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# REASONS

FOR

## RETIRING FROM THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

BY CHARLES HARGROVE,<sup>k</sup>

SOMETIME RECTOR AND VICAR OF THE PARISH OF KILMINA.

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SECOND EDITION.

CORRECTED AND ENLARGED.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

I WISH briefly to state wherein this edition differs from the last. The introduction is new, also the notes inclosed in brackets, and further, there are a few additions in the body of the work, chiefly in pages 76 to 80, 87, and towards the close—there is no change in the sentiments, or principle of the work.

The word “Church” is occasionally used not in its true acceptation, but as it is in common parlance, as we say the Church of Rome, the Church of England, &c. not that I mean thereby to sanction the propriety of the word as thus applied, but to avoid circumlocution where custom has made the usage familiar.

In considering the interpretation of John xiv. 28, 30, in p. xx. of the Introduction, I wish to add, that whether the coming of Satan refer to our blessed Lord’s approaching agony and trial, as some may interpret the passage, or to the increased power of



#### ADVERTISEMENT.

Satan over the world, by its rejection of the Son of God, the conclusion is unaffected—he is still the “prince of this world,” as Scripture abundantly testifies, and experience too sadly proves.

I would further only add, that this little work was originally published in Ireland, and therefore when such expressions as “this country” occur, as in the note p. 83, or similar allusions, the reader will remember that Ireland is intended.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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A SECOND edition of this Pamphlet has been repeatedly called for; and I know not why I should withhold it. My object was, indeed, attained by the first publication, as giving my reasons for the step I had taken in seceding from the Established Church; but if, without any effort on my part, a desire is manifested for a further circulation, I do not see that I am altogether justified in withholding it. I feel confident in the truth of the principles which it contains; and I do believe that their adoption by the saints would be for God's glory. This assertion of confidence I make, not in ignorance of the publications which have been sent forth in reply to me, of which I must say, that on my own mind they have had no other effect than that of increasing the conviction of the truth in which I stand, and of the error herein of my opponents. I believe that one confident in truth, would not have had recourse (he need not) to the means which have been freely resorted to against me, the accusations and nicknames,\* the garbling and misrepresentations,

\* This is a frequent mode of attack with some of our opponents; and so hurried on by his prejudice is one of them, that at one time he makes a dear brother of ours, after whom he is pleased to call us, our founder, leader, apostle, in fact every thing; but presently we are no better than a mere disorderly republican body. It is an easy thing to call names; but is it righteous? Is it christian? Is it the argument that savours of a good cause? I could, I dare say, were I to follow the example which has been set me—I could discover many a name offensive enough wherewith to brand my opponents, and that without going beyond the

the allusions to private letters and private conversations, and the greediness to gather up every idle gossip, and

precincts of their own communion; indeed, were I to adopt the same means which have been resorted to against me, I could set forth much that I believe would abash some; but this personality is no part of my object. It is, I trust with me, but a little thing by what name we are called. Our God will not esteem us the less; and His favour it is that we covet. Nay; in this, there may be a little of the cross for His name's sake; and if thus we be rendered more contemptible in the eyes of the world, probably so much the better. We may be getting nearer to our proper standing in a world that denied and nicknamed our Lord and Master.

Respecting the individual named, I would say this much, that when first *the little companies of believers came together in separation from the world*, with which he and I are now associated, and to which every believer, without any restriction, is welcome, simply because he is a believer, or accredits himself as such, by his profession and corresponding walk, our brother was then (as I also was and long after) a clergyman of the Established Church. So much for the assertion of his being our founder. And equally true is the assertion of his apostleship. Our dear brother we do indeed esteem and value, and desire to thank God for what he hath given him "to profit withal," and gladly receive from him according to his gift; but as to dictatorship and apostolacy (if thereby be meant any thing of apostolic power), we leave such things to those with their earthly heads and earthly successions, or to those with their still vainer pretensions. We know nothing of them in our brother, or in any other. The Spirit we desire to acknowledge in all His gifts, *whatever, wherever* they be; and further, the apostolic principle of subjection, one to another, in the fear of God. But, further than this, we know not. Equally unfounded is another origin given to us in a late publication, and copied into a religious periodical, in which we are represented as arising from the remnant of what is described as a very disorderly assembly, meeting in this city (Dublin) some years past. But this is all a little matter. I merely notice it in passing as a misrepresentation, one out of many. Our principles, and this is what is of moment, are, I believe, those declared by the apostles; and, further, I do believe, that since their time, there have been those meeting together in them, unknown probably to the world, or if known, then only to be despised. But this is as it should be while the dominion of the usurper lasteth, while Satan is the prince of this world.

A tract of the brother's to whom allusion has been made,

set it forth as characteristic of those holding the principles of the Pamphlet in common with the author.

published some time since, in "reply to an article in the Christian Journal," was, I believe, felt to be difficult of answer, but something it was thought well to do; and, accordingly, it is sifted for hard words and phrases, which are wrested from their connexion, strung together, and then sent forth in a twopenny form, as a representation of what? Of the author's opinions? no; even this injustice would not suffice—but of "our Separating Brethren's!" though the work was avowedly his own; and any harshness of expression, or unkindness of feeling, which, I believe, it was the object of the tract to expose, he was alone accountable for. He who did this injury, well knew "Separating Brethren" to be as free from the evil he would expose as any other brethren upon earth. It is not my object, far from it, to defend all that our brother may have said or done. No; in excitement from unreasonable opposition, he may have said things, and given offence, that I am sorry for, and for which, I believe, were he now by me, he would authorise me to express his sorrow; but he is labouring far away, among those whom the Lord has called, even amid much trial and persecution, into the same principles of the "Separating Brethren," and this without any intercourse or knowledge of each other. While I defend not all that he has said, this I would say; let our blessed Lord's discourses be dealt with as was his pamphlet; let the apostles—let the faithful men of God of this day, or any day—and how may they not be misrepresented?

Another proof of the enmity to this brother, as well as of the blindness of prejudice, is afforded by the accusation, so frequently brought against him, of charging all clergymen with the sin against the Holy Ghost. Not seeing that this would involve his own eternal ruin, as having been once a clergyman, and, of course (if his charge was true) of having committed the sin "which hath never forgiveness." In a tract (and seeing the offence it has caused, I would it had never appeared) he endeavoured to shew, that the abstract notion of a clergyman involved the sin. Not that the clergyman committed it: no; this was no part of his assertion;—this he disavows, and of this he should not have been accused;—but that, in this dispensation of the Spirit sent down, *dwelling, and ministering in the Church from its risen Head*, the idea of clerical office irrespective of gift, where man was to minister because he was in office, and that without the Spirit; and where the Spirit could not minister by whom and as He would, but must wait upon man and man's office, and only flow through this channel opened of man,—our brother's view was, that in this



Often while my opponents entirely overlook what I have said, I find them strenuously combating what I have not said ;\* but which they kindly say for me, and

principle was the sin involved, and not that the individual was guilty of it. I will not take it on me to assert that this is *the sin* ; but assuredly it is very grievous sin against the Holy Spirit of God.

\* This is indeed the case to a surprising extent. So much so, that one would almost be disposed to question whether some of those who have answered my pamphlet ever read it throughout: attentively they certainly did not, for the alternative I am unwilling to entertain. I constantly find errors attributed to me of which I feel perfectly innocent, or have distinctly disavowed. I feel that it is a reasonable request, but a very important one, that people would judge of my principles by my own statement, and not by the statements of my friends who have replied to me. One instance only I will refer to—the continually repeated misrepresentation of our object ; as if it was the formation of a perfect church ; as if we expected a church composed exclusively of the Lord's people. This is again and again reiterated ; though again and again it has been disclaimed in these pages. See pp. 51, 92, 93, 101, &c. A perfect church, or a church composed exclusively of the Lord's people, is no part of our hope, whatsoever else it may be. No : I believe assuredly that there will be much of evil and infirmity till our blessed Lord come ; and much mixture in the church, of those who are truly God's children, with those who have only a name to live while they are dead in sin. This I freely acknowledge. This I have ever acknowledged. My hope is not in any perfectness in the church ; but in the coming of our blessed Lord to perfect all things. But am I, therefore, in opposition to the plain word of God, to sit down in the acknowledgment of evil ? Because there is, and will be, a mixture in the church, am I therefore to mix up the church and the world—Am I wilfully to unite believer and unbeliever in fellowship ? Because there will be false professors, am I to receive those who make no profession ? Because there will be hypocrites professing, but not possessing the truth, am I to recognise those who are openly of the world, living in its sin ? We do not object to the church because of there being a mixture of true and false professors in it ; but because of its openness to, and oneness with the world ; because the world is in it ; and those who use these kind of arguments would be sharp enough to detect their fallacy and futility if used against themselves. But the system makes them necessary,—what a load of evil does it not ? What a pity that in a day when the axe is laid to its root, and when the Lord is raising up and banding together brethren in

then demolish with a flourish of victory. These means—so very distressing in those whom one would esteem as brethren—are proof to me that he who uses them does not feel the cause he advocates sufficiently strong in truth, and these means have been very freely resorted to. Indeed, so far do our opponents seem carried by their enmity against us, and so general now is their opposition, that we might almost lay claim to the honour of “the sect every where spoken against.” One of them can so ill restrain his enmity as foolishly to publish his thanksgiving, that we are “a petty miserable minority”! But there is blessedness in this; it forces one into the experience of the preciousness of that word, “Fear not *little* flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

I can confidently say, that I am not aware of having used any of those means (in truth I did not need them) which have been so freely used against me. I think, if I know myself, that I am not unwilling to have my

the common faith and common principles in different countries, and that unknown to each other, we should still see men of God so bound by its spell; putting forth their energies to support and uphold that which is so grievous to thousands of the saints, and which so hinders their communion, rather than meeting on the ground of the word, the large place where all saints may meet together, unhindered by the imposition of defective creeds and articles, liturgical forms and ceremonies, and excommunicating canons, binding on the conscience requirements, many of which, I believe, are antisciptural, and some simply indifferent, and should be left so. It is strange that those who have their Master’s honour at heart should be insensible to such things; but when the obedience which is due to the Lord is transferred to something else, it must be so; and transferred I believe it is, in measure at least, to the system, which, in my sorrowful experience with my brethren of the Establishment, I have found generally to rise above the claims of our common Christianity.

principles tried by the severest test to which they may be submitted; and if they cannot pass the ordeal, then let them fall, and from me at least they shall have no helping hand. I only ask, let the ordeal be a scriptural one, and let there be fair dealing. Let what I have said be answered, and not the incessant garbling, perversion, and sneering, which, when mixed up, as constantly they are, with "my friend" and "dear brother," &c., are just sickening to the heart. I *may* be wrong, but I say it not in the hurry of excitement or novelty, but after the calm deliberation of nearly three years, that I know not wherein the principles which I have set forth are erroneous; or, further, wherein I have misrepresented the principles of the communion which I have been constrained to forsake. I have made no mere assertion of her principles; I have shewn them from her own formularies. I have stated no abuse which is not a notorious matter of fact. I have not misrepresented her, or visited on her the corruption of the individual, when she has not accredited the corruption by her passive endurance of it. I have the testimony of my conscience (and it is a blessed witness to have), that I am in this honest before the Lord.\* I will confess that I find it very hard

\* Such has been my object; and yet my poor tract has not fared one bit the better. I have laboured after as kindly a spirit as I could towards my brethren; but, so far as they are concerned, I find that I might have spared my pains. Objections *will* be made, till the Spirit of God make obedience to His word paramount to every other consideration; but however I may fare, I trust that I may ever be kept from any other spirit.—As to the matter of my pamphlet, some have told me that my reasons are but a string of stale objections, and weak withal, patched up for the occasion.—This certainly is not very flattering; but then, for my comfort, neither can I believe that it is very true.—My object was to

to believe the same of some of those who have replied to me : from their replies I judge ; but to their own Master I leave them.

state to my brethren the objections which weighed with my own mind, in arriving at the conclusion that I could not conscientiously abide in the Established Church, and not to dwell upon all the objections of which I was aware ; which would have swollen my pamphlet into a ponderous folio : though some will talk of a "microscopic medium" in discovering the abuses of the Establishment.—Microscopic!!!—This is too bad, but a man can see nothing if he will shut his eyes ; and this is the way of many. But such being my object, I have confined myself to two heads, and the answering some objections.—1st. The worldliness :—that as an establishment she is a thing of this world, and not of God.—2nd. The allowance of evil as exhibited in the baptismal ordination, and burial services ; where evil is so bound on the conscience, that one can only get rid of it by getting rid of the system. These I have plainly stated without going into the details of error which usually are dwelt on ; and this one of the reviewers of my pamphlet has noticed. One thing I can assure my readers, that new or stale I have thought all "my reasons" for myself ; but there is no pleasing some people.

Since the publication of this pamphlet, Mr. Ryland's book on Church Reform has come into my hands. I am sure that I have not stated the evil of the church in stronger terms, nor I believe in so strong as he has ; nor have I at all gone into the detail of error which he has displayed. I felt that it was not my object.—With very much of Mr. R's views I of course agree, but from the practical result to which his views lead him I altogether differ. However I am unwilling to press Mr. R. with the consequence of his views after his own, at least, candid confession. I would commend to those dissatisfied with my statements, Mr. Ryland's summary of evil in the Church. Here let them see the opinion of a churchman who has not separated, and here see that I am not altogether so sophistical and slanderous as some would make me out. But possibly had I not separated I too might have set forth details of evil with impunity. But hear Mr. R. By the way he must have a very "microscopic" eye.

"What do we gain by the party spirit of the preface to the liturgy ; the ill-selection of proper lessons, epistles, and gospels ; the retention of legendary names and allusions in the calendar ; the lection of the apocrypha, and the omission of the apocalypse ; the mention of feasts and fasts never observed ; the repetition of the Pater Noster, Kyrie Eleison, and Gloria Patri ; the wearisome

If it be asked why I do not more formally consider these replies: for this reason among others;—because so far as I have yet seen, I am willing to leave the issue of the question with such as will candidly and impartially consider the subject (and for others, reasons are useless), to what I have published, and here republish. I do not feel the demand for an answer. I believe, as a friend writes to me, that I have answered them by anticipation, and there is little *bearing upon the question* in any of the replies which have been sent forth, to which I could not refer to some page in my pamphlet as supplying the refutation. I believe that the principles I have set forth (though with much of feebleness and infirmity, I am most ready to acknowledge), are unanswerable; at least on the ground of the New Testament. And, therefore, do I find that the sources from which my opponents have derived materials for their different replies, are, Jewish analogies, traditionary sources, reasonings from expediency, and certain evil consequences very liberally assumed and appended to our principles. Indeed, in one reply, an expression which I have used of the New Testament, as “the directory of the saints in this dispensa-

length of the services; the redundance and assumptions of the state prayers; the unsatisfactoriness of the three creeds; the disputable character of the baptismal and burial offices; the incompleteness and dubious construction of the catechism and of the order of confirmation; the inapplicable nature and absolution of the visitation of the sick; the imperfection of the commination service; the discordance between the prayer-book and Bible translation of the Psalms; the contumelious and offensive language of the state services; and added to all these sources of weakness, similar causes of inefficiency in the Articles and Homilies.”—p. 209.

tion,"\* is the subject of continual sneer; something very like an avowal, one would think, of inability to meet the question on this ground. I do believe, indeed, that it cannot thus be met; and I doubt if there be one competent, by ordinary instruction and freedom from prejudice, to form a judgment, who is not conscious of this; however he may see other reasons to justify him in his support of the system. I confess myself, under the belief, that if the system was presented singly to the true-hearted saints in the establishment, to each individually for his support or rejection, according to its intrinsic value, and without any knowledge how the minds of others were affected towards it, I do believe that thus dealt with by its own merit, it would not number one in fifty of those whom it now holds captive. But we all know how few will think for themselves; or, when they do think, will act, when they have to go against the stream. In error, even as in truth, we are encouraged and strengthened by association; and this is one reason why we see so many abiding in the established religion of the land under such grievous misgivings of conscience. They are countenanced and encouraged by others of character for wisdom and piety; thus they endeavour to pacify

\* We have been accused of slighting, if not neglecting, the Old Testament Scriptures. God forbid that we should do so! we know that they were "given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness," and those who are in the habit of attending our meetings, know how frequently they are the ground of our ministry, how we honour them unto this, for which God hath given them; but we do believe that for instruction as to the church's standing, her privileges, and her hope, it is to the scriptures of this dispensation, and not of the last, we are to look as our directory.

the misgivings within ; “ they helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.”

The grand evil of the establishment, as it seems to me, is the confounding what should be separate ; the Church and the world. The world is introduced into the Church ; and, in return for the favour, she is established and honoured by the world. They which, in God’s word, are distinct as light and darkness, are thus amalgamated. The world, all the while, continues unchanged ; it is the world still ; but the Church, by the unhappy union, loses its distinctive and blessed character. On this I have largely dwelt in the pamphlet ; and the defence of this is the principal subject of the replies which I have seen.

It is a master-device of Satan to give a religion without life and godliness. He knows that man will not do without something that he can call religion, to satisfy the craving of his conscience. This is fully exhibited in Romanism ; where we see great zeal for the system, but no life in the soul ; and, therefore, no power of godliness in the life. Now, the position of the Established Church, I fear, necessarily tends to perpetuate this evil. It practically forbids the separation of the saint from the sinner, or of the holy professor from the careless non-professor ; and thus it works double evil ; to the believer in hindering his standing out from mere nominalism, and thus hindering his communion ; and to the bulk of nominalists in affording them shelter in a name while destitute of the life and hope of the gospel. Here is what the establishment presents to us, and here is, I believe, sad evil. The Church is not the “ body of faithful men,” of holy pro-

fessors, as it should be ; but the whole congregation, professing and non-professing, except, indeed, as a profession may be made by the lips of the parish clergymen, or, as their names may be found among the baptisms in the parish registry. Thus are the great bulk judged ; not by their own intelligent profession, not by their fruits indicating its truth, but by this sad mockery ; sad and sorrowful indeed in its result. Thus, an ordinance of God (which I am accused of making light of, but which God knoweth I do desire to honour as I do every thing from Him) is, by its abuse, made a cover and justification of all kind of evil principle ; degrading His truth to a mere name and form, destitute of life and power ; endangering souls, and subversive of all true Christian communion.

One source of the evil is, I believe, the not distinguishing between the "evil world," and evil and worldliness in the Church. The latter may exist, and probably does more or less in every church, and in every professor. The former is that which is in direct contrast to the Church, and from which the Church is a separation. Now, I find, that in meeting the charge of identification with the world, a common mode with members of the Establishment is, to dwell on the worldliness of some of the primitive churches, as exhibited in the apostolic epistles. This I do not deny. I could not, indeed, with the New Testament in my hand ; but I say, that while they retained, in many instances, a strong savour of the evil world they had but lately left, still they held a principle, the nature of which was to separate them from it, and which did so, and ever does so, as it



is acted on; and further, in practice also, in a measure at least, were they distinct; and to effect this increasingly was the object of ministry, even as it should now be in the true church. But how do nine-tenths of the members of the Establishment differ from the world, either in principle or practice. I am sure I know not. And here is the evil. Worldliness in saints may be corrected. It is the subject of correction by teaching, exhortation, rebuke, and discipline, as we see in the case of the Corinthian church, to which I have referred, p. 91-2; but when the world is let in and identified with the church, I know not what remedy is to be applied, but the separation of the saints from such evil association. There is all possible difference between the believer in ever so low a state, and those who are still of the world, unconverted, dead in sin. With the latter, our work should be to declare unto them the gospel, that they may be saved.

