sins of another. Not so the *Church* of England—its clergy form *one body*—its *system* is uniform, it boasts its *unity*, consequently its excellencies or defects are to be fairly estimated in the mass, and by these its character must be determined; It is as much answerable for abuses and corruptions, as *any individual* church of dissenters would be for its heresies and contentions; with this distinction, however, that the Church of England, being in its principle a *human institute*, and in its operation altogether a

national system, it is answerable to the nation; and may be fairly judged by the nation, either on the ground of Scripture, or on that of expediency, which must involve a judgment of the good or evil attending it on the whole. The *nation* therefore has a right to protest against it as either scripturally unlawful, or practically inexpedient. But as to the sins of individual churches, they attach alone to such separate bodies of individuals, not to a national system; and in most cases not to a system at all, but to persons. They are, therefore, to be answered for, not to the nation, but to the divine head of the church: whereas in the Church of England, the abuses complained of attach to the system, and not to the persons. In the Church, the men are often better than the system: in dissent, the system, we admit, is generally better than the men. The orthodox churches have no more connection with the heterodox churches, than they have with the Jews' synagogues, or the Popish chapels. This we consider the glory of our non-establishment: we have no open incorporation of good and evil, believer and unbeliever, heterodox and orthodox. Each stands or falls to his own master: no one's leprosy cleaves to another. No man's teeth are set on edge by the sour grapes which another has eaten. It is no invalidation of my ecclesiastical principles, that there is another dissenter who is heterodox. I afford him no sanction. I own him not as a brother—he may, like myself, dissent from the Church: so may an infidel; but our common dissent by no means implies that we have any thing in common beyond this negation. Our dissent may be the limit of our agreement: beyond that we may differ infinitely, and symbolize in no one article of faith. But, in the Church of England, it may be said that the principle, constitution and orders, are the only points in which all the parties agree. There is no sound Christian unity throughout the body, in matters of highest moment—the most heterogeneous opinions are grafted upon the principle of an establishment. The same fountain sends forth sweet waters and bitter—the same tree bears wholesome and poisonous fruits—heterodox and orthodox—godly and ungodly, are all huddled together in one communion—receive one another as members of the same church—saints in the same fellowship, and dear brethren in the Lord. Dissenters are involved in no such inconsistency; they agree in disapproving an Established Church; but they may disagree upon still more momentous subjects: so that a great body of dissenters may have more affinity in religious principle with a great body of Churchmen than they have with some dissenters. And this should induce the evangelical, who are a sect in the Church, and the evangelical, who are a sect out of the Church, rather to embrace one another as brethren in the Lord, than those, whether of the

Church or dissent, with whom respectively they hare, and cat) have no religious sympathy. A pious dissenter must feel a much more sacred alliance with a pious churchman, than with a heterodox and ungodly dissenter; and a spiritual and evangelical churchman, ought assuredly to feel, that he is held by the bonds of a much closer and more sacred union with spiritual and orthodox dissenters, than with the anti-evangelical clergy, and ungodly laity of his own establishment.*

We find next a singularly incautious comparison, instituted between the results of free and established efforts, in providing for the religious instruction of the people. He shews that the state has, within ten years, supplied church-room for 130,000; but he admits that *voluntary* efforts, *within* the Church, have, in the same space of time, provided room for 170,000. Now, instead of adding these two sums together, it should have been stated, that, in the Church itself, the voluntary principle has surpassed the parliamentary one; and if he will add, as in fairness he ought, the 170,000 to the supply provided by dissenters, he will then find the voluntary system more than doubles or trebles the efforts of the state provision. The superior efficiency of the voluntary system is seen, moreover, in this particular, that, after bearing all the burdens of the national church, in common with churchmen, and providing religious instruction for that portion of the population who prefer dissenting churches, the system extends its benefits to the neglected at home, who do not belong to it, and to the neglected abroad, in various countries, who belong to no church. Are these evidences of the inferiority of voluntary efforts? Churchmen should, upon this subject, be modestly silent. We bear all the pecuniary burdens of their church in common with themselves; they bear none of the burdens of ours. The voluntary system, besides being taxed, taxes itself; the compulsory system does nothing but for its own support; and, after all that is done by both systems, it is matter of regret to us, as we think it ought to be to Mr. G., that so large a mass of the population still enjoys no efficient religious instruction. This fact, alone, should have prevented him from saying one word to the disparagement of voluntary efforts, because, they are not so much *deducted* from the involuntary efforts, but so much *in addition*, to supply their deficiency. They can, in no respect, interfere with or diminish the supply of Christian instruction afforded by the state. If they were all to be withdrawn, the state could do no more; so that, to write against them, is, in effect, to endeavour to suppress so much moral and spiritual exertion, made for