But it is said that we cannot now distinguish between the one and the other; that we have not the gift of discerning spirits; and that, therefore, we should not judge. This argument just makes for the unrighteous principle of confounding all who have been baptized in one indiscriminate mass, and calling it the Church, the baptized world! and this is the way which some have of honouring God's ordinances, reducing them to a mere lifeless letter, and thus confounding the apostasy with the church of God, and helping on the downward tendency of the nation to Romanism; but I shall not add to what I have said on this subject in the note, p. 55-6. As to our not having the gift of discerning spirits: admitting that we have not, this has nothing to say to the question;

the gift was not originally for the separation of the true children of God from the world, or to enable those who possessed it, to decide on the truth of such as presented themselves for admission to the Church. If it had been, we may suppose that none others would have been admitted; that false brethren would not have crept in unawares; or having crept in, would not have been allowed to continue. The gift, then, has just nothing to say to the question. It was, as its name imports, for discerning *spirits*, and not for deciding on the qualification of professors. And why may we not now distinguish between him who makes a profession of the truth, and him who does not; between him whose life manifests that there is more than a name in his profession, and him whose life denies it; between the clean and the unclean? What it is that prevents us from thus distinguishing more than those of old, I am sure I know not, quite admitting our exposure to deception, even as was the primitive church, and as the church will be till our Lord come; from this God only is exempt. "He knoweth them that are His." Our duty is to receive those that we know; those who are commended to us from our knowledge of them; and not to make our ignorance the bond of union; or a name, a cloke and excuse for our ignorance. The same Scripture, 2 Tim. ii. 19., that telleth us of God's secret knowledge of His own people, presents us also with their manifested character. "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." When we are acting on any principle in opposition to this, or allowing a name or form to invalidate its power, then we are acting in apostasy, and making an ordinance of God the excuse for it.—

But the very existence of a church supposes judgment; and every address and exhortation proceeds on this supposition, to those we judge called of God amid the alienation of the world; and every act of discipline is but the further exercise of judgment.—If it be only contended that it is not our province to sit in judgment on the mind or motives of others, most readily, then, do I concede it; and most earnestly would I exhort and caution brethren against it. But surely we must judge of *principle* as it is professed; if not, then what is our common Christianity, and how am I to discern between Christian and heathen morality? How between God's truth and the different shapes of error to which Satan has given currency? How even from infidelity, if I am not to judge of professed principle? And as surely I am to judge of *conduct*. What is principle without it? "He gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify to Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." The profession of sound principles with false practice is just antinomianism or hypocrisy, as it may be: and therefore do I find our Lord sanctioning, nay enforcing the principle. His word is, "Judge righteous judgment." Again, "By their fruits ye shall know them." The Apostle's word is, "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good." How could they prove all things; how could they "try things which differ;" or "approve the excellent?" Without this judgment, how can they love the brethren; how discern them without judgment. Are not all Church associations and Christian fellowship societies just founded on this exercise of judgment. But in truth there

are few, if any, Christian people in the Established Church or elsewhere, who do not proceed on this very principle in their own private intercourse; and thus justify us who act openly on the principle, and condemn their own practice of indiscriminate communion. We don't stand and reason on the propriety of separating from a drunkard, an adulterer, or profane person; yet what is this but the exercise of judgment. But there must be judgment if there be faithfulness; and just as we fail herein, will we bring ourselves under judgment of the Lord. I am sure I earnestly desire that all judgment be founded on God's word, and that whatever is not, be discarded; I believe of the word that it is in truth God's very word, and therefore sufficient for us under all circumstances. I believe that it never will fail us; though we through ignorance and prejudice may often fail it.

The practical evil (or one I should say, for they be many) of this denial of judgment, is the positive hindrance to communion. The saint needs communion. It is one of God's appointed means to him of blessing;\* and allowing for all abuse (and what good is there un-abused) it is still blessing, as many can truly testify; and the loss of it must of course be the loss of so much blessing. The saint, I say, requires commu-

\* It has been objected to us by those who cannot have communion in its church, that we make too much of it, and slight communion with God; but God forbid! we do indeed prize the communion of the saints as a blessed means of more intimate communion with God, and of more conformity to His mind; apart from this, we little value means or ordinances. We find the object of John was to lead the saints into fellowship. But was it to rest in this fellowship as the end of their attainment? No; but in order to bring them into the higher fellowship — "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John, i. 3.

nion. It is the longing of the unselfish spirit within him, and which he has of God, to mingle itself with kindred spirits, and hand in hand to help each other up the hill, amid the opposing and conflicting hosts within him and around, with what our God out of his common grace hath given unto each. But where is he to get it in the Established Church? Why, he is directed for communion to the baptized members of his Church. This he feels cannot satisfy him. It is but sad and unfeeling mockery to the Spirit within him. He feels himself straitened and hindered by this unrighteous effort to satisfy his hungry soul with that which is not bread; and at length, as has been the experience of many, he sits down desiring it may be communion with God—but with His saints! ah! believing that there is no such thing, or unwilling to encounter the risk of seeking it where it may be found—and thus seeking to satisfy himself with some poor excuse, which while he utters with his lips, his conscience rejects as untrue. There seems at this day a growing desire among believers for communion; and this it should be the very joy of a church to foster among her children. This the Establishment *cannot*. Indiscriminate union of baptized persons, of parishioners, is her principle; and not communion of those who manifest the life of God. It *cannot* give to the longing soul of the saint what he desires; and *will not* let him find it where he can: at least will hinder him, as she may when his search extends beyond her precincts.\* Most true and

\* It is surprising the means which are used to hinder saints from communion, and keep them in the worldliness of the Establishment. Some time since, and it is no uncommon case, a disciple earnestly desired to hold communion with a few poor despised

blessed is her testimony to Christ in many of her formularies; and by the lips of many of her ministering servants. But he who through grace receives the testimony, and wishes to go on in holy fellowship with those who have had like grace, I say confidently, in the Establishment, he cannot. Communion of saints! Why, the very term "saint" is a nick-name and mockery with a host of those to whom he is directed for communion. I well know that while he is a member of the Established Church he may have communion, but not *with it*. He may, with one or two here or there, with a little select company *he judges* to be faithful out of the mass of nominalists around him; but communion on the Lord's

saints meeting together in the name of the Lord. Every argument was used in support of the Establishment and failed. The last resource was, "Go to church as your parent desires it, and look upon it as part of your cross." So, then, our cross now, it seems, is to act in deliberate violation of conscience, of what we believe God's will. I thought, I suppose in my simplicity, that the flesh it was which we were to crucify; but here I find that it is the Spirit. By this doctrine, I find that the cross is to continue to do what we believe to be evil, to gratify an earthly parent. Most readily will I assert, most determinately will I contend for, the obedience due to an earthly parent in all its fulness, with *this only reserve*, that it cede to the obedience due unto our Heavenly Father. When any authority whatever rises up to interfere with the claim of God, the Lordship of Christ, I know nothing but the word of Peter, "Whether it be right to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye." If not, then I think it follows that our religion is to be, not what God teaches, but what our parent wishes, that it is to be a kind of hereditary heir-loom in the family. While I guard myself from seeming to countenance disobedience to parents, which I abhor, as I believe it is abhorrent to God; I would also guard myself from an opposite error; the seeming to countenance in parents the neglect of their children's souls, of what concerns their spiritual state. God forbid that I should do so; the principle is this, "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

day in worship, communion with his Church, in this he has none; for there he meets the world; a baptized world\* to be sure, but as much alienated from God as any other section of the world. And in grief of heart but in faithfulness do I say it, that in the Establishment, and from a multitude of the Evangelical clergy too, have I found just the same opposition to the communion of saints in separation from the world, that I have from the clergy of the Church of Rome to the great doctrine of salvation through the alone blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I believe just for the same reason; because the obnoxious doctrines clash with their respective systems. Romanism cannot tolerate the glorious truth before which her little sacrifices, purgatories, and penances fall prostrate in the dust; and the Establishment will not hear of separation from a world to which she is so intimately allied, and so deeply a debtor.

I take the opportunity which is afforded me, of offering a few observations on the use, or rather abuse, which has

\* "A baptized world." Even so it is with some. If they go under the ordinance it is enough. Why, we have multitudes of baptized infidels. Aye, and many that have been confirmed too. Are they members of the Church? I may be told that the church describes God's true children, and also describes certain offenders, whom she pronounces excommunicate "ipso facto;" but every one knows what a mockery all this is. She describes them, and suppose truly, but what then? Why, she will give all submitting to her ordinances credit for being what she describes, and will treat them as such; and as to excommunication, I never saw one so treated in my life, whatever or however many his offences may have been. Her description of the believer, and her description of the offender are alike disregarded; and so it must be. What- ever then she may assert as her principles on the subject, what I demand is her practice. What is principle without it? A religion on paper.

been made of my pamphlet. I find that it has been taken up by a party with which I feel no sympathy, to serve its purpose against the Establishment. With this I have nothing to do. But even in this I think I see her unseemly and worldly standing. I have been praised or reviled by different publications, in neither, probably, according to the merit of the case ; but according to the relation or friendship which they bear to the political position of the Establishment. To praise or reproach from such quarters, I desire to be equally insensible. I write not for the world, but for believers mixed up with a worldly system. With politics I meddle not : nor do I know of any political character which a church should bear connected with this world. Its business here is to witness for Jesus, amid all the alienation of the world, and that, equally apart from the din of its politics, as from its other pursuits and principles. I have lately seen a translation of Phil. i. 27, in which *πολιτευεσθε* is rendered "act the citizen." Well, be it so ; I do not object, though I see no necessity for the rendering. But in looking a little farther into the epistle, I see the character of this citizenship in ch. iii. 20. Our *πολιτευμα* is in the heavens—here is the true citizenship of the saint—here his calling, Heb. iii. 1.—here his blessing, Eph. i. 3.—here his standing as seen of God, Eph. ii. 6.—with his risen Head. Hence should he view all things ; from this holy eminence look down, and estimate them according to their value ; and descending hence to the arena of this world, to mingle in its politics, or follow after its honors, it is descending indeed. It is the heir of glory forgetful of his birthright.



This, I am aware, has been called quietism and mysticism, and what not. It is an old trick of Satan to give a bad name to God's truth, and thus discredit it among His people. His truth, I believe, must have more or less of mysticism to those uninstructed of the Spirit; but to those so instructed, one would think that the heavenly calling and character of the saints should be obvious enough in the New Testament; and consequently their separation in principle and pursuit from an evil world, where their Lord is rejected. I shall not dwell on the subject, but just note, in passing, a Scripture which presents itself. In John xiv. 28, our Lord tells us that He was *going* to the Father: in ver. 30, that the prince of this world *cometh*. Now, I would ask, in the dominions of which should be our heart and energies? Whether should we follow Him, in spirit, where He was going, or in spirit, still abide where He is rejected, where His enemy is acknowledged. One would think, to a true and simple heart, the question would be easy of solution, even though there were no such exhortations as Rom. xii. 2, and Col. iii. 1, 2. As to quietism, I only say, let each one serve God, and serve his brother; and further, if he will, be the servant of all men, in the position in which God's grace finds him, let him be diligent in his calling, with this only restriction, that his sense of duty lead him into no infringement of God's word. Let him take the Sermon on the Mount, let him take the apostolic epistles in his hand, and while true to the principles which he finds there, he may serve where he will; in the court, or in the camp, or in the church; in the halls of legislation, or in the marts of commerce.

I only ask, surely it is not too much for one called of the Lord, that when he finds any principle run counter to the word, any earthly duty making a demand which involves the slight or sacrifice of any truth of God, then that he will strike to the Word, and let the consequence be what it may. Here I believe is the one principle for every one naming the name of Christ, from the prince to the peasant. "If a man love me he will keep my word." I shall not say how I think this simple principle would thin those fair earthly domains, so far as the believer is concerned. But let every one be persuaded in his own mind, only let him see that it is by God's truth he is persuaded.

Again, I have far and near been represented as a convert to the Church of Rome; and this, regardless of principle, to serve a purpose. There is not in my pamphlet a syllable in praise of that evil system; but, in different parts of it, my opinion is very unequivocally manifested. I want no favour, by friendship with error. In truth, I thought, and still think, that in seceding from the communion of the Church of England, I removed to a greater distance from that of the Church of Rome than previously I occupied. I believe, in common with many, and with none more than a host of the Reformers, that the church emerging from darkness at the period of the reformation, did not, as she should, cleanse herself from the pollutions which, through a long lapse of ages, Romanism had gradually contracted, and which now she exhibits embodied in a system alike dishonouring to God and degrading and destructive to man. A system, all that is peculiar to which bears this character; its opposition to the one free, full, and perfect

work of the Lord Jesus Christ ; through which alone the chief of sinners may stand accepted before God.

Further, I have been largely represented as a convert to Irvingism ; or, by some, as on the stepping-stone to it. Again, I do believe that, as in the case of the Church of Rome, I have seceded further from it, than in the position I formerly occupied. And this too is, I believe, the judgment of the Irvingite party ; who, while they acknowledge the Church of England, her ordinances and successional ministry, have no favour for us who conscientiously separate from it as evil. Of that system I do believe, even as of Romanism (of which indeed it seems to be but a refinement, and to bear nearer kindred than to any of the reformed communities)—I believe that it is alike dishonouring to God, and injurious and insulting to His saints.

It is a principle, I think, that will easily be conceded as essentially founded in truth, that the tendency of whatever is from God, will be, to exalt the Saviour, and to humble the sinner. Irvingism just reverses the principle. It degrades the Saviour ; telling us that He had a corrupt nature such as we have. It exalts the sinner ; telling him that he may be holy as Jesus was ! Against this I desire to raise my protest and warning, feeble it may be, but earnest and decided. I do indeed believe, and here my soul finds rest, that Jesus, my Lord and Saviour, was the Holy One of God. They tell us that He had a nature, in union with His Godhead, fallen, corrupt, and sinful, as is ours. Now I say that if the searching eye of the Omniscient could discover but one line or trace of corruption in His nature or person,—which God forbid,—then was He no longer the Lamb without spot or blemish ; then is the atonement over-

thrown, and we are yet in our sins. And, indeed, it would seem as if there was some suspicion of this kind among them; as well from the slighting way in which they have spoken of the substitution of the Saviour in the sinner's stead, as also of the mode of the sinner's justification; making it rather to result from the work of the Holy Spirit in the flesh, than from the one offering once for all, by which a way is opened into the holiest, into God's own presence, by the blood of Jesus. This work of our blessed Lord, is what satisfieth God; and this work, apprehended by faith, is what satisfieth the sinner, and enableth him to go in peace; and to put any work done in the flesh in the place of this, is, indeed, to build on a sandy foundation. What is flesh? That thing in which dwelleth nothing good—the old nature that is enmity against God. It is just the devil's place in us; and it is just ready for any thing he has to do for it; and to expect any change in it, is only to deceive ourselves. We may indeed, and we should, have victory over it in the power of the Spirit; but victory, and not change, is what we are directed to look for. Thus do they dishonour the person of our blessed Lord, attributing unto Him sinful flesh like ours; and in Him do they dishonour the Father, making the body, which in His purpose of old He prepared for His Beloved (Heb. x. 5), a body of sin. And, further, do they dishonour unto God the Holy Ghost, whose begetting they make all one as that of sinful man; asserting that the body which He did form out of the substance of the Virgin, to be a tabernacle meet for the indwelling of the Son of God, was, in its nature, unclean, even as others.

Then why the *begetting* of the Holy Spirit? Would not His *regenerating* power meet their view of our Lord's nature; and how, according to their shewing, did He differ from Jeremiah and John the Baptist, who were sanctified from the womb? I do, from my heart, rejoice in the true and very humanity of our blessed Lord; that while He was true and very God, yet was He man also, even as I am man. The one who laid hold on both natures, and united them never more to be separated. But I also rejoice that the corruption, the incurable taint (Jer. xvii. 9) which I know to be in me, He had none of. If He was not truly man, then could there have been no atonement for man; for man sinned, and man must satisfy or suffer. But if He had any of the pollution which is in the fallen nature of man, neither then could there have been atonement; He would not have been a fitting offering to present unto God on the behalf of others. If not true and very God, in opposition to all Arian and Socinian blasphemy, He could not stand forth as the independent and self-existing; who had, out of His own Divine fulness, to give unto the need of another. If not pure and spotless in the nature which He took into union with His own—wondrous mystery of love!—He could not stand forth a sufficient sacrifice, a spotless victim, to meet the gaze of Him who is “of purer eyes than to behold evil.” If there was but one trace, one solitary speck, of aught that is corrupt or unclean in the nature of our blessed Lord, then never could it be said of Him by the Father, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased,”—well-pleased with that which is in itself corrupt and sinful! But it may be said that He is so with

us, and still we have the sinful nature. True, and blessedly true. He is well-pleased with us, but it is "*accepted in the beloved*, in whom we have redemption through his blood:" and the most perfect holiness wrought out of the Spirit in man, only goes up well-pleasing to the Father, as it goeth up through that beloved One, holy and blessed for ever. This grievous error, in a measure at least, results from not seeing that sinfulness is no *necessary* ingredient, no *essential* property, so to speak, of man's nature. It is the state or condition into which it is fallen; but as there has been, so will there again be, the nature without the defilement, and as truly and really man's nature as it is now in the defilement. And thus can I see the humiliation of our blessed Lord in stooping down to oneness with our very nature, while He is rescued from the charge of association with the filth and foulness of it.

Again, I protest against their treatment of the word, God's blessed word, which opens His will and mind to us. They put their own revelations on a level with it, to which they equally, indeed more than equally, demand obedience; and God's children they would deprive of their strength and comfort in denying to them the power to understand their Father's word, or hold communion with Him in it by the Holy Spirit which is given them. Their common teaching is similar to that of the Church of Rome. "You must hear the church, and give up searching the Scriptures for yourself: it is by ordinances that God now instructs His people; you must be obedient unto ordinances: it is by living men, and not by a dead letter;

is not a man better than a book?" And this is the only satisfaction, as I have reason to know, that one can obtain who has been offended by the false teaching or unholy living of their *spiritual* ministry. Here, I say, is most dishonouring treatment of the word, which is the Spirit's teaching to the saints, His testimony unto Jesus (John xv. 26, v. 39), His telling to the betrothed of the grace and beauty of her Beloved. But I find that their testimony is not unto Jesus, but unto the church. Of Him I am not told any thing additional by their spirit, but what is to His dishonour. Their testimony is rather unto her than unto Him. The church and her ordinances, her Jewish appendages, which are in fact exalted above Christ; and the belief in which, and not in Christ, is made the test of orthodoxy. Of old the testimony was, "a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, *and Him shall ye hear* in all things." But now it is, "the church, the ordained ministers; hear them: none other now must speak." Of old it was, "I believe, and therefore have I spoken:" but now it is, "I believe, and therefore must I be silent." Let a disciple have his heart full to bursting with the love of God, and let him long to tell unto others of that love, if so be he may win them from their evil ways. No; he must not. The Church hath ordained. It is the work of the evangelist; and he has only in sorrowful heart, from his misplaced obedience, to smother the outgoings of his love, till it wither and waste away. To argue with this is but to waste words. It is not argument, it is true-heartedness for the Lord, it is child-like subjection to His word that is wanting;

and strange it is, and very sorrowful, that in this—even if it were this alone—they cannot discern what spirit is among them.

Again, I find their dishonour to the word in their palpable opposition to various parts of it. In treating of the gifts in the church, in 1 Cor. xiv., I find (ver. 28) the exercise of “the tongue,” the unknown tongue, as it is called, expressly forbidden when there is no interpreter. How repeatedly have they spoken in what they profess to be “the tongues,”\* and to this appealed as a proof of the Spirit among them, while still they are forced to acknowledge that they never had an interpreter. Is not this trampling under foot the word? Again, there is not, in the New Testament, a plainer command than that in ver. 34 of the same chapter, “let your women keep silence *in the church*, for it is not

\* On the subject of the “tongues” I subjoin an argument, and I do not readily see how it may be answered, from a late publication of Lord Mandeville’s, “Things Hoped For;” a little work containing much interesting, rather novel, interpretation of Scripture.

“If I mistake not, the cessation of the gift of languages is intimated in 1 Cor. xiii. 8—10: ‘Love never faileth; but whether (there be) prophecies, they shall be *abolished* (*καταργηθησονται*); whether languages, they shall *cease* (*παυσονται*); whether knowledge, it shall be *abolished* (*καταργηθησεται*): for partially we know, and partially we prophesy; but when the perfect (state) shall have come, the partial shall be abolished.’ Now, here it is predicated concerning two out of the three gifts, that they shall be abolished, and when? at the introduction of the perfect state. Those gifts of the Spirit will therefore continue throughout all this dispensation: but respecting the other gift, namely, that of languages, we are not told that it shall be abolished by the introduction of the perfect state, but that it ‘shall cease;’ and upon its cessation, we have no authority for its revival. The proper question, then, simply is, Did the gift of languages ever cease in the church? and this all must admit.”



permitted them to speak. Whatever be the proper sphere of a woman's labours and service for the Lord, wherever she may legitimately exercise her gift (and so exercised most blessed I do believe it is), but assuredly it is not in the church; for there, *σιγαρῶσαν*, let them keep silence, is the plain order of the Spirit. But this we know again is systematically trampled on, and that under the pretence of the Spirit speaking; thus making Him to contradict His own word. They will not suffer women to exercise their gift when it is in strict accordance with the word, and therefore unto God's glory. They will not allow of their labouring with them in the gospel, when in their place their labour is blessed indeed; but they will allow and encourage them to speak in the church, when God's word expressly forbids it. Instead of adhering to the Scriptures as the word of God, instead of a holy jealousy and watchfulness that our souls bow down and tremble before the oracles of God, I know nothing more characteristic of this delusion than the way in which the word is slighted, and their own pretensions substituted for it. By their interpretations, with the assumption of infallibility, God's precious word is just made to say anything, or nothing, as they please; and we who desire to honour it, and to walk in obedience thereto, even at the risk of all, what is our treatment at their hands? Why, "we are idolaters of the word." Yes, this is common phraseology with them. Well, if it be idolatry to love it as the expression of God's love to us; if it be idolatry to search it as where we may discover His mind, and see the character of all delusion; if it be idolatry to obey it

with simple childlike obedience; to make it the lamp to our feet, and the light to our path; to receive from it, under the teaching of the Spirit, our joy, and peace, and hope, our wisdom and our power; to know it as the testimony to Jesus, and to feed on it "that we may grow thereby;" if this be idolatry, I only pray that there may be more idolaters amongst us, and more thorough in their idolatry.

I confess that it has been to me a source of much satisfaction and thankfulness, as opening the secret of this delusion, that of those whom I have known receive it, I do not remember one, who (however holy he may have been) I did not find previously falling into some error regarding the word; either denying its efficacy or its sufficiency, or the right of God's children to search it, or their power to understand it, or denying to them the possession of the Holy Spirit, by whom alone they can understand it, or can call God their Father. But so surely as we have Christ, so surely we have His Spirit; and if we have not, then is there neither church nor saint. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." He, then, who will deny unto believers the Spirit, denies unto the Lord His people, and unto His people their Lord. For it is in Him that we have and hold the promise; unto Him it was fulfilled (Acts ii. 33) indeed every promise (2 Cor. i. 20), and not unto us apart from Him. And just here is its security and permanency. However failure may and will characterize every thing of man, there is none with Him. And therefore I say, that the Spirit given unto Christ, and from Christ to His church, is as truly with

His church now, even as of old, in right of its union with Him to whom the promise was fulfilled, and to whom it is sure. I acknowledge that He does not manifest Himself in gift now as of old, and that His energy is hindered by the divisions and disobedience of believers. He is grieved by their waywardness and wilfulness.

It is thus only that I can account for the fact, that many of God's dear children, as I believe, are held captive by this delusion. They deprive themselves virtually of the lamp, and necessarily fall into darkness. They hold to an error that perpetuates itself; and here is the subtilty of Satan. I have at times felt astonished (who has not?) at the insensibility of those whom I know to be dear children of God to the delusion in which they are entangled, and that, under the manifest and manifold proofs of delusion which have been plainly set before them; for, as one remarks, certainly as competent as any other to deal with the question from intimate knowledge of all its mystery and working, "it has now gone through the course of prediction, and non-fulfilment; expectation and disappointment; doctrinal views advanced, and abandoned, works of discipline adopted and cast aside, and forms of government gradually assuming apostolic powers, without any sign of an apostle being manifested." (*Baxter's Letter to Armstrong.*) The first promise or prophecy of the renewal of the Apostolate\*, was, that it should be in signs and

\* Would it not appear that Peter did not foresee any future apostolate after those of our Lord's appointment, from the care he manifests in his epistle, that the church should have these things

wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost ; and until these were manifested, no one could be recognized as an apostle ; nor without these would the church be warranted in allowing its ordinances to be interfered with. Well, the signs never appeared ; but yet the apostles are called, and the church has been modelled, and remodelled. The apostles laid claim I believe to one sign, "patience." A very ambiguous one it may be said ; but even of this they have now deprived themselves ; going about with apostolic pretension, but without one particle of apostolic power, or one sign to which the apostle of the Gentiles could refer, when challenged as to his authority. Truly its folly is manifest (would I could say!) to all. Oh that any of God's dear children should suffer themselves so to be deluded ! but as one told me who had himself been deep in the mystery, when expressing to him my surprise at the insensibility exhibited to such obvious and unquestionable evidence of delusion ;—he told me, that he really had no capability of perceiving or appreciating truth, when it clashed with the system — every thing must be wrong, no matter how simple, how plain, or palpable it was, if it did not bow down in subjection to the church ! —Their church ! What they miscall the church must be paramount everywhere, and to everything, It is not "to the law and to the testimony," no ; but "what saith the church ?" "The testimony" may say as it will, it matters not. There is no conscience ; no truth ; no feeling ; no

*in remembrance* after his decease, 2nd Epistle, i. 12—15. One would think, that he need not be so urgent, if others were to arise endued with like power ; and this doubt would receive increased force, if we can think that he foresaw a succession of apostles after him.

sense of duty apart from the dictum of the church. Unto this assumption must the word of God bow down, and take the meaning, not that God hath given to it, but that the church may please to impose on it; and hence the thorough worldliness of the system. "Be not conformed to this world," is the utterance of the Spirit in the word; but this is not the good pleasure of the church. It is an unpalatable doctrine; and therefore is the precept as though it were not, and very worldliness is a character of the system. Again, the assumption of the church meets us in the high-sounding pretensions, and loud denunciations, assumed by her ministers to those whom they may affect. The solemn challenge to hear them as the commissioned servants of God, to beware how they reject them at their souls' peril; thus working upon their fears and weakness. Is this our Lord's way?

Of the true church, "the congregation of *faithful* men in which the *pure* word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered," — of this church will I say, which abides by God's word and ordinances, I do desire to honour her as honoured of God; and further I desire to be in subjection unto her. I believe that God's love rests on her, I believe that Christ hath purchased her with His own blood; and I do believe that the headiness and self-dependence and assumption of many are evil in the extreme; the works of the flesh which should unsparingly be denounced. But willingly allowing all this, and coveting, God knoweth, subjection in myself and my brethren, not to the letter merely, but in spirit; still do I say, that if all the communions on earth, called churches, were to rise up and claim my

obedience in opposition to the plain word of my Lord, then though I stand alone, yet, God helping me, will I stand alone, in holy obedience to my Lord, and not unto that which has nothing, and is nothing, but as she hath from Him, and is in Him. If we will hear the church rather than the church's Lord; if we will obey the church, when she is disobedient to the word of God, then I can see no limit to the apostasy which may flow in—the flood-gate is opened, and the only barrier against the tide of evil is removed—the directory of the saints is slighted; and when it is so, apostasy must be in a greater or less degree the character of the community so treating it.

Then there is its power of adaptation. Not the blessed power of God by which He meeteth His people with the grace suited to their need out of His riches in Christ Jesus: no; but the power by which it artfully accommodates itself to the scruples of those with whom it has to deal; and has for each one its word as they may bear it. So unlike the way of our blessed Lord. So unlike the straightforwardness, the single-eyed simplicity and sincerity of the gospel. At one time, one statement is made; at another time a different one; and the peculiarities of the system kept in the back-ground, when those are known to be present whom they may wish to conciliate and not wish to offend. Now I understand that they deny their holding the nature of our Lord to be corrupt like ours. I know that they do so to some who cannot receive it; yet one of the principal officers at Newman Street, told me, that if I did not see this, I could see nothing. And another, that though they had done nothing else, it was a good work to rescue this

doctrine from the error in which it had lain. And on the occasion of the difference between Mr. Irving and Mr. Baxter on this doctrine, their Spirit at Newman Street declared that the former was right, and Mr. Baxter wrong, who denied the sinful nature to our Lord. Thus do they say and unsay as it suits them; and I know nothing that more stamps the system than this double face, which it wears as occasion requires. This will of course be all denied, for it is their way to deny everything said against them, but I write only what I have myself witnessed again and again, or, as to doctrine, what any one may learn from the works of their accredited teachers. Many of them I doubt not began in sincerity; but they began in error; and it is the character of error to propagate itself, and when the error was detected and shewn to them, they still fondly clung to it. It was their own child, and they would not forsake it. They began in false doctrine, and false too on a vital point; attributing to our blessed Lord a sinful nature like ours, which was only upheld from *actual* sin by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in power; and their conclusion was, that if we had the Holy Ghost as He had, and which they asserted to be our privilege, then might we be holy as He was. Indeed some of them laid claim to this sinlessness by the mighty power of the Spirit which they said they had gotten: and others went so far as to say, that this was but a little thing, and that not only conformity to Jesus, but a holiness above His was our portion, as entitled to that which He had not—the resurrection Spirit.

Error is a prolific thing. Their conclusion set them to

look for the Spirit which was so to work in them, and many, I believe, did very earnestly pray and wrestle for the Spirit as *for what they had not*. They encouraged themselves in the assurance that their Father would not give a stone when a child asked him for bread, that he would give His Holy Spirit to them that asked Him. They did not see that this precious promise is fulfilled to us in Christ; that to Him He has given the Spirit; and that from Him, our risen Head, the supply cometh down to His members; and that our work now is, not to lie waiting and inactive; but in the energy of faith to arise and go forward, in the assurance that in Christ we have all that is wanting for our provision by the way; all that we want, to meet every requirement of our Father's will. Let us only abide in Him. Let this be our object, and we shall know His abiding in us in the power of His Holy Spirit, preserving us from every delusion; leading us into victory over every enemy; leading us up into the blessedness of our heavenly calling. When this fails us, then are we warranted, but not till then, to look for something more. But this would not suffice them, they looked for the Spirit, as of old, in His gifts and manifestation, as set forth in 1 Cor. xii.—They seemed unwilling to allow of the sovereignty of the Spirit to deal with the church according to His own will, at different seasons and under different circumstances; and thus, while they were slighting what they had of God, instead of proving the power in their souls, and while they were anxiously looking and waiting and expecting what they had no warrant to expect—thus exposing themselves to, and inviting, as it were, the enemy—he does come in with



some strange thing, for I do believe that his very power was there, and that it is not else to be accounted for. He does come in with the roar of a lion ; with a tongue without a meaning ; with dishonour to the person of Christ ; with the assurance that the word in their lips was all one, equal in authority with that which the holy men of old did speak as they were moved by the Holy Ghost—the scripture given by inspiration of God—with a string of prophecies which have uniformly failed as the time of their predicted fulfilment has come round, (at least as they were made known to us, for of late their proceedings I understand have been with closed doors), and with a set of interpretations of the Scripture, which might just as well be drawn from the Koran as from the Bible. This is what they have presented us with, as the fruit of the Spirit in power come down upon them. But as to any true power which may be witnessed by others, in leading them into fellowship with Christ Jesus our Lord, “in the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings ;” as to anything of His stranger and pilgrim character here ; as to any increased conformity with the mind of our blessed Master in His humility and holiness, His meekness and love—then in truth we see it not ; and if their new and boasted power have given it to them, they have been skilful indeed to hide it. Any holiness I have seen, has been but the savour of what they had of old ; a light, sadly dimmed, and waning fast away in those whom I have known of them. Ah, what worldliness, and what chilling coldness and insensibility to the Lord’s glory, in many of those whose hearts once did seem to burn within them as they spake of Jesus ! In truth, very worldliness

seems their characteristic,—dogmatism and superciliousness, with weakness and formality.

Such is Irvingism now, at least as I have seen it. We may hope that some have preserved their integrity in the system, not seeing its evil. Multitudes failed to see it for a time; indeed it was not at once manifested as it now is; and many there were, grieving over the low and divided state of the church, and who earnestly longed for something better, when it arose and stood forth commended by all the talent and attractiveness of Edward Irving, the powers of mind and nobleness of heart of that extraordinary man, who I do believe prematurely fell a sacrifice to this the offspring of his own ardent and unsubdued imagination. Well, he rests in Jesus for ever free from the delusion now, and a warning to others, how little mighty talent and mighty eloquence can avail without subduedness of soul unto the mind of Christ. Where is the man who held multitudes suspended on his lips as he did, and where is the man who, as he, led multitudes astray—falling into the snare of Satan? His great gifts were worse than useless. The Lord keep us; we are weak when the enemy cometh in, but let us stand in faith and here is our strength (2 Cor. xii. 9).

But here I say was the snare. Many there were dissatisfied, and not without reason, with everything they saw. The worldliness of the ecclesiastical establishment of the land, and the erroneousness of some of her principles which were as imperative as her truth. Then the political bearing of the great body of the dissenters, and their sad union, for political ends, with the deniers of the Lord Jesus; and besides in doctrine, their rejection of

the coming of the Lord as the hope of the church, and of liberty to the Spirit as the minister in the Church. Under these circumstances when Irvingism arose, many were led captive by it. They believed what they wished to be true. They expected to find a rest for their souls, in which many have been grievously disappointed I do believe, at least the true-hearted among them. Others dissatisfied, and for the same reasons, knew not what to think of this new thing, but awaited the Lord's mind concerning it. I confess so it was with myself, I was thoroughly dissatisfied and disheartened with all I saw. I longed for something more according to the mind of God in the Scriptures; and I thought Irvingism might be it. I went to the head quarters, and diligently examined into it, some years past, before it stood out in its present unambiguous character. I knew not what to think of it. Some things I saw wrong, and I told them so; but I could not decide on its character at the time. I felt, however, assured, that the Lord would graciously manifest its true character to His people whom He knew were only desirous to know His will, and for grace to do it. I think few can have doubt about it now, who in honesty will thus judge of it, "by their fruits ye shall know them." These bitter fruits, or a few leaves from that unhealthy plant, I have here presented. I did not think so long to dwell upon the subject. My desire was simply to rescue myself from the imputation by my protest against it; but I have been led on; and let what I have written go forth as a warning to those whom it may meet, against error dangerous, I believe, exceedingly.

I have been led on to so much greater length than

I intended, that I shall refer but to another subject, and that—the charge of novelty so frequently brought against us. I observed some time since in the *Christian Examiner* (1834, p. 233) the following high character of an ecclesiastical historian of the present day. It is in an article from an American publication, and written by an American professor, “able and trustworthy,” as he is described. Speaking of Berlin, he says, “Neander the first ecclesiastical historian of the age, and perhaps the best exegetical lecturer on the New Testament, is the ornament of this University.” This would naturally make one desirous to see Neander’s book; and since the publication of my pamphlet I procured it, at least the first volume,\* translated by a churchman of high character, prefaced and noted of course, and rightly so with his views, to protect himself from the appearance of sanctioning what he esteems error, yet with the highest testimony to Neander. “The more intimately,” says Mr. Rose, “I acquaint myself with his work, the more I am convinced of the high qualities both of head and heart which adorn its author. His work is distinguished in general by his candour and acuteness, his diligence and fidelity; qualities of which I have some right to speak, from having verified almost all his quotations; and I have found him uniformly entitled to this praise.” This is high testimony to Neander, but how does his history bear upon the question? why thus: I might very nearly, indeed I believe entirely, refer to

\* If Mr. Rose has relinquished the intention of bringing out the 2nd volume of Neander, (the 1st was published in 1831), it would be well if some one with the leisure and ability would present a translation of it to the English reader.

Neander's statement of the constitution of the primitive church for a correct view of our principles on the subject. I observe that it is simply as touching the constitution of the church that I quote Neander ; and this, as a testimony to those who may give heed to such testimony, and not desiring for ourselves to build anything on it. This I say not to his disparagement, of whom I know nothing contrary to the high character above given ; but simply as one desiring to rest my faith both as regards my own soul, and the constitution and standing of the church, on the word of God.

“ A class of priests,” Neander tells us, “ who were to guide all other men under an assumption of their incompetence in religious matters ; whose business it was exclusively to provide for the satisfaction of the religious wants of the rest of mankind, and to form a link between them and God and godly things ; such a class of priests could find no place in Christianity. While the gospel put away that which separated man from God, by bringing all men (all believers) into the same communion with God through Christ ; it also removed that partition-wall which separated one man from his fellows in regard to his more elevated interests. The same High Priest, and Mediator for all, by whom all being reconciled and united with God, become themselves a priestly and spiritual race ! One heavenly King, Guide and Teacher, through whom all are taught from God ! One faith, one hope, one Spirit, which must animate all ; one oracle in the hearts of all, the voice of the Spirit which proceeds from God ; and all citizens of one heavenly kingdom, with whose heavenly powers they have already

been sent forth as strangers in the world. When the apostles introduced the notion of a priest which is found in the Old Testament into Christianity, it was always only with the intention of shewing, that no such visible and distinct priesthood, as existed in the economy of the Old Testament, could find admittance into that of the New; that, inasmuch as free access to God and to heaven was once for all opened to the faithful by the one high priest, Christ, they had become, by union with Him, a holy and spiritual people, and their calling was only this; namely, to consecrate their whole life, as a sacrifice of thanksgiving for the mercy of God's redemption; and to preach the power and grace of Him, who had called them from the kingdom of darkness into His wonderful light; and their whole life was to be a continued priesthood, a spiritual serving of God, proceeding from the affections of a faith working by love, and also a continued witness of their Redeemer. Compare 1 Pet. ii. 9. Rom. xii. 1., and the spirit and connexion of ideas throughout the whole epistle to the Hebrews. And thus also the furtherance of God's kingdom, both in general, and in each individual community, the furtherance of the propagation of Christianity among the heathen, and the improvement of each particular church, was not to be the concern of a particular chosen class of Christians; but the nearest duty of every individual Christian. Every one was to contribute to this object from the station assigned to him by the invisible head of the church, and by the gifts peculiar to him, which were given by God, and grounded in his nature: a nature, which retained indeed its individual character; but was regenerated and ennobled by the influence of the Holy Spirit. There was

here no division into spiritual and worldly; but all as Christians, in their inward life and dispositions, were to be men dead to the ungodliness of the world, and thus far departed out of the world; men animated by the Spirit of God, and not by the spirit of the world."

"The condition of the Corinthian Church, as it is depicted in the epistles of St. Paul, deficient as it was in many respects, shews us how a Christian Church should act; how all in that Church should mutually co-operate with their mutual gifts as members of the same body, with equal honour supplying one another's deficiencies. The office of a teacher was not here exclusively assigned to one or to more; but every one who felt a call to that office might address a discourse to the assembly of the Church for the instruction of all." p. 180-183.

So far Neander's testimony as to liberty of ministry, and as to the non-existence of any privileged order of men in the primitive church distinct from the people, a clergy and laity, which he represents as "wholly unevangelical, for all Christians ought in this sense to be a body of men consecrated to God, a *κληρος του Θεου*, and all their earthly callings ought to be sanctified by the Spirit in which they pursue them.—Such was the original gospel notion." p. 198. "The more a Christian Church answered its proper destination, and corresponded to its true model, the more must it be shewn in the mutual relations of all its members; that all, taught, led, and filled by the one, all drawing from the same fountain, and mutually imparting, as equal members of the one body, stand in reciprocal relation to each other." p. 196.

On the subject of government, he tells us that, "a council of elders was generally appointed to conduct the

affairs of the Church," p. 187,—“ that these presbyters or bishops had the superintendence over the whole Church; the conduct of all its common affairs; but the office of teacher was not exclusively assigned to them; for, as we have above observed, all Christians had the right to pour out their hearts before their brethren in the assemblies of the Church, and to speak for their edification.” p. 188. “ It was, however,” he observes, “ a source of great satisfaction, when, among the rulers of the Church, there were men qualified also for teachers.” p. 190. “ The only other Church office,” he observes, “ in the apostolic age, was that of deacon.” p. 191.

If it be said, as respects these offices, that we differ from the statement of Neander respecting the primitive church, I reply, that we do not differ, though we acknowledge we do not attain to it; simply because we do not just see how legitimately we can, coming out of apostasy and confessedly in weakness, which is just the result of the apostasy. We do not pretend to have got back into the power of the Apostolic Church, but this we do not make an excuse for continuing in evil which we may escape—for countenancing anything that we see contrary to God's mind as revealed in His word. We are in a position, though of weakness, yet where we have judged evil, and desire to judge it as we discover it, and moreover to act in obedience as we may, to every word of God; therefore do we meet with all who profess\* to have found peace through the blood of the cross, “ whose sins are forgiven for His name's sake;” yea, with the weakest to whom He is precious.

\* Doubtless we may often err, for hypocrites may come in and deceive us, but this has nothing to say to the question, our principle on which we act is still the same.



We meet for the communion of the body and blood of Christ, for prayer, and for the exercise of any gift which those, who are made partakers of the One Spirit, may have of that Spirit wherewith to edify the Church. We meet, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is," but exhorting *one another*, and in the assurance of that promise, that, "where two or three are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst of them." Here, amidst all our weakness we are in a scriptural position, in one of obedience, and accordingly in one of present blessing, as we often prove to His praise, and where we are warranted to look for increasing blessing from our God, if we be only faithful—our bond of union is this, partakers of the same Spirit, or rather partakers of Christ by the Spirit, His word the lamp unto our feet—all such we know, however they may differ from us in other things—we do not make unity of sentiment our bond of union: No; we acknowledge that in many things we differ, and herein is weakness; but herein we have learned of our God to exercise forbearance (Rom. xiv), and to prove more the power of His love to unite us in Christ, than the power of mere difference of opinion in other things, to separate us. Is this the position of the Established Church? No—we see the veriest worldliness in every aspect, and her saints not judging, but justifying it! we see the very highest pretensions, coupled with the very extremest weakness—we hear of uniformity, while probably there is not a shade of error which may not be found within her pale: we hear of Apostolic Succession—so do we at Rome\*—but those who

\* At Rome, it has been said, the Church rules the State, but here we have a worse thing, the State rules the Church.

affect it, we see nothing the better of it, and believe that it only leads into that anomalous thing which Neander calls "a Judæo-Christian Priesthood." Office, indeed, in the primitive Church we see, and most desirable we acknowledge that it is, when from God—but who is there to appoint to office *now*, who to confer authority? This is what as yet we have not been able to find, and without this, office is simply unfounded pretension.