* Hoc enim vei maxime, frater, laboramus, et laborare debemus, ut Unitatem a Domino, et per Apostolos nobis successoribus traditam, quantum possumus, obtinere euremus.—CYPRI, Ep. 42.

the benefit of our still unchristianized population—a clear deduction of so much Christian instrumentality, which there would be no chance of supplying in other ways. Those who endeavour to write down voluntary churches ought, therefore, to consider well what would be the effect of the cessation of dissenting efforts, with no possibility of a commensurate augmentation in the resources of the Establishment. If such persons would look upon the voluntary churches in the higher light of co-operating with the national church in the general results of Christianity, and not in the unjust and false light of *rivals and opponents*, they would surely cease their hostility to us, and rather encourage us to those surplus efforts, which, after all *they* can make, are still so deplorably needed by the ignorant and vicious population. Neither ought the evangelical party in the Church to overlook the influence which the zeal and orthodoxy of dissenters have long exercised, in preserving the Establishment from its natural tendency to corruption. A highly respectable authority, within the Church, has said, “if we would open our eyes, we should see that we are beholden to the dissenters for the continuance of a great part of our theological principles; for, if the high-churchmen had no checks, they would have brought in Popery before this time, by their over-valuing pomp and ceremony in divine worship. So that, *if there had been no dissenters, the Church of England had been long since ruined.*”*

“A national church,” Mr. G. says, “is bound, as far as may be, to provide instruction and grace for those who are not able to procure it for themselves.” Does it do so? Without criticising his theology about *providing grace*, let us simply ask, does the Establishment provide efficient religious instruction for those who professedly belong to it? Alas, let the deplorable state of the great majority of parishes answer this question! Mr. G. says, “overthrow it, and that is overthrown upon which the claims of the people are irresistible.” But I am not aware that any orthodox dissenters wish the spiritual efficiency of the Church Establishment to be impaired; they have no desire to diminish, but rather to increase the sound and scriptural instruction of the people. Their doctrine is in brief this, no national establishment has any sanction from the New Testament, but rather the contrary; that, since the state has legislated for the promotion of the Gospel, it has proved itself a bad conservator of the Church; and the Church, under the authority of the state, has been found an unfaithful steward of the people’s spiritual interests. Take it, therefore, out of the hands of the state, and throw the duty of evangelizing the people upon the

* Dr. Edwards’s Preacher, vol. ii. p. 183.

zeal, and love, and responsibility of the Church of Christ, and you throw the duty into their hands to whom Christ and his Apostles committed it. Would there be a whit less piety in the Episcopalian portion of the public by such a change? Would not all the pious remain in her communion? Would not the ungodly be put out of it? Would not all the pious ministers feel the same, or even stronger, obligations to propagate the Gospel? Would they not be able to do it in a much more independent manner than at present? Would not their docks support them as liberally, when released from the constraint of law, as under its coercion? I cannot think so dishonourably of the Episcopalian body, as to suppose there would be any diminution of its real piety and efficiency by such an alteration. It would lose nothing by the change but what is of this world—human power, human supremacy, human legislation: it would lose nothing but what impedes its usefulness, and sullies its honour: it would cleanse itself from its corruptions, and the hirelings would flee. The people who really love it, would rally around it, and the Episcopal Church might yet shine forth, “fair as the morn, bright as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.”

Omnes sancti sibi charitate coherunt.

Aug.

Ecclesiam veram intelligere non audeo nisi in sanctis et justis.—Pax
hujus unitatis in solis bonis est.

Id.