Do we then reject *ministry*? God forbid, we prize and honour it as of God—we feel our responsibility, to acknowledge every gift as we see it of God; whether it be of rule or pastorship, of teaching or evangelizing; and equally to reject every pretension, however it may come, ordained or unordained, which does not bring with it this credential from on high. We would, indeed, and the Lord knoweth that we ask it of Him, that every little meeting of believers in the land had those whom the Holy Ghost hath made bishops or overseers to "take heed" to them and feed them; and that evangelists to tell of God's love to perishing sinners were risen up and multiplied a hundred fold. It is with us an easy and a happy thing to acknowledge God's gifts in His servants. All we would plead for in reference to this, is that which we find in the New Testament, and which Neander describes as the practice of the primitive church; the liberty of the Spirit in ministry; that each may edify his brethren according to the gift which God hath given him for edification; as we find in the epistle to the Corinthians; to the Romans, xii; in the epistle of Peter, iv. 10, 11; and, indeed, I think, all through the New Testament. If it be said,

as often it is, that this was a time when the miraculous power of the Spirit was in the church, I say, even so; this does not prejudice the question. The miraculous gifts or power of the Spirit do not seem specially necessary for edification in ministry. It is the presence of the Spirit Himself, acknowledged and unhindered in the members, which works to edification. He Himself is better to us than His most excellent gift: and very remarkable it is, that the Church which seems to have been richest in "gifts," also seems to have been the most corrupt and disorderly; and in the two last quoted passages, that of Paul to the Romans, and of Peter, I believe I might say, in their epistles, we have nothing of miraculous gift.\*

\* I am aware that shortly after the apostolic age, ministry was very much limited to office. But I am also aware of other errors besides this having very early crept into the Church; therefore the greater the necessity to cleave unto the word alone. Of this the apostle warns us, Acts xx. 29, 30. He tells us of the evil, the wolves without, those speaking perverse things within, in v. 31, 32. he gives us the remedy, "therefore watch," "I commend you to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up," &c. In the 2nd epistle to the Thessalonians he tells us that, "the mystery of iniquity was *even then* working;" and those who were preserved from it,—how was it? "through sanctification of the Spirit, and *belief of the truth*;" and in the 2nd epistle to Timothy, 3rd chapter, when dwelling on the evil of the last days, what does he give us as the means of prevention, "continue thou in the things which thou hast learned—the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation," &c. In the 1st epistle of John c. iv. in directing us in the trial of the spirits, he tells us v. 3, that the spirit of antichrist was *already* in the world, in v. 6, he gives the mark and preservative of God's people, "he that knoweth God, heareth us." We shall cease to wonder when we consider these testimonies that error is so venerable in years, and we should further learn the exceeding value of the word—in everything to rest on this only foundation,—*"It is written."* Therefore what I contend for is, *the practice of the Apostolic Church as recorded in the New Testament*; and

If, further, it be said, as also it often is, that this is giving liberty to any one who may think himself fit to rise up and assume the place of teacher, then I reply most distinctly that it is not so; for it is not merely *as a man thinks of himself*, but as he approves himself as one qualified by the Spirit of God, in grace, in utterance, in knowledge, that he is received. And the Church is just under the same responsibility to reject what is *not* of the Lord, as she is to receive what so proves itself.

It may be said, that the order and constitution of the Established Church, and, indeed, of other churches, would not allow of this liberty. I know it. But what does this prove? Surely not that the liberty of the Spirit is wrong;—no; but that your order and constitution which is opposed to it, is wrong. Oh let us acknowledge the supremacy of the Spirit *in the Church!* He is the Great

that this is in favour of liberty of ministry we have seen Neander's testimony. I think that there are admissions in Mosheim to the same effect; and Dr. Bloomfield acknowledges on Pet. iv. 10, that "at that early period the distinction between clergy and laity was not fully established," and on Acts xiv, 23, his testimony is strongly to the same effect. There is also in Neander, p. 185, a quotation from Hilary bearing on the subject, which I commend to those who prize such testimony. "Primum omnes docebant, et omnes baptizabant; ut cresceret plebs et multiplicantur, omnibus inter initia concessum est, et evangelizare, et baptizare, et Scripturas explorare." All this is plain enough, and such quotations might easily be multiplied, but they little matter, *what saith the word?* To this I bow, but beyond this I know of no authority, which it does not sanction; and it is well for me, for otherwise I should be quite overwhelmed. One of my opponents brings his authorities down on me all the way from Momulus of Girba, to the high priest of Oro!!! This is very astounding to a plain person like myself; but happily for me, my principle preserves me from its force; I am satisfied with the testimony of "the early period." My Bible, and therefore my authority, ends with the book of Revelations.

**Minister ; and we can only have effective ministry, or true order, as we forsake the traditions of man, and yield obedience to His holy word.**

**With these additional observations, I commend my little work to the care of the Great Head of the church ; and, in brotherly love, to the candid consideration of God's dear children.**

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## REASONS,

&c.

THE following pages have been in substance for some time lying by me; they have not been undertaken without prayer to my God for direction, and the earnest desire to write in subjection to His holy will: and it is not without much anxiety and consideration that the determination to send them forth has been adopted—not, indeed, that I entertain any doubt of the principles contained in them; no—but I feel a slowness, a natural unwillingness, to distress the minds of some whom they may distress, and who yet, I believe, should be distressed in the position which they occupy. And moreover, I feel an entire disrelish for controversy, or rather for that unhealthy excitement and disturbance which so frequently attend it; but these are not reasons why God's truth should not be declared and vindicated;—at least, I find reasons sufficiently weighty, to my mind, to counter-balance them.

I find many inquiring the ground of the step which I have taken; and I readily acknowledge the title of brethren to be made acquainted with it, especially my brethren of the Established Church, with whom I have lived in all brotherly love and friendship to this day, and with whom, God knoweth, I do still desire so to live: for I covet not separation from them; no—but from the

system which they support, and from which I feel I must be separate. Again, I have heard of much misrepresentation both of motives and principles; and though it but little moves me, as having, I trust, been taught of God in this sense to "cease from man," yet do I feel that it is but just to myself, as well as to the truth which I advocate, to do what lies in me fairly to remove misrepresentation. And furthermore,—bear with me, dear brethren, while I say it,—I do assuredly believe, that notwithstanding the light, and truth, and labour of love which is among you (and to which I most readily bear testimony), still are you, I do believe, under the influence of error, and in subjection to a system which hinders your service to the Lord, and prevents His grace from flowing more freely and fully amongst us. Believing these things, is it not my duty to declare them in love unto my brethren?—and in love only would I do so: of them I have no desire to say anything unkind; of the system will I speak as it deserves, without desiring in one point to misrepresent it. And now, in committing these pages to the press, earnestly do I pray that our God and Father, whom we serve in the Gospel of His dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, may vouchsafe His blessing, and enable us by His Holy Spirit, to lay aside all prejudice, and party views and feelings, and in the balance of the sanctuary to weigh the subject here before us; and wherever the truth may be, to sacrifice unto it, and that at any and whatever cost.

In resigning my parish, and with it the position which I held in the Established Church, there were many motives influencing me; that which probably most pressed

on my mind was, *the worldliness* of the establishment ; it distressed me exceedingly—what child of God has it not ? The Church of God, I saw, according to the Scripture, was a union of those “ that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints ”—an assembly of those calling upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, professing salvation through His blood, and this the bond of their union. I found nothing more marked in the Scriptures than the distinction between the church and the world ; they seemed quite contrasted to each other ; the one lying in sin, under the influence of its ruler, Satan, the prince of this world, and fully manifesting its character in the rejection of the Son of God—the other, that body of which Jesus is the risen head, and whose proper position is with its Head, “ raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places. ” The one, the very instrument of the enemy for luring sinners to destruction, for tempting and harassing the saints of God—the other the place of rest and security to the wearied soul, the fold where the scattered sheep should gather together, and where that which is of the world should not enter, where Jesus meeteth and communeth with His people. The Church, I further found, was a separation *from* the world, a calling out of it (as the word implies), a people for the name of the Lord ; and this people I found repeatedly instructed as to the character of the world and cautioned against it. I found such words as these—“ Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God ? ” again, “ love not the world, nor the things that are in the world : if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him ; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh,



the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world ;” and “the whole world lieth in wickedness;” or rather, as I believe it should be, “in the wicked one.” I found when our blessed Lord came into the world, that he had nothing of it; clearly, I think, intimating its character ; I found also that He gave Himself for our sins, that “He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God our Father.”

Now, in applying these portions of Scripture, and many others of the same character, to the Established Church, I could not but see that there was something wrong, something very contrary to the plain import of the Word ; her principle, indeed, as expressed in her article, I found true and scriptural, declaring the church to be “a congregation of faithful men,” but in her practice I found no such thing ; and I fear that other of her principles effectually hinder it. Faithful men indeed I found, and many of them, but I found no *congregation* of them. On the contrary, I found them mixed up in a system characterized by its worldliness, in almost every aspect in which it may be viewed ; a system loving the world and the things of the world ; a system on terms of intimacy and friendship with the world ; honoured, patronized, and endowed by it. It is not that I found worldly men and principles intruding into the church unawares ; but I found a few disciples (comparatively with the bulk very few) in a system which they called the church, but which seemed thoroughly identified with the world ; such, at least, is the appearance the Establishment presents to me wherever I have encountered it ; and I appeal to the candour of my reader if it be not so. Look, for instance, to

Dublin, or any other given place, and what is the Established Church there? Is it a gathering of saints in professed subjection to Christ? Nay, is it not the world just as much as any other section of the world in the place, as much characterized by the principles and practice, the follies and the fashions of the world, quite admitting that it may (or may not, as often happens), have faithful men within it: but then they are faithful men *individually*, and not a congregation of them, meeting together in separation from the world, which is truly a church; but meeting with that section of the world where they happen to be placed: not meeting in the name of the Lord, for the great majority of those meeting together are ignorant of the Lord whom believers worship; and of this we find believers well aware, for they are unwilling to be identified in social intercourse, and the intimacies of life, with those with whom nevertheless they are quite willing to be associated in all the services and worship of God.

From this consideration—this identity of the church and the world—for wherever I saw the Established Church, there did I see the world: and every where in the Scriptures do I see the church a separation from the world; from this consideration, it was obvious to me that something was grievously wrong. At first I thought—I fondly hoped, that discipline might rectify what was wrong; but I never saw the favoured spot where discipline had rectified it, and I now believe that the evil is quite beyond the power of discipline; for the true place of discipline is the church, the “*congregation* of faithful men,” among whom error may have crept in; but the Establishment is

quite the reverse of this. Here the congregations are of worldly men, among whom comparatively very few, oftentimes none,\* are faithful, and I see not how discipline can be enforced here. She will call those faithful men, and treat them as such, who never gave one particle of evidence of their conversion to God; her members she recognizes, not by the evidence of their conversion, but by their having passed under certain rites of the church; and, therefore, the population of whole parochial districts are acknowledged by her as members, among whom there may be few, if any, evidencing that they are children of God. This is all bound up in the system, and therefore I believe that the evil is beyond the power of discipline, which is for the church and not for a worldly association; it would involve the few faithful, in obedience to God, coming out from the body of the unfaithful, and it is for this only that I plead.

I have indeed witnessed the efforts at discipline of those who groan under the evils of the Establishment, but who do not, or will not, recognize the necessity of standing out from the system and testifying against its evil. I

[\* I was once entrusted with a parish, on my appointment to which I searched diligently if I might find any giving evidence of being converted to God: I could not, neither could the clergyman who preceded me (a faithful man), mention one such then residing there. Yet the services of the church, "the dearly beloved brethren," &c. were obliged to be observed, even as though they had all made a true profession. "And so they did," some determined son of the church may reply; "for they were all baptized, and I said the creed for them every Sunday:" such obviously is the amount of the profession of the majority of members of the establishment. Well, I did not then see the evil; I am thankful that I have since, though late; and more thankful that I have, through grace, been enabled to forsake it, while so many have lingered behind.]

have witnessed the efforts of such to satisfy their conscience by a discipline which certainly they never got from their mother church. I have seen their little companies of believers meeting together in the name of the Lord, and my heart rejoiced with them; but when they came together to break bread, the very bond and token of fellowship, I found the holy brotherhood dissolved, and the world admitted to this dearest pledge of our Lord's dying love to his disciples. I inquired why it was so,—why did not the brethren still meet as brethren in the name of the Lord? why were those admitted to the nearest and dearest bond of brotherhood, the communion of the body and blood of Christ, those who were deemed unworthy of communion in the word and prayer? And I found that it must be so—that, in accordance with the principles of the establishment, they could not be excluded; and in truth so it is,—a minister of the establishment has no right to exclude from the table of the Lord, however he may exclude from his own social intercourse, any but the “open and notorious evil liver.” One may be a formalist, a Pharisee, a mere worldling; but if he be not an open and notorious evil liver, though he evince not one spark of divine life in his soul, he may come to what should be the communion of saints, the very symbol of their union one with another, and of God's communion with them. He may come and intrude himself where he has no tittle of right, and the minister of the establishment, as her minister, has no right to exclude him: he *may*, to be sure, exclude him; but if he does so, it is by a stretch of arbitrary power not given him by the ecclesiastical establishment of which he is the minister. The poor world-

ling may say to him, "I am a member of the Established Church—she has declared me regenerate at my baptism ; this decree has been ratified at my confirmation ; it has never been reversed ; and I demand the rites of the church to which I am justly entitled, and which you as her minister have no right to refuse me." What a multitude might thus address their clergymen, whose lives are quite free from any evil notoriety, but who never have exhibited a trace of the life of God in their souls, who know not what it is to be humbled under the sense of sin to the feet of Jesus, or to have risen with Him in newness of life ; who are utter strangers to the meaning of crucifixion to the world, while our Lord distinctly says,—if a man will not take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple. Yet of those who may be honest in their lives, and free from the breath of scandal, what grasping after this present evil world, what coveting of its wealth and its honours, where the Lord of Life was an outcast ; what sitting down contentedly in the very lap of its luxuries, while many of the dear saints may be pining in want ! These are they whom the church pronounces regenerate, and helps on the delusion by treating them as the very children of God, receiving them to her communion, and opening to them all the privileges of the saints : thus lulling them into security, when she should, in faithfulness to their souls, bid them from her membership, as yet strangers to the covenant of promise, as living without God in the world.

But it may be said that the church, in her offices, faithfully warns her members against coming to the table of the Lord unprepared. Admitting that she does so, where

is the good of the warning, if, after all, she will still receive those who disregard it, and evidently have no right to the privilege? It may further be said, that the minister often does so boldly and faithfully from his pulpit. Yes, I know it; often have I myself laboured in this work, bidding away the unconverted in as strong language as my ability would furnish me with; and many I know there be, who thus labour to deliver their consciences, and throw the responsibility off themselves upon the unworthy intruder at the ordinance. But let them do so ever so faithfully, still are they "partakers of other men's sins," and I believe the most guilty partakers too, for they do it with light upon their souls, while the other acts in comparative darkness. But after all, is not the minister in this, thwarting his mother and mistress, the church? She requires that "*every parishioner shall at the least, communicate three times in the year,*" and this, of course, on the assumption that they are all converted, though some may be disorderly, whom she accordingly warns;—he, true to his God and Father, but untrue to his mother the church (alas, that it should be so!) bids them away as unconverted. But what if still they will come and present themselves (observe I speak not of the notorious evil liver, but of the moral, well-conducted, yet thoughtless worldling)? what if, heedless of the warning, as they are of more important warnings, they still present themselves? Why, he has done what he can to prevent them—further he cannot go: he receives them, the very persons whom, it may be, in fearful language he had charged that they dare not approach the table spread for the children of God; still he receives them, as he must, thus nullifying

his own energetic language—saying one thing and doing another—building up confusion on confusion : the very persons whom he had previously warned that they eat and drink not their own damnation—he helps them to that damnation, whatever it mean—he is a partaker in their guilt ; and all this because he will rather submit to a worldly system than to God's own word—because he will not yield himself to the accomplishing of his Lord's declared will, that His people be one, a people called out of the world and separate from it. Here is his Lord's will, and he will not recognize his responsibility to give effect to it, or he will admit divers excuses from expediency, or difficulty, or what not, to justify himself in the course he pursues. Hence the unseemly sight ; God's dear saints, the children of light, and those who are still in darkness, walking “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air”—all kneeling together, together uniting in the sound of praise, and partaking together at the same table of the Lord. Talk of confusion, but what confusion like this ?

But, in truth, it must be so ; and the servant of Christ, while he continues faithful to the Established Church, cannot help the evil. It is, I fear, necessarily bound up in the system ; and therefore do I see nothing for it but to submit to the evil, or to separate from the system that sanctions it, for I believe no reform can reach it. The source of it all is, I believe, the intimate union between the Church and State, between the body of Christ and the worldly power ; that the church should submit to be established by the power and authority of man. This is, I believe, the capital error, which intrudes into all the

arrangements of the Church, which affects the whole body, which flows into every extremity. I find the influence of this unnatural union every where: it seems to me effectually to prevent any valid reform,—to forbid any effective discipline. The poor church has thrown herself into the arms of the state, and now she lies at its mercy. Oh how unnatural a position! What one word in the New Testament—the directory of the saints in this dispensation—countenances such a position? She has given her headship, at least her earthly headship (that I misrepresent her not) to the Sovereign; the Romanists, in this more consistent, give it to an ecclesiastical head.\* Now the Sovereign, as her head, appoints her bishops; but the appointments, as we know, are really the acts of the State

[\* It may seem to some that I here favour Romanism. I do not. I merely say that in the respective headships of the churches of Rome and England, the former is the more consistent, as having a professedly ecclesiastical head. For my own part I equally abjure both. The churches of this world may have their respective heads; but the church of God, as it is but one body, however scattered the members may be, so it has but one Head, the Lord Jesus Christ; and one Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, ministering in the members to each severally as He will. And herein is apostasy, when any section of this body, any of the members meeting together, suffer the powers of this world to come in and claim headship, and authority to legislate, which is the right alone of the Lord Jesus Christ; or allow of ministry *distinct* from that of the Holy Spirit. But what is the standing of the established church in these countries! Is it as the body of Christ in the life and liberty of the Spirit? No; it is Her majesty's ecclesiastical establishment for providing religion for her subjects. There is a military establishment, and a civil establishment, and to complete the necessities of the state, there must be a religious establishment also, and certain persons "ex-officio" are the ministers of this state religion; and none other, however qualified of God, may intrude within its "penetralia." This may appear ridiculous; but it is a subject very full of sorrow, to see the saints so entangled in the evil, and still so insensible to it, as their sufferance would seem to intimate.]



Minister. The Minister may be an infidel in principle, a profligate in practice—one or both; or take a more favourable, and probably the more common case, he may be a mere worldly person—one viewing the ecclesiastical establishment merely as a state appendage, a kind of political instrument to subserve his purposes; yet to him it belongeth, and to him only, to nominate the bishops of the church.\* I am well aware that neither Sovereign nor

[\* I subjoin a passage from a tract of the late Mr. Walker's, "Thoughts on Religious Establishments," which forcibly sets forth the evil against which I am contending. I omit some offensive expressions, as I wish to avoid giving offence otherwise than as the truth gives it; and even as the passage stands, while I adopt the sentiment expressed, the mode of expression I approve not. "To this *State-religion* the continued existence of the race of CLERGY was essential. And accordingly they continued,—a class of pretended agents between God and the people, tricked out in the trappings and claims of the Jewish *priesthood*;—of that priesthood which had its termination and absolute abolition in HIM, who is *the great High Priest over the house of God*, on the completion of whose work the shadows which had prefigured Him passed away. A man appointed by worldly rulers to what is called the episcopal function, after some ceremonies have been gone through with him by others similarly appointed, is supposed to be transformed into a *successor to the Apostles* in the government of the Church of Christ! And he, by putting his hands on the head of another and repeating some words over him, is supposed to convey to this person, however infidel and profligate he may be, a sanctity of character, which is necessary for the *administration* (as it is called) of Christian ordinances to the *laity*!—a sanctity of character so indelible, that nothing—not even his own renunciation of it—can efface it! That this should be imposed on the people, while the Scriptures were shut against them, is comparatively little wonderful. But that it should continue to be credited in countries bearing the name of Protestant, and by persons acknowledging the Scriptures and having access to them,—this is a marvellous instance of the prevailing influence of *the mystery of iniquity*.

"The claim of *successorship to the Apostles* is one which the Roman Pontiffs have long advanced. But it was a claim too gainful to be lightly abandoned by the reformed Hierarchy: and therefore, to retain it, they have been content to trace their right

Minister may consecrate to the episcopal office: this can be done by episcopal hands alone; but none other can be consecrated but the nominee of the one or the other; their province it is, according to the constitution of the Established Church, to determine who are to be her ecclesiastical rulers\*. Is not this the living to the dead? But the bishop, being appointed by the state, becomes a peer; for not only for his ecclesiastical office, but for rank also, is he a debtor to the same worldly source. He becomes a peer, and his vote is of value; and to what miserable work does not this lead! The various underhand influences and interests have been often exposed. I need not dwell upon the subject; I have no pleasure in it. But I know the sad result, that instead of a holy band of self-denying men, taking the oversight of the church, not for filthy lucre, but with a deep sense of the value of souls, and a holy zeal for the glory of Jesus, we have—what? Alas! we have ecclesiastical peers and politicians, living in lordly splendour, and in the very heart and pride of the world that rejected and crucified the Lord of Life. I may be reminded of the

of *succession* through the most abominable of the Popes of Rome. It introduces a new set of apostles, manufactured by men to be at the head of a state-religion, and to give imaginary sanctity to its ceremonies and canons.”]