Mr. G. is peculiarly unfortunate in a reference which he makes to the instance of America, when he says, “the sabbath brings not, in *vast districts*, the delight and joy which all may here partake; for, year by year passes on, and the ministry and ordinances of Christ come not.” I cannot imagine whence he drew so erroneous a statement; the fact is, according to the most veritable travellers, that, even in the new states in the west, which have not existed more than twenty or thirty years, there is, at least, an ampler and more efficient supply of the word and ordinances of God, than with us. And, besides this, I believe a much larger proportion of the people attend divine worship than in England.

ARGUMENT IV.—FOR THE EXPEDIENCY OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

Under the fourth head of discourse, he endeavours to vindicate the Church of England from the charge of intolerance and persecution derived from the history of past times. He says, “for the delivery of this realm from darkness and despotism, we are indebted,—not to the nobles—not to the people—but to the

bishops and clergy.” Noble patriots! I will not rob them of a single laurel; but let justice be done. Did the Church, as a body, reform itself in the days of King Henry VIII.? Was it not the creature of the royal will through all the successive changes which ultimately issued in the permanent establishment of Protestantism? Did not the same bishops, who acknowledged the supremacy of Henry, and of his son, subsequently return into the bosom of the Catholic Church, under his daughter Mary?—and, with the same pliability, bow in passive submission to the will of her highness Elizabeth, who commanded them all again to become Protestants? I venerate, as much as himself, the men whose names he has mentioned; but he must allow me to remind him, these were *individuals*, exceptions to the main body, and not the *hierarchy*, which was always more inclined, throughout this struggle, to *Popery* than to *Protestantism*. The Church, as an incorporated body, has *always* been intolerant; though it has contained within itself many brilliant exceptions. What act did it ever originate for the promotion of liberty, either civil or religious? I had almost suspected that our author must have mistaken what Hume says concerning the dissenters of those days, and applied it to the Established Church. The words of that historian are, “the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved by the PURITANS ALONE; and it was to this sect that the English owe the WHOLE FREEDOM of their constitution.” What historian has ever given a parallel testimony concerning the clergy of the Established Church, as a body?

The glory of the revolution of 1688 he wishes to throw around the head of the Establishment; but, without detracting from the honour of Bishop Hough, in the noble stand made by him, at Oxford, for the rights of his college, or from the honour of the Bishop of London, and the six who were sent to the Tower, under the King’s displeasure, let it be remembered, that this resistance turned wholly on the question of the royal power to overturn, by itself alone, the constitution of the Church. These noble-minded prelates defended only their own church, as Protestant, against the arbitrary will of a Papist, and a despot, but the effectual resistance to his projects—the first direct step towards the overthrow of the incroachments of the Crown upon the laws of the realm, was made by the self-denying magnanimity of the *Protestant dissenters*, who consented voluntarily to give up, for the sake of the *national religion*, an illegal and unconstitutional *toleration*, professedly extended by royal indulgence towards them, but covertly and designedly intended for the sole purpose of enabling Popery again, to become dominant. The part which the dissenters in that day took in the revolution, Mr. G. either conceals, or does not understand; but he ought to know

how large a proportion of the bishops and clergy, after all their resistance to Popery and arbitrary power, would have been content to let the vilest wretch that ever bore the name of king, or disgraced a throne, continue at the head both of church and state, if he would only have abstained from invading the rights of their order, and the exclusiveness of their church. Let the conduct of the bishops and clergy, during and after the revolution, and at the accession of the Prince of Orange, testify how far they rejoiced in the civil and religious liberties of the nation.

But, since that period, what efforts has the Church ever made towards the establishment of perfect liberty of conscience? Has it ever smiled upon any such efforts?—has not every extension of liberty and toleration, which Christian sects have gained, been wrung from a resisting and reluctant hierarchy? Let the history of the *test and corporation acts*—a privation which, as history shews, the dissenters voluntarily submitted to, in order to save the Church Establishment from being over-run by Popery—let the long and ungrateful resistance of the clergy to the removal of these acts, and the late abolition of them, testify. I cannot here enter into the statement of the conduct of the Church of England in reference to these acts.

Longa est injuria, longæ ambages.

Is it not notorious, that, after the hour of danger was past, those very acts were turned, for a century and a half, to the oppression of the dissenters, by *that very church* which they had contributed to save?—and would still have been perpetuated, if an indignant nation, and an enlightened senate, had not decreed their abolition, in defiance of nearly the whole bench of bishops? Nothing, however, which I have here said can be fairly understood to the disparagement of any of those individuals belonging to the hierarchy, who have, either in former times, or in our own, stood forward as the advocates of civil and religious liberty. They have, however, always been the exception, and not the rule.

ARGUMENT V.—FOR THE EXPEDIENCY OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

Mr. G. argues further for the expediency of the Church Establishment, that it “has been foremost in defending the faith, and elucidating the oracles of God.” That, out of so vast a body of clergymen, of all degrees, enjoying the full and exclusive possession of the national schools and depositories of learning, with ample wealth, and equally ample leisure, there should be found, in each successive generation, many men of eminent piety, consummate mental accomplishments, and Apos-

tolic zeal, is not a matter of surprise or boasting. Whether the amount of such excellence has been equal to the means of its production, I will not take upon myself to determine. Let the question which Mr. G. has mooted be, however, fairly stated; and it appears to me to be this—the Church of England has rendered great service to the Christian faith, by the production of a multitude of works, which elucidate and defend that faith in a most able manner. This body of clergymen, however, have all along been maintained at the public expence; they have had a monopoly of schools, libraries, colleges, and sinecures. There is another body of men excluded from all the privileges of the public schools, colleges, and libraries, thrown entirely upon their own private resources; and they, too, have contributed to the common cause of Christianity, Protestantism, and literature, no mean share. Will Mr. G. allowing for the numerical relations and the relative advantages of these two bodies, take upon him to strike the balance of the account?

Quæ utrinque tam infinita sunt, quam ipsa rerum varietas.

Will he affirm that non-conformist authors have not contributed more than their fair proportion to his own theological library? Will he take any other average library of good books, or will he take the whole compass of biblical literature, and select the soundest and most approved works in Christian theology? Will he take the Catholic controversy—the Socinian controversy—the infidel controversy? In either of these, I apprehend, he will find, that the non-conformists have supplied a much larger share of standard works than could have been fairly expected of them. We might even advance a step further, and ask, whether the preponderance of sound, scriptural criticism—of irresistible Protestant argument—and of Useful practical divinity, has not proceeded from dissenting pens?

Nos genera degustaraus non bibliothecas discutimus.—Nec ignora quantam mihi concitem pugnam, cum præsertim id non sit propositi, ut hos illis comparere.

Quinct.

ARGUMENT VI.—FOR THE EXPEDIENCY OF THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

His sixth argument states, that “it would be unthankful and unwise not to note the tokens of the divine favour, evinced in the protection of the Church, and in the fruits of the Holy Spirit within her.” Here he quite loses himself in extatic admiration of the Church, under the misleading personification of a tender

and matronly female of astounding longevity, who first struggles for Gospel truth, then falls as a helpless victim into the hands of Roman tyranny, under Mary—when she beholds her best sons silenced by exile and the stake, her light almost extinguished, but rises again with life and spirit after the death of Mary, then struggling again with dissent, brought to the dust, reviving again, and entering upon a fresh conflict with Popery. Now, allowing a little for the extravagance of this metaphor, and divesting it of rhetorical ornament, it means simply this—that the Church, as an establishment, including the great body of its clergy and laity, was changed first from Popish to Protestant, then from Protestant to Popish, and finally from Popish back again to Protestant; and that, through all these changes, there were always some few men of conscience, who would not bow to the sovereign will of the prince or the legislature, but stood prepared to brave, for their religious principles, whether these were Popish or Protestant, the terrors of exile or the stake: but that, in fact, the great body of the clergy were contented either way—though, left to their own choice, they were, through all these changes, vastly and invariably more inclined to Popery than to Protestantism, and have as uniformly been favourable to arbitrary power, in preference to constitutional liberty. As to the Church's enjoyment of any remarkable tokens of the divine favour, which might designate her whole constitution, as the special favourite of heaven, all her history, and her works, as well as her present infirm state, *seem*, at least, to indicate an adverse conclusion. At all events, have not other churches been equally, or even more prospered? And if success be any proof of divine favour, and any argument of right, what possible priority can the Church of England claim? She has evidently declined immensely in public favour, while all the other denominations of real Christians have not merely maintained their ground, but have made, and are still making, large accessions to their numbers. If the Church of England may boast of divine favour, her rivals may boast of it in a far greater degree; his argument, therefore, is worse than fruitless—it proves suicidal, and does but mock its author. I frankly admit that, in all ages, the Establishment has had many brilliant stars in its hemisphere; that, in many places, it has been a great blessing; that, in recent times, it has been excited to truly Christian exertions; and I delight, as much as any of its sons, in its evangelical labours, at home and abroad. But I contend, that none of these things result from it *simply as a legal establishment*; and that, had it not been for its connection with the state, it would have abounded much more plentifully in all good fruits. Its connection with the state is, at the present