\* There is an unfair way occasionally adopted of representing this subject, as if the bishop was merely recommended by the Sovereign. In England, indeed, there is the “*Congé d’élire*” to the dean and chapter of the vacant see, which, as every one knows, is but a miserable mockery; for they must elect the person recommended, or expose themselves to a “*præmunire*” for not doing so. But the Established Church in this country (Ireland) is equally deprived of the principle here acknowledged in letter, as she is also delivered from its unhallowed abuse. The bishop here, I believe, simply owes his appointment to the “Sovereign’s letters patent.”

illustrious names connected with our episcopacy; truly can I say, that I feel no desire to deny or to detract one jot or tittle from the value of the holy men of God who have sat on the episcopal bench in these countries, or any that may yet have their place there. I war not with the men, but with the system; and wherever it is due, most cheerfully shall I pay my homage.\* But admitting all this to the fullest extent, still I cannot see that it makes in favour of the system. No believer of sound mind will argue in favour of the episcopacy being in the hands of the Minister of the state, because God is pleased, in His overruling providence, in opposition to all the evil, to bring in good; and even in the most favoured cases which may be adduced, what pressure is there upon the soul's health and happiness, from the weight so heavily and unscripturally imposed of so much of this present evil world!

The bishop having received his appointment from the minister, the leaven runs through his whole diocese; his anxiety will be to appoint men of his own mind and principle, and thus we know how, in times past, the Establishment in this country was overrun with men of careless

\* I cannot here deny myself the pleasure, the melancholy pleasure, of recording the uninterrupted course of affection and kindness which I received at the hands of one, under whose episcopal superintendence I was for fourteen years placed. Truly his authority was no bondage to me; and if the system could at all be redeemed by the parental affection, and Christian feeling of the individual, then would it have been my happiness still to abide under the superintendence of the Archbishop of Tuam; and truly can I say, that it is not the lightest part of the cross I have had to bear, in the step I have been constrained to take, that a clear sense of duty should at any time lead me into a course, either in word or deed, opposed to the wishes of one, for whom I shall ever entertain feelings of gratitude, affection, and respect.

life and defective principle; and that the awakening which has partially taken place in latter times, has been almost exclusively through the instrumentality of the inferior clergy, and not only without the fostering care, but in general in the face of the direct opposition of the prelacy—the Spirit thus shewing that for any good that has arisen, we are in no wise indebted to the system, but to His own sovereign agency, bearing with the evil, and bringing in good out of, and contrary to, the appointed order of the establishment. I speak truths known to all, however they may be explained, palliated, or excused; and I say that this is the necessary result of the unnatural union between the church and the state, and the no less unnatural appointment of her ecclesiastical rulers.

Thus do we see some of the effects of the system. The Sovereign, the head of the state, the head of the church also, and appointing to her rulers and overseers, according to the partiality or political necessity of the State Ministers, and conferring on those so appointed, lordly wealth and dignity. We advance another step; and we find the Sovereign, the same head of worldly and spiritual power, prohibiting the clergy, without permission, to meet and settle what belongs to the church, “concerning the injunctions, canons, and other constitutions thereto belonging.” Here we have the controlling influence of the state, by which the church is tied down to that measure of light possessed by the framers of her constitution, at least without the Royal permission,\*—that is, without the Ministers think

[\* In the Epistle to the Ephesians, v. 24. I find it written, that “the church is subject unto Christ;” I find it elsewhere written (and true of saints collectively as well as individually), that “no one can serve two masters;” now the Established Church which

well of it ; without this no reformation can proceed. And consistently with this, not long since, when some ministers in the Establishment did grievously groan under the galling enactments of the State, what did they do ? To stand out as the body of Christ in holy separation from the evil thralldom they would not,—to avert the abuses they could not ; but they did just what they could do in the position they occupied,—they petitioned the King that he would rectify the evil, or give them liberty to do so. Should not a people “ seek unto their God ? ” But no ; the poor Church will not, in her difficulty, seek unto God. She will not, in His strength, arise to put away the evil from her, without first appealing to the State, and awaiting its good pleasure. In truth, she is but a dependant upon the state, and must just take from it what it may be its humour to give,—the bishops that it gives, and the bishoprics that it takes ; whatever her legislators, the O’Connells, Humes, “ *et hoc omne genus* ” may think fit to award her. At one time so many bishoprics off, at another time so many parishes—no, her legislators differed, and the parishes are spared a little longer. Oh, how melancholy is this ! how very melancholy, that God’s dear children should submit to such a system, so

professes subjection to Christ, I still find subject to the State, which never was subject to Christ,—neither indeed could be, and hold its standing in the world. Just measure the practice of the State by the principles of the New Testament, and then see the amount of its Christianity. But it is a baptized State ; and this with some is a cover for all kinds of evil and disobedience ; and this many will justify by the case of Israel, when evil and disobedience did not disfranchise them. But this is only the defence of evil—misapplying, to the present dispensation, Scriptures belonging to the past :—a fruitful source of error, and the grand magazine of the advocates of Establishments.]

dishonouring to our dear Lord, that the heart of all the men of God is not bowed, even as the heart of one man, to arise and shake off the abomination !

But this is not all, though it be far too much : the church is not only dependent for her bishops, her rank, and for the reform of abuses, but for her discipline, and provision also, upon the state. Her defect in discipline seems, I think, to be pretty generally acknowledged, even by her zealous supporters ; it is not exercised,—nay, it cannot be exercised, her identification with the world renders it impracticable ; for in the course of events it might so happen, that one of the first persons to be excommunicated would be (with due respect do I say it) the very head of the church, the defender of the faith, and then probably not a few of the ministers ; and it is not at all improbable that those ministers, not being very wise in spiritual things, might select for the episcopacy such as would very likely, from their doctrine, if not from their practice, stand exposed to the same penalty :\* and then as to the bulk of her members, why, probably, an effective discipline would at least remove eight or nine hundred out of every thousand. Now, as excommunication in the establishment is not merely a spiritual penalty, but like every thing else, a loan from the state, as it exposes to heavy civil disabilities ; those in power will not submit to it, and the church will not quarrel with them about it ; and thus comes to pass the almost total suspension of discipline,—and therefore is the church in the establishment a place open on Sundays and certain holidays, for

\* Some late appointments in England seem to increase the probability of this supposition.

any one who will come—saint and sinner—all alike to her—all dearly beloved brethren; all invited to join in worship; one is just as good as another for her purpose, at least all are equally recognized; for the address and invitation are to “as many as are here present.”\*

But some one may tell me that he knows places in the Established Church where evil is rectified by the exercise of discipline; well, I readily acknowledge that in a country parish one may, by active and continued exertion, succeed in purging out some of the evil. This I know, for at this I long laboured. But this also I know, that though I was enabled to remedy some practical abuses, still the system clogged me in every step I took; its unfounded assumption that all the Protestant population, all church-goers, are believers, forced me to recognize and worship with, as dearly beloved brethren, those who, it was quite obvious to me, had no lot or part in the matter. Thus, I believe, is discipline effectually hindered, and hindered by the oneness of the church with the state. By their union, the world is recognized in the establishment, and the world is the great power and the vast majority in the establishment, and will not consequently submit to the truth and spirituality of the minority; and therefore the exhibition in these countries of a worldly religion, in which many of the saints are partakers,—grievous, I do believe, to every spiritual mind.

Then as to her provision, whence does this arise? is it

[\* Do I object, then, to any openness for sinners to hear the gospel? God forbid. I would that their opportunities of hearing were multiplied many fold. All I plead for is this, that when the Church meets for worship, it be distinct from that which is manifestly of the world.]

the church providing for its own wants? No, in truth; except in this sense, as the kingdom is the church. Here again we find her a poor dependant upon the state. The state endows her; and that it may do so, it goes to the cancelled Jewish legislation for the law of tithe—it Judaizes; and in proof that this provision is merely the bequest of the state, and held at its good pleasure, we find at one time fifteen per cent. taken off the income of the clergy; at another time twenty-five is spoken of, according to the good will and pleasure of her political legislators, to which she must bow down in subserviency. It is not the lessening of income to which I refer, or for which I care; but it is that men of God should bow down to such unhallowed defilement; that she who should be as the bride of Christ making ready for her Lord and Husband,—that she should be the thing waiting on the world for her ministry and discipline, her rank, her support, her every thing.

There is a sense where I most readily admit submission to the state to be the duty of the saints, entire obedience and subjection to the powers that be, in every thing not contrary to the revealed will of the Lord. Obedience is the Lord's will concerning His people—obedience where the Word tells us it is due; and this assuredly to the "powers that be," even under the most cruel exactions and persecutions—even though a Nero, as of old, did with an iron sceptre oppress and crush the people of God, still do I find the Apostle, under these very circumstances, exhorting to subjection (Rom. xiii.), for this simple reason, that our God is to be our refuge and our avenger; and that we are not to be our own arbiters or



defenders, even as with our blessed Lord, who, “when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judgeth righteously;” even so is He our example. “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”

But while the saint, as the subject of the state, should in every thing submit unto the state, let him, as the subject of God, be subject to God only. Let the church, as the body of Christ, refuse the authority of the state to legislate for her; as the church, she is a kingdom not of this world, and independent of its legislation. She has another legislator,—even Him who is passed into the heavens, and Him only should she allow. The Bible is her legal code, she can admit no other. Let the state see to its own interests, and that the economy of the church interfere not with its social order—that is its business; but let the church, as she would be true to her Lord, see that she willingly suffer not the state to interfere with her order. In holy distinctness from the world, let her be the witness of its evil; and yet of God’s unwearied love to it, amid all its evil. This she cannot be, while she is so united to the state; her very position would falsify her testimony; and therefore in the whole body of the New Testament, do we not find a single promise to the church, of honour, wealth, or aggrandizement in this present evil world. Her Head had none of it—no honour, no enjoyment from it; His work, His happiness here, was to do His Father’s will; He was the man of sorrows here,—the one whose visage was marred more than the sons of men—the rejected of His own—and very plain are the intimations that His

own self-denying pilgrim course is the one to be tracked by His followers, till He again cometh to gladden their hearts, and for ever to remove all source of sorrow and suffering. Is this the position of the Established Church? Is she as the woman coming up through the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved—the world a wilderness unto her, the place for the exercise of her faith; and her all of honour, support, and dignity, derived from the Beloved—from Him in whom she stands accepted, honoured before the Father? Is this her position? I shall give the testimony of a friend, that I be not said to misrepresent her.

In looking into “*The Christian Examiner, and Church of Ireland Magazine,*” for January (1836), the first article on which my eye happened to rest runs thus:—“There is not an educated individual in the British empire, who is not aware that the Established Church is placed at this juncture in an extraordinary position; its property, its patronage, its discipline, its rites, and ceremonies, subject to the control of persons composing his Majesty’s government, who may be not only indifferent to its welfare, but actually hostile to its very existence.” An “extraordinary position” indeed! for a body calling itself the Church of God, to be subject to the “controlling supremacy” of the King’s ministry. But whose doing is this, and whose is the blame? is it of the worldly unconverted men in power “who care for none of these things;” or does it not righteously—rather unrighteously rest with her, who has suffered herself to be found in such a position, the mere tool of those in power? But wherefore “at this juncture” more than any other for the last

two or three centuries, for nearly so long she has been "subject to the control of persons composing his Majesty's government," I believe all along most of them caring as little about religion as those now in power, though the demand and pressure of the times did not lead them to use her as those now think it well to do in furtherance of their political projects? Ah! it is a sad state for a church, to be dependent on the religion of state-ministers.

But what help is proposed for this extraordinary position with which "Popish prelates taunt her, which dissenters cast in her teeth, while radicals and infidels prophesy her ruin and rejoice over it?" Where is her help in this her extremity,—is it the "very present help in time of trouble?" Ah, no! such is the effect of her evil association, that she thinks not of arising and waiting on her Lord; and yet it would seem that vain is the help of man. The clergy so "impoverished," "distracted, and divided,"—the "fifteen bishops"—no help there; "therefore we turn our eyes to the laity to save their church,—the church which belongs to them and their children,—the church, which if not purified and reformed from the monstrous abuse of parliamentary supremacy"—parliamentary supremacy! and this the confession of a friend! And again, "parliamentary supremacy, which overlays the Established Church!"—Yes, the poor church is indeed overlaid by the state; this has she got by her unhallowed union. But what a position for a body calling itself the church of God! I am sure I can quite feel with the writer of the article in the *Christian Examiner*, that there is not an educated individual in the British empire, an individual sufficiently educated to read his Bible, who

does not, or at least should not, see "the monstrous abuse;" and, further, will I add, that there is not a true-hearted disciple in the church, who should not see it his duty to protest against the evil, and separate from the system which so dishonours God by sanctioning it. But, I ask, is it not the consequence of the avowed principle of the Establishment, of making the head of the state the head of the church also,—of identifying interests which in our Lord's mind were so distinct and opposite? An unestablished church, to whatever other evils it might be exposed, it never could be to this; and while the church continues established, she will ever be in danger of continuing also "subservient to a ministry that may be to-day under Tory, to-morrow under Whig, the next day under Popish, and the next under radical influence. And if our bishops, possessing seven-eighths of the parochial patronage, are to come forth with their lawn vestments cast over them by such conflicting and varying hands, verily our church will become a fit representation of Babel; and the very confusion of hearts and tongues that must ensue will not only frustrate edification, but will cause a sure dispersion."—*Christian Examiner*, Jan. 1836.

It may be said, that this is the abuse of what is good, and that the abuse does not vitiate the principle; I know it is the abuse; but I believe it is the abuse very naturally flowing from the principle—in fact, bound up in it. The principle has often been thus familiarly expressed: that as it is the duty of the head of a family to provide for the religious instruction of his family, so it is the duty of a king to provide for the larger family of his subjects.

This is a very common argument : I believe a very fallacious one. Let every king provide for the welfare of his subjects ; let him see that he rule righteously—this is his duty, and he is responsible for it ; the ruler is, I believe, God's ordinance *for this purpose* ; but he is not responsible for the establishment of religion,\* for it is not his

[\* Not for its *establishment* ; for such a thing is no part of God's revealed mind in this dispensation. National religion established of God is among the things that *has been* and again *will be* ; but now *is not* ; and he who sees the heavenly calling of the saints need not be instructed in this, though he may need to be exhorted to obedience.

I have been faulted for so summarily dismissing the duty of sovereigns. I can only say that it was no part of my object to write a dissertation on the subject, but to advert to it as briefly as I could. I thoroughly believe that every king is responsible, and largely so, from his large sphere, for the use he makes of the power committed to him ; but I cannot believe that he is responsible for establishing religion, for I see no trace of such a thing in the New Testament. The advocates for it quote Isa. xlix. 23. which is just a prophecy of Israel's restoration and glory, when religion will, I acknowledge, be nationally established of God, when the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ. But this is among *the things that will be*, but now are not. Now it has no existence but in promise ; and to endeavour to antedate this is but ignorance or presumption. Now the kingdoms of this world are lying under the usurpation of Satan, and the church is just a calling out of them, to have her place and portion by faith with Jesus in the heavens.

Again, the second Psalm has been triumphantly appealed to. I can only say that I see not a tittle in it about the *establishment* of the religion of Jesus in this present evil world. The Psalmist addresses the kings and judges of the earth ; exhorts them unto wisdom, to serve the Lord with fear, rejoice with trembling, and kiss the Son lest He be angry : and therefore, say the advocates for establishments, let the religion of Jesus, in that form which we approve, be established under the sanction of the law of the land ; let it be invested with earthly power, wealth, and glory ; let it be lifted up by the patronage of the great of this world ; and consequently made a dependant upon their good pleasure. Here is what I see of established religion ; but I confess I cannot see the force of the reasoning that would deduce this from the second

duty—at least, I cannot discover any trace of it in the New Testament; and I believe the understanding the

Psalm. If the question be argued abstractedly from what may be called its abuse, then still I ask for authority from the Scriptures of God that religion be established nationally *in this present dispensation*. In the New Testament, we have not, I think, confessedly any thing of it. In the Old Testament we have, I believe, very little indeed even of this dispensation; plenty, I admit, of the Gentiles; but this will, I believe, for the most part be found still future; and of this intermediate, or, as it has been graphically and I think well called, parenthetical dispensation between the times of Jewish establishment, we have but little; and that little has nothing to do with earthly establishment. Nay, on the contrary, the people, or rather children, of God in this time are constantly represented as a sorrowing stranger race here, and having their all with Jesus in the heavens; and there it is that the Spirit sent down from on high leadeth them, and not to look for establishment on this earth, now that Jesus is rejected and Satan the God of this world.

I should thus be led “a priori” to conclude against the national *establishment* of religion; but all argument, however cogent it may seem, must yield to the authority of the Word. Where then is the Word? and at once I submit. It is attempted to be deduced from the second Psalm, for after all, it is but deduction, no plain word of God on the subject; but the deduction I deny. Rulers, I find, are put on their responsibility: but where do we learn that this is to *establish* religion. Here is the point to be proved; and it is gratuitously assumed. Let rulers see that they honour God in their lives. Let them, in their public capacity, give free course to the gospel of the Lord Jesus, and see they hinder it not. Let them protect His worshippers in their service which as subjects is their right. I would say with the pious bishop Horne, “Let them learn true wisdom and suffer themselves to be instructed unto salvation, bow their sceptres to the cross of Jesus, and cast their crowns before His throne; esteeming it a far greater honour, as well as a more exalted pleasure to serve Him, than to find themselves at the head of victorious armies, surrounded by applauding nations.” Let them see well to their responsibility for all this; but, as to nationally establishing religion, this is God’s work, it is what He *only* can do: and though the mimic efforts of man to do so may seem wisdom, and I quite believe may be well meant, yet it is the well-meaning that needeth instruction, and the wisdom that is not from above. National established religion then, I repeat, *is not God’s*

character of the dispensation entirely disproves it. Established religion is, I believe, just the device and effort of man who would be wiser than God, to substitute something in the place of the continued energy of God's Spirit—

*revealed will* in this dispensation. It is moreover entirely in opposition, not only to the spirit and character, but also to the reception which we are led to expect for the gospel in this world; and further, it is *necessarily* opening a door for corruption and abuse, most injurious to the saints, most dishonouring to God. Therefore to a national established religion, whether it be in the South Sea Islands, or in these more northern latitudes, I feel equally averse, as unscriptural and contrary to the Spirit of our dispensation, and therefore I believe that the saints should have nothing to do with it. In power, or out of power, let him see that he has just one principle of action, or rather one object of life, and that one GOD'S GLORY, and that his directory unto this is GOD'S WORD. Let kings rule if they can, by God's word: Let them, as Bishop Horne says, "bow their sceptres to the cross of Jesus." Let the statesman make God's word his manual, and see how long he can direct the affairs of a nation by its principles. Kings and statesmen would soon find that the time for national established religion, the time for ruling on principles derived from heaven, or at least of upholding a nation in its ascendancy and glory on such principles, has not yet arrived: that the kingdoms of this world will not yet be subservient to Christ. They will find that Satan is still too strong for them when they encounter him on ground where they cannot wield against him the sword of the Spirit; they will find that the church of God, and not the helm of the state, is the fitting place for the saint. And if yet they will abide in power—I do not say (God forbid) that thereby they unchristianize themselves; No: but I say they will soon find that they cannot walk in the simplicity which becometh God's children, by the simple rule of God's word,—they will require a latitude of interpretation suited to their ungenial circumstances. The statesman will find that the words of our blessed Lord, or the epistles of Paul, will but poorly serve him in the intrigues of diplomacy, or in the management of an unruly parliament: for these are positions never contemplated by the Word in this present time. They are elements in which its authority will not be acknowledged;—and we have heard of those who did once run well before their introduction in an evil hour into these soul-chilling regions: what is the amount of their Christianity now?]

to make provision for that for which God has not seen it good as yet to make provision—to christianize a nation. God's purpose but rests on an elect people of the nation ; but the error being adopted, it is accordingly acted on, and hence we have a national religion, and a national apparatus to support it ; but the great guilt rests, I believe, upon her who suffers herself to be established—a position so unwarranted by one word of her Risen Head, so contrary to the standing of the church in an evil world, so calculated to withdraw her from the sense of her constant dependence upon her Lord, and so exposed to “monstrous abuses,” as we find by the confession of her friends and supporters.