time, the heaviest drawback it has to sustain. This is the source of nearly all its corruptions, and of all its dangers. Its highest honours in modern times—its missionary, bible, and other enterprises, Mr. G. knows, do not belong to it, *as an establishment*; do not take place under *state* or ecclesiastical patronage; and are, in no sense, the fruits of its fundamental principle. All such efforts are discountenanced, and condemned as irregular, by the *soi disant* orthodox majority. These are the fruits of the *voluntary principle*, introduced into the Church Establishment, either by way of *infraction*, or by way of *supplement*. I give churchmen full credit for the share they have taken in all voluntary Christian enterprises. They have, in many instances, acted upon independent principles, to the disregard of Church-and-state etiquette. But the modern efforts they have made are no more the fruits of the Establishment, than the reform bill, the emancipation of the Catholics, or the repeal of the *test and corporation acts*; to all which measures some of them have always been highly favourable; but the majority as decidedly opposed.

Mr. G. says, "there is no church, the constitution of which is so well suited to preserve unity without sacrifice of sacred principle; and to avert that disunion among believers which is so deeply lamented by the wise and peaceful of other congregations. Nor is this a slight explanation of the causes for which the *government by bishops was universally established over Christendom in the age of the Apostles*." (p. 84.) This whole statement we consider to be fallacious. The only unity the Church of England possesses is *verbal*—one creed on paper—another, or rather many others, in the hearts of her ministers: one Lord on paper, but many lords in reality: professing to be under the headship of Christ alone, but submitting to the supremacy of an earthly potentate, from whom all orders of the clergy receive their commission to be ministers of the gospel—maintaining a uniformity of worship, but admitting *the utmost discrepancy of religious sentiments*. As to his reference to the disunion among the pious of other congregations, it is manifest that whatever he knows of their disunion, he knows but little of the unity existing among them; and he must allow me to remind him, that it very ill becomes a person who maintains a visible church-union with the ungodly and unconverted, to reproach others for *disunion*—when such a unity as his church enjoys is anything but a credit and a blessing—at least according to St. Paul's doctrine in all his Epistles. I heartily wish the Church of England enjoyed as much true spiritual union, and upon as *sound principles*, among all her ministers, and her people, as is enjoyed among the great bodies of orthodox dissenters.

Happy will that day be for the Church of England when she can rival, in the identity of faith taught in her pulpits, and the Christian unity felt among her ministers, either the Methodists, Baptists, or Independents. They can say almost without an exception, that in all their churches the Saviour is held up as the only object of a sinner's faith, and justification through the blood and righteousness of Christ, connected with spiritual regeneration by the Holy Ghost, is proclaimed as the substance of the Holy Gospel. Among us there is a real unity, a unity of principle and feeling, of minds and hearts; and as to the divisions and contentions which sometimes arise, they are not more frequent than they appear to have been in Apostolic times and churches. Greatly as they are to be deplored, they are Symptoms of an identity of constitution with the Primitive churches, rather than otherwise; as the very diseases of a human body identify it with the whole suffering family of man: while the absence of such from the mere statue proves that it has no affinity with human nature, though wrought into its shape. The prevention of similar contentions, and the introduction of others of a totally different nature, by the system of the National Church, demonstrates that another power has been introduced, beyond and alien to, that which originated with Christ and his Apostles. To the Established Church, or its congregations, many precepts and admonitions in the Apostolic Epistles are inappropriate, and nugatory, because the *congregation* cannot practice them; and such portions of the Epistles might, for any use made of them in the congregations of the Establishment, be almost as well blotted out.

But let us not be reproached with our contentions—are there none in the venerable Establishment?—have there been no contentious vestry-meetings held in Birmingham?—are there no contentions about tithes, Easter dues, &c. &c. &c.? I might ask Mr. G. whether since he has resided in Birmingham, he has heard of any such disgraceful contentions, in any of the dissenting congregations of that town, as have taken place in its Churches? If we have contentions, they are just such as occurred in the days of Paul, and we are content to remedy them in the same way as he did. But whether they be few or many, they do not endanger the existence of our churches, for with them we still increase and prosper, and it is very evident, however Mr. G. would intimate that he knows of the existence of such things, and is not unwilling that the world should know it too, that contentions among us are much less frequent, and much less injurious to the cause of religion than in the parishes of the Establishment. When did Mr. G. ever hear a dissenting minister proclaim the danger of his denomination from the

contentions which existed within it? Why is it that the Established Church alone is convulsed with the cry of *reform*, and from *its* ministers exclusively is heard "*the Church is in danger?*" The reason clearly is, because the Church of England is founded upon human laws, which human authority may alter or annul, while other Christian churches stand simply upon the word of God. As to the *government of bishops being universally established over Christendom in the age of the Apostles*, I beg leave to say, that no such government as that by *diocesan* bishops did ever exist in any part of Christendom in the Apostles' days, nor till long after. The only bishops known to the New Testament were the pastors of single churches, and these strictly independent of each other in their government, I could produce ample testimony to this point, but I shall content myself with a single brief citation from the Bishop of Bristol's late work on "*The Ecclesiastical History of the Second and Third Centuries.*" He says, "the passages already alleged sufficiently prove, that in Tertullian's estimation, all the Apostolic Churches were *independent of each other, and equal in rank and authority,*" (p. 136.) If Mr. G. does not know this, he is a novice in Church History. But as to a government by bishops having no cure of souls, but being merely the governors of the clergy, like that of the present Church of England, it is wholly unknown to the age he mentions; so that the closing sentence of the paragraph last quoted from Mr. G., is a total illusion, by means of the phrase *government by bishops*, and can have no other effect than to impose a false notion upon the ignorance or simplicity of his readers. Let it be explained that by *bishop*, the New Testament and early ecclesiastical history, both intend a pastor of a single church—and that each separate society of Christians in the Apostolic times, was independent of all foreign control; and where then, is the model of his universal government by bishops throughout Christendom in the age of the Apostles? It has vanished or transformed itself, under Dr. Kay's hands, into *Independency!*

His peroration consists partly of an apology, partly of a repetition; neither of which requires any particular notice from me. We find here, however, two or three bold and new assertions, which must not be allowed to pass as true. He says, "it has been my duty to urge what will never be disproved—that the Establishment of this country is lawful, is scriptural, is most expedient." Now this is a bold, a very bold assertion; for I maintain, and I hope I have in some measure shewn, that wherein the Church of England is essentially a human establishment, it is neither *lawful, scriptural*, nor expedient; unless, indeed, all that is not

expressly forbidden in Scripture is lawful, by which door every Popish superstition must be Admitted. The Establishment cannot be scriptural, unless what is found nowhere in Scripture may be said to be so; and in this sense the Popedom and conclave of cardinals, is equally scriptural. It cannot be *expedient*, unless what is least productive of beneficial results be expedient. After a tolerably boastful declaration of what the Church has done for us, scarcely one word of which is correct, he sounds tire trumpet of victory, and sits down to enjoy his imaginary triumph. But before I dismiss his discourses I must refer to one or two errors of material importance in his concluding paragraphs. "She (the Church) brought them (our fathers) forth from the dangers of mystic Babylon—she broke from their shoulders the debasing yoke of idolatrous ignorance, &c.—she presented to all the Word of God in a version, the general accuracy of which, has made it," &c. Now I beg leave to demur to the whole of this;—the Church, as an establishment! performed none of these magnificent works—but long and Resolutely opposed them all. It was the conflicting power of the people, and of the truth brought to light by persecuted individuals, *against the Church*, and against the state, that effected these memorable achievements; it was the spontaneous efforts of individuals that first gave us the Word of God in our vernacular language, and then it was the people who demanded, and the state which gave, a standard version of the Scriptures. Wickliffe and Tyndal, Frith and Barnes, were, both practically and essentially, the *dissenters* of that day, and in their ecclesiastical opinions came much nearer to the opinions of modern dissenters, than to those even of the present National Church. Of this, however, Mr. G. seems not to be aware; I will not, therefore, contend with him Upon these points of history, until he has made himself better acquainted with them, and With the uniform conduct of the Established Church in *resisting till innovations through all ages*. From such a source he can derive no support whatever to a National Establishment of Christianity. The Church must be judged by that Bible which he says she has put into our hands: by that, indeed, all consistent Protestants must stand or fall—but by that Bible she stands impeached, and convicted too, of introducing a principle into New Testament Churches opposed to the words of Jesus Christ, and the practice of his Apostles. Further—she stands convicted of framing a constitution for herself different from that which was universally admitted among the early churches, which is subversive of their discipline, and in many respects, opposed to sound doctrine and common sense; And, finally; the test of above 250 years proves how inefficient her principles have been in the promotion of the gospel.