But not to dwell longer upon this part of the subject ; this worldliness, for the most part the result of the union between the church and state, meets me every where ; I see it in the Sovereign's headship of the church ; I see it in the appointment of her bishops and many ministers ; I see it in the power to prevent the convocation from meeting, and to overrule their deliberations when met, and thus effectually to impede any progress toward reformation ; I see it in the absence of all discipline, or rather of the *exercise* of it ; and in the character of the discipline she has ; her excommunication, a thing of worldly disabilities, pains, and penalties ; I see it in the wretched sale and traffic of church preferment ; I see it in the titles, and worldly rank and standing of the church ; I see it in her provision, wrung by the power of the law, from the unwilling hearts of those who are opposed to her in principle—most legally, to be sure, but as surely most contrary to the doctrine of the apostles. She is, in truth,



“overlaid” by the state; every where, and in every thing, I see its controlling power—she cannot stand without the state, or go without the state, or sit at ease without the permission of the state. All born within the limits of the state are treated as Christians—Christians, not by right of conversion to Christ, but by right of citizenship and form, without conversion: for this the state provides, and will not suffer it to be otherwise, except in certain instances specified in the book of canons, among which are the impugning the rites, ceremonies, and government of the church, and this is visited with excommunication, “*ipso facto*.” The members of the church, and the subjects of the state, are thoroughly identified; there is no principle of selection, but one of universal union—not union of believers, but union of all sorts within the state. The State requires the assent “of all subjects” to the thirty-nine articles, and prohibits the least difference therefrom; all the formularies of the church proceed on the assumption—the unfounded assumption—of her members being believers; and it is the very boast of the church, according to one of her most learned and pious sons, that “she is, by the blessing of God, of the same extent with the kingdom in which we live.”\*—(*Bishop Beveridge, Sermon IV., on the Nature of the Christian Church*). Here is the great evil—the State must have a national religion, to this she assents, and for this she puts an outward form in the place of the Spirit’s

[\* This is stoutly contended for: but how then can she be a church. A church is a separation, or calling out of the world. But here in this kingdom there is no world to be called out of; according to this doctrine, the kingdom is the church.]

work, and then will deceive herself and others, by assuming as believers all who pass under this form ; she attributes to them a profession which they make not, she gives them a name which they esteem not, and then she deals out to them ordinances which they understand not—the bread, the dishonoured bread of the children. Ah, she is married to the state, and hence the evil ! There is an unholy, an unhappy alliance contracted ; she who should be the Lord's bride, awaiting the day of her Lord's coming, in sorrowing separation from a world of evil, is united to that very evil world, the Lord's enemy ; and the issue, alas ! is a progeny of worldlings, with a Christian name and little else. Is this the church of God ? Truly, if it be, so marred and deformed is she, that I cannot discover the likeness. I well know that there is a precious seed still mixed up with the confusion ; but wherefore is it so ? I know not how else to account for it, but by the slowness to get rid of old opinions and impressions, even as I find in Peter at Antioch ; and again, the power of names and systems on the mind, and the various near interests involved in separation ; but whatever the cause be, this, at least, do I know, that the fact is most melancholy in contemplation, as it is most grievous in result : it is the very opposite of what I see concerning the church in the New Testament ; and therefore, in faithfulness to my Lord, and in subjection to His word, do I feel myself called upon to bear the strongest protest that it is in my power to bear—and that is by distinct separation from this worldly assemblage, this ecclesiastico-political body, the Established Church.

## II.

I SAID, what most pressed on my conscience was the worldliness of the Established Church; and I have endeavoured to shew how this worldliness meets me. But this is not all: I have another charge, of a very serious nature, against her, which, even though the worldliness did not exist, should compel me to retire from her communion—I mean her acknowledgment of what I believe to be evil; that, which, to my apprehension (and I must act on my apprehension) is evil, is established in the system, and it is not in the power of her members to evade it.

Before I proceed to substantiate this charge, I make a preliminary remark to obviate misunderstanding; I accuse the Established Church with the *acknowledgment*, or *allowing* of evil. I am thus particular, because it is a common reply to such accusations—O we shall encounter evil every where, in every section of the church, even as in every saint of the church! Now, this I well know, and readily admit; but as the saint who encounters evil in himself *allows* it not, just so should it be in the church. The saint is well aware of the existence of a worldly and carnal spirit within him—a spirit prone to evil, and that continually; but he *allows it not*, he contends against it; it is the source of his sorrow, even as it is of his unceasing warfare. Now, just so should it be in the church; evil may be present with her, but she should not tolerate the evil; she should not sanction it, nor the

principle which of necessity leads to it. If she encounter evil in principle, it should be condemned, and God's truth honoured—if in practice, she should apply discipline, which is the corrective of evil which the Spirit gives, as we see in the apostolic churches.—1 Cor. v. 7, 13; 2 Cor. vi. 14, 17; Gal. v. 12; 2 Thes. iii. 6, 14.

Now I fear that, both in principle and practice, the Establishment tolerates evil; I believe assuredly that she does in principle, that it is embodied in her formularies; and as assuredly in practice; for with our eyes we may behold all kinds of evil in her communion. To begin with principle, and where we may most naturally begin—the baptismal service—we find the church putting into the mouth of her officiating minister the assurance of the actual regeneration of every child he baptizes. He is obliged, in the solemnity of worship before God, to return thanks for the regeneration of the child he has just baptized; if he refuses to do so, he is dishonest in continuing the member and minister of the church, whose requirements are imperative, and to whose ordinances he has subscribed; and if he does so—Oh! I well know how I here possess the sympathies of the great body of the men of God in the establishment! what bondage they feel, and well may feel it. But there is no help for them, their church has no feeling for a weak conscience, in this so utterly contrary to the spirit of Christ. The apostle could say, “him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations” (Rom. xiv. see the entire chapter). But the Established Church will say, whosoever shall affirm contrary to what she (not the word of God) affirms, let him be excom-

municated (see the twelve first canons), and all this for her fancied uniformity, in which she has not succeeded the one half as well as they have at Rome. For the sake of an outward uniformity, which, after all, she cannot effect, she will gall and harass the consciences of God's dear children, and yield the true ground of Christian unity, which is union in spirit, and not in form and letter. But the minister—alas, how many of them!—is placed in this painful dilemma, he must either be dishonest to the church, or untrue to his God; he must either be dishonest to the church,—profess obedience to her, receive her emoluments, and still trample on her requirements; or he must be untrue unto his God, as every one is who reads the baptismal service, without being fully persuaded that the child he baptizes is actually regenerate. Here is the dilemma into which the church forces her ministering servants, by forcing their consciences where God's word leaves liberty. The question is not, observe, whether a child may, or may not, be regenerate at baptism, this I neither affirm nor deny; but the question is simply, *does the minister believe the child he baptizes to be then and there, verily and truly, regenerate of the Spirit?* If not, on his knees before God he asserts what he does not believe! Some I hear there are, who profess to believe that all the children they baptize are really regenerate; if they can believe it, they certainly are the honest members of the church: but on what grounds they believe it, I know not; I see no word of God on which their faith can rest;\* and without this

[\* One who has replied to my "Reasons" has found, he thinks, a word of God to support his faith in pronouncing unqualifiedly

foundation, faith is but credulity. But I see thousands and tens of thousands, nay the bulk of the population, rising up to falsify the affirmation passed upon them. The Church seems to build her assurance in this service upon our Lord's reception and blessing of the children, as recorded in the Gospel of Mark; but what this has to say to baptism I am sure I know not; I see nothing of baptism in it. Again, she seems to rest upon our Lord's gracious promise, Mat. vii. 7, and Luke xi. 9; but this promise, I think, seems very obviously limited to the person asking—"your heavenly Father will give his Spirit *to them* that ask Him;" so that here, in truth, I see no foundation for the confident language of the formulary. And the question will recur, does the

every child he baptizes regenerate. It is 1 John v. 14, 15; and so decisive does he esteem this, that "had it not been written by inspiration, he doubts not it would offend." Had it not been written by inspiration, it had been of very little value to me; no more than the tract in which it is quoted. But this I can say, I thank God that so precious a word is indeed the very word of my God, whatever he may please to doubt about it. But he overlooks a word in this blessed declaration, in his haste to enlist it in his cause? "*this is the confidence*, that if we ask anything *according to His will*, He heareth us." Then it is "we have the petitions we desired of Him." Now where did he learn that it was according to God's will, that every infant brought to the baptismal font should be then and there regenerate? He does not state his authority for this; and I know it not; and must therefore still believe that there is no word of God on which his faith may rest; and that if there be any faith (and I believe that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred there is not), it is no better than mere credulity. I think I see reason why he should hesitate in saying (at least without a very explicit declaration) that it was God's will, that every child at his baptism should be regenerate; and it is simply this, that it is so downright opposed to fact, and that as soon as children, the overwhelming bulk of them at least, if not all, begin to evince what is in them, we see very plainly that it is not God's Spirit.]

minister, without any secret reserve, really believe in the actual regeneration of every child he baptizes? if he does, it is wonderful—and if he does not, it is awful that he should tell his God he does. But if he does, then should not his language be the reverse of the Apostle's to the Corinthians? (1 Cor. i. 14)—should it not rather be “I thank God how many of you I baptized?”

Many efforts have been made to get rid of the obvious meaning of the word *regenerate* in this service; but that the word means regeneration in its true and usual acceptation, of being born again of the Spirit, there is not, I think, any ground for an honest doubt. Look at the service:—in the exhortation, the people are called on to pray (since “Christ saith none can enter into the kingdom of God, except he be *regenerate, and born anew, of water and the Holy Ghost*”), that this child “may be baptized with water *and the Holy Ghost, received into Christ's holy church, and made a lively member of the same;*” in the first prayer, God is besought “to *wash and sanctify this child with the Holy Ghost;*” in the second, “we call upon thee for this infant, that he, coming to the holy baptism, may receive *remission of sins by spiritual regeneration;*” in the third, “*Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation;*” in the exhortation to the godfathers, they are reminded of prayer being made for the child, that “our Lord Jesus would vouchsafe to receive him, *release him from his sins, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, and give him the kingdom of heaven and ever-*

lasting life ;” in the versicles, prayer is made “ that the old Adam in this child may be so buried, that *the new man may be raised up in him ;*” and in the last prayer, before the baptism, “ sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin, and grant that this child, now to be baptized therein, may receive *the fulness of the grace, and ever remain in the number of the faithful and elect children ;*” and then is the infant baptized, “ received into the congregation of Christ’s flock,” signed with the sign of the cross, pronounced “ regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church ;” and then the congregation (not the clergyman only) yield their hearty thanks unto the Father, “ that it hath pleased Him to *regenerate this infant with his Holy Spirit, to receive him for His own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into His holy church.*” Now from all this, I confess, I cannot see what room there is for an honest doubt as to the meaning which the Established Church attaches to the word *regenerate* ; but if a doubt still remain with any, then do I refer them to the confirmation service and the Church Catechism. In the former I find the bishop thus praying : “ Almighty God, who hast vouchsafed to *regenerate these thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins ;*” in the latter, I find the child instructed to say, “ in my baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven ;” and further, “ I believe in God the Holy Ghost, who sanctifieth *me*, and all the elect people of God,” plainly, I think, shewing the



assumption of the Established Church, that all her members are elect and regenerate.

Some, feeling the force of this, have made desperate efforts to get rid of the authority of the catechism, as not a sanctioned formulary—to this I only say, that it is again and again recognized by the church, it is printed in the Book of Common Prayer, and rubrics annexed to it, calling on the curates to “catechise in it upon Sundays and holydays.” In the close of the baptismal service there is an exhortation, that “the child is to be brought to the bishop to be confirmed, as soon as he can say the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, and be further instructed in the Church Catechism, set forth for that purpose.” Here it would seem the ground on which the young person is confirmed, and it is again set forth in the confirmation service; it is commended in the 59th canon, and again sanctioned in the 60th and 61st. All this is, I think, very plain to a plain person; and I cannot help thinking that these desperate efforts any how to get rid of a subject, argue not in favour of a quiet conscience in those who make them.

To me, then, it is abundantly plain, that the Established Church adopts the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. She asserts—she makes her ministers do so, she makes the congregation present do so—that all infants coming to the baptismal font are thereby regenerate of the Holy Spirit, and made children of God by adoption; she makes them assert what the great body of her godly ministers disbelieve,\* and what the daily

[\* The efforts to explain away the obvious meaning of the word,

experience of the multitude around us discredits ; this I believe to be evil : and it is acknowledged—engrafted into the very constitution of the Established Church ; and she will not allow her members to differ from her, on pain of excommunication.

Those who are thus baptized, are in due time confirmed ; and then they are treated as the members of Christ, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper administered unto them, if they be not open and notorious evil livers, though all the while they exhibit not one trace of the divine life, as every one knows to be the case in the vast and overwhelming majority, while they are living in pride, and worldliness, and envy, and covetousness ; but it is, I believe, incalculable, the amount of evil resulting from the application of a spiritual liturgy\* to an unconverted multitude ; every

the talk of ecclesiastical regeneration, &c. it is indeed very distressing to witness. Probably this may, in some measure, be connected with the fact, that baptismal regeneration is now so much more commonly held by the evangelical clergy than it was some years past ; they felt it to be the intention of the formulary, and were thus pressed by one evil into another. Ah, the established church, with her ecclesiastical denunciations on those who differ from her, is a hard task-mistress to a tender conscience, which will yet rather obey her than God. Hear the testimony of one of her own sons, speaking of the "assent and consent to all and every thing in the book of common prayer :"—"Never have the arts of evasion, sophistry, palliation and management, been more notoriously developed, than in attempts to explain away the strictness of subscription to the Liturgy, Articles and Homilies."—*Ryland*, i. 266.]

\* While I willingly admit the general truth and spirituality of the Liturgy, I feel assured nevertheless that it contains error in detail, and that by no means trivial ; and then, to the principle of a Liturgy I object, as contrary, I think, to the character of our dispensation, which is that of the promise of the Spirit. Why may not the Spirit now intercede for us as well as for the saints

prayer in it seems necessarily to involve hypocrisy and falsehood in the lips of unbelievers; and in this, I believe, is the Establishment very guilty before God, that she will deal with sinners as saints, that she will put spiritual worship on their lips, and make them partakers of spiritual ordinances, and in every respect treat them as God's spiritual children, and this without any evidence of spiritual life, at least without evidence other than their being born in a country, or of parents called Christian,—their being therefore entitled to certain forms called Christian, under which they have passed, and further, being free from notorious evil.

It may be said, Must not this be the case in every congregation, where probably there are false professors and hypocrites more or less? In such cases, the evil is on their own head. We have no guard against the false professor and hypocrite, and God does not hold us responsible for such; but when the church or her minister admits those whom he has no right to admit—who exhibit no evidence of conversion, who do not make even an intelligent profession, or if they do, whose lives are not conformable to it, then I say guilt rests with the church or her ministering servant in receiving such. Of a hypocrite we cannot judge nor

of old, and does not a settled form hinder His liberty and utterance in us? This seems to be the experience of most of the godly ministers in the Establishment, who always have recourse to extemporaneous prayer when they may. [But admitting its spirituality, hear Mr. Ryland's testimony on this subject:—"Few things are so incurably injurious to the cause of truth, as the degradation of purely spiritual expressions to the service of this world. It is the investiture of a rebel with the crown, sceptre, and ermine of royalty, as if in mockery of his sovereign's dignity."]

exclude him, for we do not know that he is a hypocrite. His profession and walk is that of the Christian—he assumes a character not belonging to him; and while he upholds it, the church is not to blame, however many of them there be in her communion;—no more than was John, James, and Peter, for their communion with Judas, who assumed the character of a true disciple, and was such in their eyes; but let the church be faithful in lifting her warning voice and in watchfulness over her members; and as soon as the hypocrite exposes his true character, in exercising discipline and putting him away from her communion: thus will she purify herself from manifested and allowed evil, for which alone will the Lord hold her responsible.

But to resume—The child who has been thus baptized, and pronounced regenerate, grows up and is confirmed, and by every means led to consider himself as a child of God: at length he draws nigh to the close of life, and if he desire it, then may he have absolution from his minister, and the *sacrament* somehow to comfort him in his dying moments, though certainly with no warrant from Scripture that I can discover. At length the poor careless worldling passes into eternity, and discovers, alas! too late, the errors which the church had fostered in continuing him a member, and treating him as such, without any claim to the title. His body is then brought into the grave-yard, and the very beautiful service\* adopted by the church is performed over this

[\* I am not aware how I have spoken evil of this service. I acknowledge it beautiful, and moreover the language of Christian hope, and joy, and confidence; yet have I herein been accused of "sectarian slander;" this I notice (one instance out of many), as

poor careless unconverted sinner; the church assuming him (as she most unwarrantably does all her members) to be a believer, assuming what in fact is false, causes her ministering servant to thank God "that he hath taken to himself the soul of our dear brother here departed;" and this while the fearful boding of the minister may be that his poor soul is in misery. It has again and again been said, that the declaration of "the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life" which follows, is only a general expression of faith in the resurrection, without any special reference to the individual over whose remains the service is read. But does not the connexion clearly show that it is to the poor body lying before us that the church refers, at least to him among others, else why does he get Christian burial—why are thanks given unto God for removing him—why the hope expressed that he rests in Jesus?—who do so but the saints,\* and to whom else does

expressive of the mind of some who have replied to me, and not of what is in my pamphlet, as is obvious to any one who will read the passage; but when men have a bad cause, they will make hard speeches and false assertions; and it is indeed a bad cause, and a hard one too, for those *who see the evil*, to honour the word of God, and uphold the Established Church in all things, and this is what her members are committed to. But some can uphold anything, and uphold the Establishment because their lot happens to be cast in it. They were baptized into it, and therefore it is the best in the world; and so it would be, if we may judge from what is very manifest in this day, had their lot been cast in the Church of Rome. Certainly if I understand the spirit of Romanism, distinct from its peculiar observances, its details of error, I have seen that spirit as manifest in the Establishment, as I have out of it.]

\* The Established Church, indeed, would seem to make a monopoly of the saints in these countries to her own communion—others are excommunicate, schismatics, or recusants. See the twelve first canons, by which all impugnors of the king's supremacy in things ecclesiastical—of the apostolicity of the Church of

the glorious resurrection belong? I do not object to this expression of confidence in the church: I think it should be her language: but I object to it where there is no ground for it. And as if to exhibit the evil more manifest and monstrous, when a corpse happens to be washed on shore, it is the duty of the clergyman, in whose parish it so happens, to inter it, and to use this very language of Christian hope, and joy, and confidence, though, for aught he knows, it may be over the body of an infidel, a Mahomedan, or a Jew.

I may be told that the officiating minister knows nothing of him whose body he inters, and that in charity\* he hopes well. I reply, that he should know, or not deal with him as if he were a Christian—that it is on knowledge, and not on ignorance, we are to act—that we have no right to hope where there is no ground of hope; and that to call this by the name of charity is but an unrighteous effort to excuse what is inexcusable. All this I feel to be evil in God's sight, and I must in

England, of her public worship, of her articles, her rites and ceremonies, her government, ministry, &c., or who shall affirm that other congregations than such as are allowed by the laws of the land are true and lawful churches,—such are excommunicated for their “wicked errors.” Ah, that men must be wiser than the word—the wisdom of God! “To this,” said good John Fox the martyrologist, when summoned by Archbishop Parker to subscribe, hoping that the general reputation of his piety might give the greater countenance to conformity, “to this I will subscribe,” said he, holding up a New Testament.

\* [“The judgment of charity,” says Mr. Ryland, “is a phrase invented by a bad world to screen itself from the attacks of an uneasy conscience, and to keep in countenance the companions and abettors of its crimes. It is, in the mean time, astounding to recollect that the closing scene of life is frequently the very last station where true charity can place itself.”]—*Church Reform*, p. 147.

faithfulness separate from it and protest against it. But do protest, some will say, without separating. Brethren, would it be honest to profess obedience to the church, to call myself her son, to be dependent on her for my support, to perform her services, and still to gainsay the very things which I am bound to—to participate in the evil, but speak against it?—would this be honest? No; the only fair mode of protest that I see against evil in the system is separation from it. Indeed, the church, if she enforced her own laws, would separate the protester, for she pronounces excommunicate the impugner of her principles. [See note, page 40.]

Once more, and I shall have done with this part of the subject. Though last not least, I refer to the Ordination Service. We have crowds of young men with different motives daily pressing forward for ordination, all professing to be moved by the Holy Ghost! Awful profanity in the great majority of them! Still, the church receives them: and the bishop, who is a debtor, for his elevation, to the favour of the minister of the state, lays his hands upon the head of the person presented to him, and he becomes a clergyman. He may be one desirous sincerely to serve his Master, and thinking (as I do not think), this the legitimate way; or he may be one desirous of the standing which the state confers upon the ecclesiastical order, for every clergyman is a gentleman “*ex-officio*,” or he may be one consulting literary ease and quiet, and making the clerical profession a stepping-stone to it; or, further, he may be one having preferment in prospect—the filthy lucre against which the apostle so guards the man of

God. Which of them he may be it matters not, still the Bishop pronounces over him the awful words, "Receive the Holy Ghost." He professes to give what he knows in his soul he has no power to give; when probably the experience of his heart at the time, may be that of the Ephesian disciples, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

I do not here stop to raise the question, as to the proper position and expectation of the church, whether or not we should look for the miraculous operations of the Spirit. The Established Church, I believe, holds the doctrine, that we should. This I incline to think, as well from the Homily for Whit-Sunday as the Collect for St. Barnabas' Day; and probably, among other parts of her formularies, from this Ordination Service. But this is plain to all, that she asserts a power which she has not. There is indeed enough of high-sounding pretension, but in reality what weakness! This is pitiable—no, it would be pitiable, if it were not worse. It is, I do believe, awful trifling with God the Spirit,—taking His holy name in vain.

And then as to the men who are thus episcopally commissioned. Why, they are clergymen, let them be whatever else they may. They may be men of literature or science; they may be triflers on the surface of society; they may be kindly country gentlemen, enjoying the pleasures of the table and the chace, in one shape or other (as multitudes are, we know, in the ministry of the Establishment), votaries at the shrine of the god of this world;\* but still they are clergymen, they have been

[\* I lately saw from an English provincial newspaper, the



ordained, episcopal hands laid on them; and the church acknowledges their ministry, without a single discernible trace of the Spirit's work, while the most gifted men in the kingdom will not be acknowledged without this preliminary. Here I believe is evil, grieving and hindering the Holy Spirit of God, substituting something in the place of his energy, or making some prerequisite to the display of that energy, limiting and forcing it to flow in one given channel, and that of man's appointment; for I cannot in the New Testament see anything of this successional ministry to which the energy of the Spirit was to be restricted; but I do see the Lord, in his gracious dealings, daily contradicting it. I see successional ministry, indeed, in the Old Testament—the priesthood was there derivative in one line only; and so far I acknowledge divine authority for the appointment; and there it is, I believe, that the Established Church has found it, as she has other things, or rather received them

names of four and thirty clergymen present at a fancy dress hunt ball. Now all these are recognized as ministers by the Church; they are just as much clergymen as Newton, Scott, or Romaine, were clergymen, and when they officiate, they are the channels through whom alone the Holy Ghost may operate. Is not this acknowledging episcopal ordination without and against the ministry of the Spirit. I am sure if it be not sin against the Holy Ghost, I know not what is: and yet one who has replied to me will say, "What shall we say of the statement that the Church will recognize episcopal ordination without the ministry of the Spirit?" Why, read in this fact (which in a greater or less degree is occurring every day), what you shall say of it. There it stands; and he who asks the question knows well that the most profligate clergyman is a clergyman just as much as he is. But he tells us, "if we have bad ministers, it is not the fault of the Church." Then whose fault? Either it is her fault, or the most glaring and destructive evil in her ministration, she is compelled to tolerate without a remedy. I leave the choice between fault and moral impotency, with those whom it concerns.]

from her who there did find them ; but is she not in this, Judaizing—is she not so far forsaking Christ, and going back to Moses?—The only acknowledged succession that I know of, is derived from Peter, the apostle of the circumcision. Who was Paul's successor? We Gentiles are interested in the reply, for he was the apostle of the Gentiles.\*

But while I reject this claim to ministry as connected with successional office, for which the Established Church is a debtor to the Church of Rome, as the Church of Rome again is to the Jewish dispensation, still do I acknowledge ministry in the New Testament, and prize it as God's holy ordinance; but it is the ministry of the Spirit, who breatheth where he listeth; it is ministry where man is a witness of the grace given to him, and not a pretender to what is not given him, as is so frequently the case in the Established Church; grace adds nothing to ministry in her estimation; a clergyman has as much title and authority without it as with it; if he be episcopally ordained, it matters not what he has, or what he has not, he is a minister in the eyes of the Establishment, just as much as any other in her communion—is it not so? I speak of what daily passes before our eyes—I fully admit the responsibility of the church to recognize and honour ministry; but it must be that which evidences that it is the ministry of

[\* On this subject see a paper "On the Character of Office in this Dispensation," in the 2nd vol. of *The Christian Witness*, a periodical, published at the Tract Depôt, No. 1, Warwick Square, London; containing much information on subjects connected with the true state of the Church, and on prophecy and Scripture in general; but, "to the law and to the testimony."]

the Spirit ; but the Established Church *will not* recognize the ministry of the Spirit without episcopal ordination, and she *will* recognize episcopal ordination without the ministry of the Spirit.

In this again, dear brethren, I believe the Establishment sanctions evil, and I must cease from it. I believe that in the Baptismal and Ordination Services, there is most unhallowed liberty taken with the third person of the Blessed Trinity. I believe by her Ministry that the Spirit is grieved, and his energy hindered ; and I believe that in the Burial Service, and the whole Liturgy, the laxity and want of discipline which applies them to the unbelieving world, is fruitful in evil unto man and dishonour unto God ; for probably within the pale of the Established Church there is not one congregation to whom her service can be truly and legitimately applied—one congregation, according to the words of her own article, “of faithful men ;”—nay, a congregation with her is a meeting of parishioners, the inhabitants of a certain district or parish, acknowledging the religion of the state, and not of believers in simple subjection to Christ. Her article, indeed, is sound, in declaring what a church should be. Again, her homily is sound in giving, as one of the marks of the church, “the right use of ecclesiastical discipline ;” but where is “the congregation of faithful men ?” and where shall we find “the right use of ecclesiastical discipline ?” In truth, I think out of her own mouth is she judged ; her own testimony goes to unchurch her. When her members are pressed as to the worldliness, corruption, and laxity of the church, it is usual for them to refer to her sound

articles and spiritual liturgy; but articles and liturgy, however sound and spiritual, do not constitute a church; a church is something more than principles and formularies, however excellent they be; a church is a congregation of living, of faithful men, under ecclesiastical discipline. This is her own testimony; but where do we find this in her communion? In truth, I know not; but I well know that articles can never make or keep her such.

For these reasons, dear brethren, not to enlarge on them, I feel that I can no longer hold communion with you within the pale of the Established Church. In her principles, her practices, her worldly standing, I see evil, with which I must not longer be identified. Some there are who do not see the evil, and even tell me that were they to separate, it would be without a reason. I confess, when I hear such things, it will rise in my mind that it is conscience and not reasons that we want; \* conscience enlightened by the word, and awake

[\* This I understand has given offence; but I think that it can only be to those who look for it. Any candid mind must acknowledge that while I have exposed the evil of the Established Church (which it was my object to do; and if I have failed, then am I guilty in separating from it), yet my whole pamphlet manifests my desire to avoid any thing personally offensive or hurtful to my brethren. Such, in truth, has been my desire; and the Lord knoweth how it hath restrained me in many things. But I regret to say that it has been to very little purpose, so far as they are concerned. As at Rome, identification with the system seems the principle everywhere. And, indeed, some, from their eagerness to search out a single word, and discover offence where I never meant it, would seem dissatisfied that they have not any thing of personality or bad spirit to lay hold on and expose.

As to having a good conscience in the Establishment, I have not denied it, neither do I. Many, I believe, there are, and good men too, who read their Bibles as addressing individuals simply, and quite

to God's glory ; but I desire not to judge my brethren. To our own master we stand or fall—for myself, I know,

overlook God's mind as respects His church, of which nevertheless the Bible is full. This they are ignorant of. It is surprising how ignorant many of them are. Their own holiness and the holiness of individuals around them is their object, in which I do believe many of them are most sincere and conscientious: but as to God's mind regarding His church; as to seeing that this is a separation from the world, His own house where His Spirit should be supreme; or as to making the revelation of His will, instead of their own well-meant intentions and exertions, their directory unto this; that is what they have little thought of. And thus they are ignorant of much truth, and of course do not feel the evil which that truth exposes; and probably, suspecting that all may not be right, they will not examine into the subject, for fear their conscience may be disturbed.

I can suppose one (I have known such) labouring faithfully as an individual, most inconsistently and erroneously as regards the church; but he little considers that, according to the doctrine he professes, if he knows what he professes, a church consists of the inhabitants of a certain number of streets, or of a certain section of the country; and that it is the Minister of the State who appoints the person who is, or who assumes to be, the successor of the Apostles over this church; and that he again, by uttering a falsehood over the head of another, qualifies him to be the minister in this church, and that the ministry of the Spirit of God is limited to the one so appointed. He may little think of this; once I little did myself: but what child of God is there in the kingdom, with any zeal for the Lord's glory, who *does* think of it, and has not found his heart rise within him, in the contemplation of such dishonouring treatment of God's word and ordinance? I do not believe that there is a single converted person in the church who has looked the evil in the face with an unruffled conscience; for it is palpable evil that conscience enlightened must take cognizance of, whether it will or no, when fairly brought before it, however it may afterwards be pacified by reasons of expediency of one kind or other. If it be said, how can we suppose that good men, who wait in prayer upon God for light, will still be left by Him in a system that is thus evil and dishonouring? I reply, that prayer is of little value when unaccompanied by corresponding practice. If I pray for light, and still continue in what I know to be darkness, what is the character of my prayer? Is it honest? I fear not. If I pray to be delivered from evil, and still abide in evil that I recognise and may forsake, is it not like asking God to be hardened in what I

in faithfulness to my God, I must cease from the evil that I believe to be dishonouring to him; and therefore, in the Established Church, I cannot commune with you; but come and meet me on the simple ground of God's word, and then most gladly will I be your fellow-labourer and servant in the Lord. God knoweth, as many of my brethren in the Establishment also know, that it is not without much ado that I have taken this step, for I covet not separation from brethren dear to me, as I know they are to the Lord. The Lord knoweth for how long a time I sought out every means that might satisfy my conscience, and let me abide in my calling—for I had good reasons, as I also had the inclination, to have done so if I could. I have read, and thought, and prayed, and conversed with those from whose lips I thought I might get instruction. From time to time I have got hold of a principle that I hoped would support me, and let me dwell at ease under mine own vine and fig-tree; but one by one, as they have been weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, they have been found wanting; the Lord has dissipated them all, and shewn me, that here I have

pray against? Some have told me that they pray to be shewn if the Established Church is evil, and that when God shews it them, then they will give it up. I ask them, do they believe that the Bishop gives the Holy Spirit in ordination? that every child is regenerate of the Spirit at his baptism, and adopted as a child of God? If not (and who does?), I say here is evil; why do you not separate from it? You are bound to it; it is bound on you by as solemn an obligation as you can make; and if still you will submit to it, it would be more honest to cease prayer on the subject, and acknowledge the evil, and your own unfaithfulness in submitting to it: or else defend it, as you may, and as many do, with a misgiving conscience.]

nothing to do but take up my cross and follow Jesus without the camp—not looking for my rest or honour here, which is not the portion of the stranger and pilgrim—nor do I look for it. Jesus was a sufferer here, a stranger, and an unwelcome one, in this world ; and I read, “if so be, we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together”—the Lord graciously make his dear people more to know him in “the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.”

### III.

And now, in the last place, will I proceed to notice some of the principles and reasonings, which for a long while weighed with my mind, in keeping me in the Establishment, and which, I believe, do still weigh with many a dear child of God, who would more honour his Lord and Master by coming out from all human systems, by simple fellowship with the children of God, and simple dependence upon his God and Father.

The first principle on which I laid hold at all to satisfy my mind, after I had been exercised on these subjects, is contained in the word, “profession.” I thought that all the members of the Establishment being baptized, and attending the services of the church, thereby made a profession entitling them to be treated as God’s children, even those whom I well knew afforded no evidence of having any “part or lot in the matter ;” who evinced no newness of mind, but yet whose lives were free from open and notorious evil.

This in a great measure removed my difficulties in the baptismal, communion, and burial services, and in the application of the liturgy to the unconverted. A profession, as I thought, was made; and on this warrant I further thought myself justified in dealing out the ordinances of God's children. This, as I now believe, was just the abuse of a true principle; and almost all error is but the abuse of what is good and true in itself, and therefore the more dangerous, and the more to be watched against. I do indeed now believe, that profession is, as it were, the door into the church; it is that by which we are admitted to the company of believers—for what is a church but a society, *professing* to hold the truth of God, and walk in obedience unto it, and there should we abide while our walk is consistent with our profession—while this proof is afforded that our profession is in truth: when it ceases to be so—when an unruly member, being warned, will not be humbled and obedient—then should discipline be exercised in defence of the body—"put away from among yourselves that wicked person;" he who was known to be such, observe, not by any discerning power in the apostle, but by the common report of the church; and here let not things that differ be confounded—let it not be said, that we cannot exercise discipline, because we cannot deliver unto Satan. The delivering unto Satan had respect only to the individual himself, "for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;" but the putting away, was for the health of the body, that the leaven might not leaven the whole lump (1 Cor. v.) Discipline, then, is the corrective which



God has given to keep the church free from manifested evil: as to what is secret, I believe her own faithfulness and holy walk would go far to bring it to light, and then it may be dealt with; but for this we are not responsible, but specially dependent on our Lord.

But what is profession?—here, I believe, in the misapprehension of this, is the wide and open door of evil—what is profession? Is it a mere rite, the meaning of which the multitude of those who have passed under it know not? or does it consist in the assent which our presence at a place of worship gives to the principles there inculcated?—or further, is it the mere repetition of a formulary, a sound abstract, it may be, of the truth, yet without any evidence of corresponding thought or feeling in the heart of him who makes it—without any evidence of that change that ever accompanies, more or less, the reception of the truth. If it be these, or any of these, then may a lunatic be a sound professor, for he was baptized. The worldling, “the covetous man, who is an idolater,” the scoffer may be such, for in crowds do they attend places of worship; and the merest and most lifeless, barren formalist, may be such, for such may repeat a sound form of truth as glibly as any other. In Scripture a profession would seem to imply something intelligent and heartfelt. This was obviously the case with the Eunuch. Philip finds him reading the word: his questions exhibit the exercise of his mind on the subject; and on his profession of believing in Jesus with all his heart, he is baptized, and goes on his way rejoicing. So was it with Cornelius, so with Lydia, so with the Philippian gaoler, and with the three thousand

on the day of Pentecost, who came inquiring of Peter and the rest of the apostles, and *gladly received* the word. Now, I see in these instances, that profession conveys an intelligent reception of the truth in the love of it; and that such it is our duty to look for, and diligently to examine all pretensions to it, before we receive the professor to fellowship; and this, I say, is still more necessary at the present than in the apostolic times. *Then*, indeed, there was but little inducement, apart from the truth itself, to lead any one to the acknowledgment of the name of Jesus. It involved contempt and persecution; but *now* there is no disgrace or suffering attached to the profession of the name, nay, it is a discreditable thing not to be called Christian; and therefore the more vigilantly should we guard the inclosures, and the more narrowly inspect the pretensions of those claiming the rights and privileges of the kingdom. I need scarcely add, how the exercise of a sound enlightened judgment in this respect would thin the ranks of the Establishment; and so it is with those who adopt church associations, which I believe are now spreading in the country. Such, in this, is the judgment they exercise, and such the result—they feel the evil of promiscuous, worldly association in the church; and therefore, they frame little churches within the church, which are but the strongest acknowledgment of the corruption and defectiveness of the church without. For if the Establishment be indeed the true church, which they assert it is, and if so consonant to God's mind, that they can not only quietly abide in it, but see not a reason for separation; if they will so praise and uphold it in word, then why are they not content with it in fact? and why

do they resort to their little select classes of believers—this separation within the church, and altogether unauthorised by it, from which indeed the multitude of her members are excluded? for they will not receive, nor allow within their little sacred inclosures, those whom, nevertheless the church, which they so praise and profess to obey, receives. Here, then, seems to be the strongest acknowledgment of the necessity of separation; it is the practical acknowledgment of those who, in the exercise of an enlightened judgment, feel the truth of the principle, and recognize its necessity; but who will not bear the cross of it; and therefore, their expedient to reconcile things irreconcilable. I rejoice that believers are brought together any how; but how strangely inconsistent, if indeed this be all.

But a very common defence of the more open and general profession is drawn from the consideration of the Jewish nation—Israel of old, even all the members of the nation, all the circumcised were acknowledged as God's people, and treated accordingly, then why not all the baptized, all the citizens of a Christian nation, or at least all the members of a Christian establishment? The ideas current upon this subject, and the parallels usually instituted between the past and present dispensations, seem very vague and inconclusive. Israel of old was the family of Abraham, the one family chosen of the Lord out of all the families of the earth, to be his own peculiar people—the people for his name: to them were imparted certain great privileges, and they were hedged in, by laws and ordinances of God's giving, from all other people; but I see nothing like this in our present dispensation—

no intimation of it in the New Testament Scriptures—no one family or nation exalted thus above others; but I do read of a people redeemed *out* of all nations, and I find God's purpose in visiting the Gentiles, not again to choose a family or nation, but to “take *out of them* a people for his name.” Now assuredly if Israel be typical of any thing in this dispensation, it is of this family of the redeemed chosen out of all nations, and not of the baptized and general professors, which actually are the *nations* of Europe, and some of Asia and America too. If then the parallel hold good, it must be between the Israel of old, the chosen and favoured people of God, and the true church now, the true circumcision, those who are the children of Abraham by faith, the temple of the living God, of whom he says, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Israel could scarcely be the type of the company of the baptized—they surely are not the peculiar people chosen *out of the world*, the people called from darkness into his marvellous light to shew forth his praises.\* And

\* And yet some would seem to think it so. It seems quite marvellous to me, the way that men of God will speak on this subject, and only to be accounted for by the power of system—system that so mars the unity of God's children; for what believer is there who has not enjoyed sweet communion with his brother, while they spake of the things concerning their common salvation, and their common hope, which are all laid up in Jesus; but something arises touching on the peculiarities of their little system, and then is the brother merged in the champion of his views or party. This is very humiliating. But to return to our subject—the privileges of the baptized: One tells me that there is no world now, at least none in Europe; there certainly is in Africa and Asia, and probably might also be found in a voyage of discovery in America, but not here in Europe; for the world in Scripture means the heathen world, and the baptized must not be so called. Another brother, advancing a little step, will tell us, that it is a shame to call baptized people the world! This is pitiable, or it

the reception of all Israel as worshippers in the temple, gives no ground whatever for the reception of all baptized people to the ordinances of the Lord,

would be so if it was not ridiculous; and what but the determination at any hazard to uphold a system, would lead men of God—for of such I speak—into such puerile extravagancies. So then, men may wallow in “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life,” which the Spirit declares to be of *the world*, but if they be baptized people, it is a shame so to characterize them; in truth, it is a shame for God’s children so to trifle—to say the least of it, with God’s word. It would be well if there was a little more of godly fear in their dealing with it. In John xv., our Lord says to his disciples, “if ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” But they never were chosen from the heathen—then what is the meaning of the world here? According to the interpretation of our brethren, who so magnify the *mere rite* of baptism, making it the “opus operatum,” there can be none now chosen out of the world, for there is no world to choose them out of, except as they might be transplanted from some other quarter of the globe; and if they come, then there can be no hatred of the world, for there is no world to hate them.

The conformity in Rom. xii. 2, must be to the heathen world, and of course it has nothing to do with baptized people here; for we have no world to be conformed to, while we stay at home in Europe. In truth it is a great thing to be born at this side of the Mediterranean, even in the depth of its ignorance, superstition, and bigotry. Here none can be guilty of the sin of Demas, for there is no world to love, and there is then no necessity to be crucified to the world, this seems quite out of the question for one in Europe, and can only be perhaps experienced by a believer in Asia or Africa. The dominion of Satan, who is called the god and the “prince of this world,” and “the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience,” can have no extension according to this doctrine over the baptized, however disobedient they be. He “that deceiveth the whole world,” cannot deceive them—they have passed under the rite, and are safe. Oh! this is pitiable—it is robbing the church of some of the most searching and needful exhortations in the whole Scriptures, and of some of the richest sources of her comfort also. John xvi. 33, and 1 John v. 4, and many, many others of the same stamp, can have little to do with us according to their miserable gloss.

It is indeed true that in the apostles’ days the world was the unbaptized—it is just as true, that the world now, that which ex-

but of those alone of whom Israel was typical — the people of God, as they are manifested by a profession of the truth—truth not in word only, but in power, in life ; for this is true profession. I cannot look upon Israel as a type of the baptized church, taking it in its common acceptation of Christendom ; for I cannot believe that God appointed his people to be the type of a wide-spreading apostasy, and such I fear is the character of Christendom at the present day ; nor can I see in the contemplation of Israel any ground for the lax and profane custom which throws open the ordinances of the Lord (ordained for the church in her pilgrimage), to all indiscriminately, saint and sinner, as they come. If the Church of England stood as Israel of old, established of God, then would she have cause to shew for her practice ; but I cannot see one tittle of foundation for such assumption. Israel was indeed established of God,\*

hibits every feature of the world as distinctly as ever, is the baptized. In the above passages the different words in the original, translated world, are all used in contradistinction to the church. Then the church was the baptized, now the baptized is not the church. And to deny this, is to substitute an outward form, after experience has proved it only such, in place of the holy living “workmanship” of God’s energizing Spirit.