It only remains that the nation should determine what shall be done with a fabric which has always been so burdensome, and whose corruptions have, at length, become intolerable. Should her *principle* and her *constitution* be sent to the tomb of all the Capulets, I cannot see that Christian piety would be bound to shed a tear. All that is scriptural and spiritual would remain *imperishable*; all that is *human* would pass away. I entertain no fear for that church which is built upon the rock; but for that which is built upon a kingdom of this world, and owns the secular prince as its head, I entertain no reverence. Whenever it shall please Providence to take down the scaffolding of an Established Church, and to remove the rubbish with which it is surrounded and encumbered, it will only be to shew, in a clearer light, and in more perfect beauty, the spiritual edifice which exists in these realms. Every real Christian must surely feel persuaded that, should the Plead of the Church withdraw from it the arm of flesh, it will only give occasion for the more auspicious display of *his* presence, and *his* protection, who says, "I will be a wall of fire round about her, and the glory in the midst of her,"—"Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world."

I have contended, in these pages, for nothing that is of human invention, and I resist nothing that can shew a divine origin. Some may think this controversy needless and offensive, But, when it is considered that the source of all our contentions and differences is the introduction of human authority into the Church of Christ, it will not appear either uncharitable or unwise to aim at the removal of all those principles which mar our unity, and prevent us from acting with consolidated power and undivided energy against the kingdom of darkness.

Benedicta prælia quibus regnum Christi necessitate defenditur.

Calv.

After the attempt which I have here made to invalidate the reasonings brought forward in defence of the Established Church, I feel bound to state, that my only aim is truth and charity—that my chief object of hostility is that *constitution*, which makes the Episcopal Church *secular* and human, and thereby imposes upon her an aspect of opposition and of exclusionism towards all other churches. With the profession of great liberality and tolerance, this Church is, after all, cut off from all recognition of other bodies of Christians. Ministers

of other churches cannot enter her pulpits, and her ministers, as such, can hold no communion in the worship and ordinances of God with others. These barriers, which belong exclusively to the Church Establishment, should be all removed; till they are, she must retain the character of *the most sectarian* of all Protestant denominations in the kingdom. It seems to be in the very nature of established churches to make non-essentials to Christianity essential to communion with themselves.

We all confess the Church of Christ to be one — it was one in its purest and most prosperous age;

Fraternæ que fidem pacis petiitque, deditque.

The spiritual, and only the spiritual, belong to Christ, and to one another. There can be no justification in our sectarian peculiarities for violating that unity which ought to be evinced by receiving one another in the Lord. All truly spiritual men ought to be ready to receive all other spiritual men to all the privileges of the Lord's house. We never shall reconcile all opinions; but we ought to unite all hearts. We shall, probably, never harmonize all views of church-government; but we shall have got far towards the primitive oneness, when we have given up, as essential to Christian fellowship, all human terms of communion, and require nothing but a sincere faith and a consistent life. No other union is so sacred as that which is formed by a participation of the *one Spirit*. No terms of communion, among real Christians, should be imposed, but such as all confess are essential to union with Christ. Whatever unites us to him, should be sufficient to unite us to each other. On such principles, it appears to me, the Apostolic Churches were founded: for the authority and prevalence of them I have contended, solely because I wish to see the Church of Christ *united*, and because I believe the chief barrier to its union is to be found in the human additions made to its principles, and to the terms of communion with it. Let all these, as we conceive, needless appendages, be abolished, and it would, unquestionably, make a large and important advance towards that perfection which is to be the glory of its latter days. We are all agreed that a wider and more perfect unity is highly desirable, and ought to be made the object of universal pursuit by the disciples of Christ, as we know it is the object of his intercession—"that they *all* may be *one*, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." Verily, it must come to this before Christianity will attain the pre-eminence to which it is destined. We cannot, therefore, be better employed than in detecting and reprobating whatever hinders this consummation. For the sake, then, of this unity among the disciples of Christ, which

must precede the conversion of the world, let us each return to the integrity and simplicity of the divine word, and disclaim all human additions and improvements. Let us sigh, and pray, and strive for the unity of Christ's Church. But how may a Christian, that longs and prays for this, reasonably hope to see it accomplished? Surely, never by all sects bowing down to any one; never by one absorbing all the rest; but by all banishing from their own communion whatever human wisdom, or secular power, or a worldly spirit may have added to the doctrine and commands of Christ. When once that is done, all denominations of real Christians will appear to stand, and will really stand, as near to one another as may be necessary for the unity of the Church, and the triumphal advancement of Christ's kingdom. Our love to the peculiarity of our several opinions, being, after all, a love for points not essential to salvation, must not be allowed to militate against that more ardent affection which ought to be felt towards the general features of Christianity and of the Christian character. We shall then, indeed, be one—*το εν και αυτο φρονειν*, and love will appear, as it is, the greatest of all Christian virtues. "This heavenly grace the Apostle Paul exalts above prophecies, tongues, knowledge, the faith of miracles, the most magnificent alms, the very zeal of martyrdom! Now this love, the only cure for the gangrene of party strife—the most characteristic feature of Christ's image in a renewed man—the most precious fruit of grace; and yet the fruit which the bulk of his professed followers seem to think themselves under hardly any obligation to cultivate—this love is declared to originate in the love of God shed abroad in the heart; and to be drawn out towards the brethren precisely on this account, that they are *the children of God*—the disciples of Christ, and, therefore, not on account of their adherence to one or another denomination, however sound it may be in the faith; *hereby*, said the master, *hereby shall all men know that ye are MY disciples, if ye have love one towards another. Every one*, adds the beloved John, who lay in his bosom and drank deeply into his spirit, *every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him*. And surely the description which Paul has given in the thirteenth of 1 Cor., corresponds to any thing else as well to that gloomy distance and sour disdain which are cherished by some professed Christians towards others, of whose graces, the light is at least equal to their own; and which, by a hardihood not easily attained or equalled, are converted into a testimony for Jesus Christ!"

It is the IMAGE OF CHRIST, and not human forms of worship, or human constitutions, or human creeds, that must form the

principle of a universal fellowship of saints, and the glory of the millennial church.

“Blessed likeness! Enchanting loveliness!” Are the painted earth-made vizors which conceal “the human face divine,” and substitute in its room, their own deformed and forbidding visages, worth the price they cost us? worth the conflicts, which have all the pains of military warfare, without its recompense; and all the hardihood of chivalry without its generosity? worth the broken unity, the blighted peace, the tarnished beauty, the prostrate energy, the humbled honors of the church of God? Ah, no! our hearts feel that they are not. What then, remains, but to lay aside our petty contests? to strike our hands in a covenant of love—“a holy league,” offensive and defensive for the common Christianity—to present our consolidated front to the legions of error and death; and march on, under the command and conduct of the captain of our salvation, till the nations mingle their shouts in that thundering *alleluia*—“the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!”

ERRATA.

The author has to apologize for the following typographical errors, which his distance from the press has occasioned.

Page 37, line 10, the note of *interrogation* after the word *agency*, should be a *comma*.

— 49, line 20, for *sibyls'* read *sibyl's*.

— 60, line 14, insert *comma* after *perfectness*, and dele it after *faith*.

— 68, line 15, from bottom, for *interference* read *interfere*.

— 78, line 8, from bottom, insert *of* after *ignorant*.

— 80, line 3, from bottom, unite *summumque*.

— 91, line 16, for *counsel*, read *council*.

— —, line 4, from bottom, for *references*, read *reference*.