[\* And, therefore, separation from her would have been schism. And so it would from the Church of England, if she were established of God, as was Israel. And here is the simple answer to all the laboured conclusions that would be drawn from our blessed Lord’s attendance upon the worship of Israel amid all its corruptions. He did so, for Israel was God’s people, and the temple was God’s place ; it was all God’s establishment, and therefore honoured of His beloved Son. But the evil was not acknowledged of Him, as it is now in the Church of England. If any analogy be drawn, and it may, but partially, then should it be between Israel and Christianity, the dispensation of old and that of the latter times, and not with any of the little sects or parties called Christian, set up and bedizened with their preten-

and as such honoured of our Lord and his apostles, even amid all its corruptions. The Church of England is indeed established, but it is by man and not by God, and this makes all possible difference in its position, and in the obedience that is due to its claims; it is established by worldly power and authority, which is now rejected of God since its rejection of his Son. I know some there are who make the church but an extension of Israel; the Church of God they identify with Israel, and the Church of England with the Church of God: this certainly is putting the Establishment in these countries into a very imposing position, and by a very speedy process; but however such reasoning may please those who discover it, I have little fear that it will impose upon many; it wants proof in every step of its progress; and remarkable it is, that those who are so disposed to argue, are the persons borrowing from the Church of Rome the aid of her tradition. That the Church of England, or the Established Church of these countries, is the Church of God, I deny, and defy proof; and as to the identity of the church with Israel, if in any sense one, then it is in such a different state, and under such totally different circumstances, as makes it impossible to draw any conclusion from the identity affecting the

sions and trappings by the pride and folly of man. It is remarkable the continued falling back on the case of Israel by the advocates of the Established Church; and it strongly shews the low and earthly standing which they take. They *will not* enter in within the veil; in this more culpable than Israel, for she *could not*, it was not her calling. But unto us what saith the word? "*holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.*" This is most plain, most blessed: but, according to some, what does it mean? why, baptized Europe, established in the dominions of Satan !]

question : the one was earthly ; its prosperity, its promises, its hope, its sanction earthly—the other heavenly ; its hope, promises, prosperity, sanction heavenly—the one literal, the other spiritual—the one abounding in form and ritual, the other marked by the absence of these. Indeed, the association seems rather that of contrast than any thing else—the one was a whole nation set apart by Jehovah, the other a gathering of saints *out of all* nations ; and thus to identify them seems but to bring back the church from its heavenly calling, when God contemplates it in Christ Jesus, and where in spirit it should be, to its Jewish, earthly position—a bringing it back to the weak and beggarly elements, to which it would strangely seem, that some, who should know better, desire again to be in bondage. While earth was acknowledged of God, then the things of earth were acknowledged, as we see in the Jewish dispensation, which was earthly in its character and service ; but when this earthly dispensation was rejected, when it filled up the measure of its iniquity in the rejection of the Lord, then the creature, which previously was acknowledged of the Lord, was laid aside also, and became weak, inefficient, “ beggarly elements.”

I find then, honestly weighing the matter, that there is no profession—none, at least, that we are warranted by Scripture to consider such—in the multitude of the members of the Established Church ; and therefore the support failed me which I derived from this source.

It was then very strongly brought before me, that obedience was duty—obedience to the rulers of the church, on whom, and not on me, responsibility rested ;



that it was not for man to arise in his own strength to reform what was wrong, but to wait upon the Lord in obedience to his ordinances, and in prayer to the Spirit to arise and reform for us. But here again I found the abuse of a true principle, the mixture of truth and error. Most readily, and from my heart, do I acknowledge the duty of obedience, only let me see from the Word to whom the obedience is due. I see that it is due unto "the powers that be," for they "are ordained of God." Then do I desire, and God giving me grace, so will I bow down in obedience unto them, not for a moment questioning their authority; and let the ecclesiastical rulers of the Establishment give me the same evidence of their title to my obedience, and as cheerfully and unreservedly shall it be yielded; nay, it would rejoice me to do so, for I covet not freedom from authority—I believe that it is not a wholesome position for the Lord's children to stand in. But wherever the authority, be lodged, assuredly I cannot see it in the ecclesiastical heads of the Established Church. Then, to whom am I to be obedient? I may be told to the church—what church?—The church established by law.—No; I cannot see her claim; but I do see that she is disobedient to my Lord and Master; and, therefore, in obedience to Him, I am driven to disobey her; and here is just the ground of my separation from her. She looks to the world, and not simply unto Christ, but to the world that crucified and rejected him, for her power, her honour, and support. She is not a separation of saints from the world in subjection to the Word, and "one to another in the fear of God," but of worldly people meeting together, because they have been brought

up to do so; and it may be, and often is so, of a few saints mixed up with them, because they have not the light or the strength to come out from them, and meet together in the name of the Lord. Thus have we the clean and the unclean, the precious and the vile, all united. The church has the same services for them all, for she assumes them all faithful; and on them she lays heavy burdens and grievous to be borne (such, at least, they are to the saints, the others care not for them), and she will not move them. Therefore do I feel myself, in obedience to my Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, to whom obedience is due, disobedient to the Established Church, which I cannot see to be a church. She is not a body of faithful men, for the vast majority is notoriously composed of unfaithful, and unbelieving; and probably there is not a crime of which the law takes cognizance, that might not be found, and found unrepented of, within her precincts. Her practice may indeed be called charitable; but I believe that it is as uncharitable as it is unfaithful; to give a poor sinner any ground for thinking himself a believer, while he affords no evidence of it, is only to lull him into a fatal security, that he may lift up his eyes in torment to the full amount of his misery. This, I fear, the Established Church does, in her formularies, assuming her members believers, and in her ordinances treating them as such; while her faithful minister sees the evil, and tries to rectify it, by contradicting in the pulpit what he had assumed in the reading-desk; and then will say, what else can I do?—Why, come out from such a system, I say, in the name of the Lord: many a brother there is to receive you, and to work with you in that holy

name, unshackled by the inventions of man's wisdom, in the unhindered liberty of God's Spirit.

But we are cautioned not to arise in our own strength to reform abuses, nor to expect blessing from any plan or effort of our own wisdom. Assuredly we should not. God's people should ever pray to be kept from acting in their own strength or wisdom, which is but weakness and folly. But are they, therefore, to sit passive under that which they see and feel to be evil? and are they to sit in negligence of the truth which God hath given to rectify the evil? I assuredly believe that blessing comes in the way of obedience to God's revealed will; and I know not on what grounds we are to look for blessing while we continue in disobedience.

Yes, indeed, from my heart do I allow that we should wait upon the Lord, and wait for the daily supply of the Spirit of Christ; but in so doing, let us see that we allow ourselves in no evil, else will our prayer be hindered; for it seemeth to me like unto a mockery to pray for deliverance from evil, and yet to lie passive under the very evil from which we pray to be delivered. It seems to me that the Lord might address us as he did Joshua of old in the sin of Achan, "Get thee up, wherefore liest thou upon thy face?" Even so, I do believe, should we arise, should every child of God stir up the gift that is in him; and that it is in the faithful exercise of it, in God's light, in active obedience, that we may look for the holy energy of the Spirit, and not in passively lying under evil, which we will not make an effort to arise and shake off. I see evil in the Establishment—I have felt it, and suffered under it. What am I to do?—still to lie mourning on

my face, suffering under its defilement—or to arise and petition the head of the temporal power? This is the alternative the church gives me. But my God sheweth me a better way, to “cease to do evil;” and in faithfulness to him I must arise, and have done with it. While we continue under it, I believe it is increased weakness, and not strength, that we may look for.

But, say some, and many a one, what shall we do?—the Establishment, we know, has its imperfections: we see, we feel the evil in it; but we see nothing better. Do you see the evil—then cease from it: let that be your first step; God will shew you the next when you have taken that. Then it will be time enough. What right have you to expect that God will shew you duty afar off, when you neglect that which is at hand? This would be a premium to disobedience. And for one to see evil, and submit to it, without an effort to forsake it, this is just to hinder the progress of light; it is to bring his own soul into a dark and hardened state, and infallibly would do so but for the preventing grace of God. If, then, any one's conscience tells him that the system he is sanctioning sanctions evil, I readily tell him where he will get better—simply, by ceasing from the evil. This is God's will, and obedience to it is blessing; and this is my answer to the apologists for evil, who tell us that all is Babylon, and that we cannot better ourselves by changing—that we are only changing from one to another form of evil, from one street of the unclean city to another. I say it is not God's way to give his people a choice of evils, but a cessation from them; and I say that he never left his people under the power of moral evil, for which

he did not make a way to escape. Then, in whatever church or communion you may be, as you profess obedience to the Lord, cease from the evil; before you complain of all being in Babylon, and the want of the Spirit, cease to grieve and hinder the Spirit by your disobedience. When you have acted on the light and help that God has given, and when it fails you, then have you ground to look for more; but while you neglect this, it is delusion, and not light, that you may expect—the meteor glare that shines to lead astray. Oh! there is more intimate connexion than we generally suspect between our honouring God's truth, and our being preserved in rectitude of life and principle; and for my own part, I confess that I see no safety amid the delusions on the right hand and on the left, but in the Word, which is God's truth, which is the testimony of the Spirit. Here I find a rest, a foundation for my soul; but where else to look for it, I know not. Now, in the Established Church, I cannot thus live and rest simply upon the Word; for she allows of evil, both in principle and practice, contradictory to the word, and further binds it on her members, who will be bound by her; and if they will not, they should cease to be her members. She allows no liberty to her members. As much liberty as they please will she give them in pursuing their worldly course; but in things even of avowedly little moment, and which yet may gall a tender conscience, uniformity, not liberty, is her word. God gives liberty to his dear children; but with the Established Church uniformity in things external, though it be to the harassing of the weak, and nourishing the seed of discontent within her. Now, I

say that a faithful disciple, who feels himself galled and harassed by the recurrence of evil in ministration, and who has not liberty to cease from this in the Establishment, should come out and be separate from her communion. He should do so, for he has no other remedy ; and, moreover, he should cease from every communion upon earth which *sanctions* evil, for this is hindering the disciple's liberty and joy in the Lord, and hindering the manifestation of his Lord's grace. — Let the disciple follow his Lord in faith, and he will guide him to a resting place. Let him, if indeed he cannot see his way, go forth like Abraham of old, “not knowing whither he went.” Better to be a wanderer, than find a resting place in evil. But he need not be a wanderer. Faith honours God, and God ever honours faith ; and He will lead his obedient people into a resting place. Their own self-will and disobedience only is it, I do believe, that hinders any of them from finding it. But it seems one of Satan's devices, at this day, to lead some to honour the Church more than the Church's Lord ; and, therefore, will they rather do what they *can* in their system, than what they *should* out of it : and hence the laboured excuses to justify and commend what I do believe is unjustifiable. To me it is a sufficient evidence of falsity of principle, the recommending one still to abide where his conscience is hurt or offended. Our object should be the maintenance of a conscience void of offence towards God and man. This I cannot have in the Establishment. How others, whose consciences have been exercised, can, I know not—but I judge not. I must leave it—I would that others were under the same necessity.

But again, the question will be asked, Whither will you go—to which of the many sects of the day will you join yourself? I reply, to none of them. I have not left one to join another. They are all, I fear, more or less sectarian; and sectarianism I do hate. I of Paul, and I of Apollos—I of the Church of England, and I of the Church of Scotland, and I an Independant, and so on, each jealous of its own little interests—the Church interest with one, the Dissenting interest with another, all desirous to make the Lord the leader of their little sect, rather than the head of his body, the Church. Now, will I have nothing to do, God strengthening me, with this poor sectarianism: I desire to be simply, in all its foolishness, a member of the Church of God, and to receive as my brethren the true and holy believers of every denomination; to be one with the Lord's people wherever I find them meeting together in his name, in separation from the world, in obedience to the Word, acknowledging the Spirit wherever he is pleased to manifest his grace, and refusing to acknowledge all unfounded pretensions, whether of lifeless formality or unholy delusion. With such do I desire to cast in my lot, wherever I see God's children gathered together, without any opening to the world—without any closing to the saints—receiving all, even the weakest, that receive Jesus—receiving none other\*. Such I believe was the church in the

[\* This, I feel persuaded, is the proper character of the Church, open and free to all who confess Christ. And this, I believe, is a great truth lost in the general apostasy, the Catholicity of the Church—receiving all whom God receives, and allowing the Spirit of God liberty in His own house; instead of setting up man's order in His place. In this the Church of England errs: indeed, this she almost reverses. She is open enough to the

Apostolic times—such do I believe it should be now, and such it may be, and to such will I gladly join myself wherever I find them in this present evil world. There do I look for the Lord in fulfilment of his word,—precious, precious word!—“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there will I be in the midst of them.”

But it will be said, as it often has been, that every effort to unite disciples on this principle has failed, and only ended in further separation. No; I say, in times past many, many little bodies have risen up and served their day and generation—many have risen up God’s witnesses in the midst of evil, and been blessed in bringing saints into fellowship one with another, and with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. They may have been few in number—they may have been overlooked and despised by the world, but I believe they have experienced the presence and the blessing of the Lord just as they have been true to the principle of separation from the evil world, and fellowship with all the children of God; world, but by her narrow requirements, her articles and canons, &c. shuts out multitudes of the saints. And herein many of the dissenting bodies err, who will only open unto such as can utter their shibboleth; one making it *his view* of baptism; another *his view* of obedience to the precepts of Scripture; not simply obedience to the word or ordinance which should be required of every disciple; but obedience to the particular view of the word and ordinance adopted by the party, and which in their assumption of infallibility must only be the true one. Such seems to be the error of the followers of the late Mr. Walker,—an error, wherever it be, which converts the Lord’s table, which is for all His children, into a narrow sectarian communion. I desire to know but the one Church, and that the Catholic Church,—to be a member of but one, even the Church of God; and accordingly, to receive any one whom God has received, however I may differ from him in detail. It is in the Church we may hope to be brought to one mind, and not in separation one from another, or in undistinguishable union with the world.]



and just, I believe, as they have forgotten this, and let the world in, or shut the saints out, have they been judged and laid aside as the churches of old, or dwindled, as some have, into mere sects, with a name to live and little else. But I rejoice to find in this, our day, that the Lord is putting it into the hearts of many of his saints thus to meet in fellowship—that many little gatherings of disciples both in these countries and on the Continent, most contemptible (even as it should be) in the eyes of the world, but I do believe most dear unto our Lord, are now meeting “in the Apostles’ doctrine, in fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayer:” unto such do I desire to join myself wherever they be, with such do I consider it my privilege to unite, and my honour to be in any way instrumental to their growth in the knowledge and joy of the Lord.

But further, some one may say, “I acknowledge evil in the Established Church, still is it but a choice of evil with me between staying where I am, and separating and joining others.” No, not a choice of evils: you acknowledge evil where you are; then cease from it; this is not evil:—then meet with the brethren for prayer, breaking of bread, and the exercise of whatever gift God hath given you; this is not evil:—true, you may reply, but evil will arise. Well, probably it may, but then God has not left us without a remedy. Even if it does arise, he has given us a corrective; and when this fails, being tried *as He gives it* in dependence on Him, then, but not till then, may we speak about a choice of evils.

Another word, not without its weight in keeping God’s children mixed where they should not be, in the worldly

system of the national establishment, is the charge of schism so generally imputed to those who separate from her communion, and connected with what is represented as the devil's motto, "Divide and conquer." Now, as to schism, rending the body of Christ, I quite feel that it is a very serious offence in God's sight; and God forbid that I should defend or palliate it; but utterly do I fling from me the charge as applying to those leaving the national establishment: it may, indeed, be schism as regards the Established Church, and from this charge I feel no anxiety to recede; but it is not schism, I do feel thoroughly persuaded, as regards the Church of God. This would be a grievous offence, one which every believer should deprecate. I very readily acknowledge that it is not allowable to separate from the Church of God, even on account of corruptions or *un*-scriptural usages: separate from the evil wherever it be—cease to partake of it at *whatever cost*, but do not separate from the Church of God, still abide with her, stand by her, help her in her extremity; God loves her amid all her infirmity, and does not sanction separation from her, nor ever give it as the remedy for her evil; but then all this assumes that the Established Church is the Church of God, and this to me is mere groundless assumption. I utterly deny it. What! a worldly association, where nineteen-twentieths, in many cases double and treble the number, are worldly, unconverted men—a worldly association united to the state, and, in the acknowledgment of her friends, "overlaid by the state,"—a worldly association, whose spiritual rulers are called into office at the beck of the Monarch's minister—this the Church of God! this the body of

Christ! He may believe it who *will*—I *cannot*; and it is because I cannot, that I separate from her, for it is not on account of certain *un*-scriptural usages that I leave her communion. No, I acknowledge that this would be insufficient ground; but it is because of her *anti*-scriptural standing and practice—and this proves to me her true character; it shews me that she is indeed the schismatic; she is not in the position of a true church—if she was, I could bear with her even in her corruptions and abuses.—The character of the true church, I believe, however corrupt, is still separation from the world, the calling out of it, the witness against its evil, however feeble and infirm her testimony may be; but this she cannot be while she is its pensioned dependant: just, then, as she becomes identified with the world, does she lose her distinctive character—does she fall from her standing as the Church of God. Every act, every lesson of the true church should be to lead the hearts of her members upwards, to raise them off the world, to teach them the heavenly calling of the saints—children of God!—then strangers and pilgrims here, not seeking their happiness, their distinction here, not conformed to the usages and principles of the world. The apostle gives it as one of the marks of the enemies of the cross of Christ—they “mind earthly things,” and then immediately adds, “Our conversation is in heaven, from whence we look for the Lord Jesus Christ.” Phil. iii. 18, 20. And again, in the 3rd of Colossians, “Set your affections on things above, *and not* on things on the earth.” I may be told that such is the effort of many of the faithful ministers in the church—I well know it;

but such, I say, is neither the standing nor the practice of the church herself; but, on the contrary, her position of dependance on the world for rank, support, protection, while it marks her worldly character, tends to foster the same worldly spirit in her members. How remarkably is this seen in the avidity even of good men in her ministry for church preferment. Then, when the charge of schism is brought against me, I throw it back on this worldly assemblage, with *some* good principles, and bad practice. I feel that, if I would be obedient to God's word, I cannot be obedient to her—I must separate from her communion.

But, "woe unto the world because of offences:" a dear brother writes to me, and asks if ever I have considered the meaning of this passage, "Woe unto that man by whom the offence cometh"? Now thus publicly do I answer that dear brother, in case the thought of his heart may have passed through the mind of any other, and I say, woe then to the Established Church, for she it is who has caused offences to many—to multitudes of God's dear children both within and without her communion; and further will I tell that dear brother, that what I have done, in obedience to God's word have I done it; and further still, that if such an alternative could be—if obedience to my God, which God forbid, was to the stumbling of all his children upon earth—I would not hesitate in the course I should pursue. But I believe that many are stumbled and offended because of their own disobedience. You cause offence, a brother tells me. Why? Because I cannot submit to say what I do not believe—to call the world regenerate, and worship

with that world that still, I know to be the enemy of my God and of his Christ. Others believe it as little as I do, but still they will submit to it, and then find out a reason for their so doing. Why are any of God's children offended with me? is it because of my refusal to submit to any part of God's truth, to which they are obedient? No, truly; but because the light of the word to which I desire to bow down my whole soul, and in obedience to which I have acted, witnesseth against the worldly system to which they are so wedded, therefore are they offended. I desire, God knoweth, conformity to his revealed will; in conformity to it, I have ceased from what I assuredly believe without a shadow of doubt was contrary to it. Surely there cannot be woe for this—then for what? Will that brother shew me *out of the word* any one truth to which I sanction disobedience? If he does, I will thank him, and pray that my soul be disciplined to yield to it. I here shew my brother much in the establishment, and much that I think he will acknowledge—at least he once would—contrary to God's revealed will:—what then shall I say of him, and those like him, who with God's love, I do believe, in their hearts, still submit, when they need not, to what is dishonouring unto Him (for all error is so)? I will not say, Woe, though I feel, that they are an occasion of stumbling to many of the "little ones," who would walk in simplicity with their God, but are hindered by the course of those to whom they look up for direction; and if, instead of setting up one system against another, brethren would simply labour to gather sinners to Christ, and to holy fellowship, one with another, I doubt not our

Lord would be more honoured—his “*obedient children*” less offended, and their own souls more happy; and to this I doubt not that there is a witness in the conscience of very many of them; but the system—the spell, the bondage of the system prevails.

When then I am charged with causing offences, on the Established Church I throw back the accusation; and when such texts as that in Rom. xvi. 17,\* are applied to

[\* As I have been very directly and pointedly encountered with this text, and more than once, it may be well here to dwell a little on it. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them; for they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Now, the doctrine which they had learned, was, of course, the doctrine of the epistle; but I ask, wherein do we act contrary to this; or how can we be condemned by any one passage in it. If any one will undertake to show us wherein we err, we will undertake to rectify the error so far as in us lieth, readily acknowledging, of course, our short-coming. But some there are, I believe, who do cause divisions and offences, contrary to the Apostle’s doctrine, and, wherever they be, they are the schismatics. Now, I cannot find anything in this epistle of the union and mixture of the Church and the world; but I do find the Church described as those “beloved of God called to be saints,” (i. 7.) I find nothing of the Church established by, and dependent upon, the powers of this world, but I do find her cautioned against conformity to the world, (xii. 2), and this is vain while she is its dependant. I find nothing of anathematising disciples, for not in every thing agreeing to certain regulations of man; but I do find exhortation to forbearance wherein we differ, (xiv.) I find nothing of Apostolic succession, or of a set of men calling themselves a priesthood, and claiming to be the rulers and teachers of God’s heritage; but I do find disciples exhorted as members of one body to minister unto each other according to the gifts of grace given unto them, c. xii. I find the Apostle describing these schismatics as those who serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly. But to whom is this applicable? Is it to a few despised brethren here and there banded together, among whom are some worn out in labour in their Master’s service, and some from their labours prematurely

me, again on the church I cast them : it is she that has caused divisions and offences, by setting up, and insisting on, what the Lord has not insisted upon. My conscience witnesseth to me before God my anxious desire to have staid in her communion, if she would have let me—my conscience grieved and galled by her *anti-scriptural* exactions, demanding assent on the pain of excommunication, when God's way is long-suffering and liberty. I cannot but feel that she is the cause of sorrow and suffering I have endured. I cannot but feel that she it is who has in any degree separated me from brethren whom I love—

entered into their rest? Is it to those, among whom are many who, for conscience towards God, have lost their all, or nearly so, giving up what they could not hold, or being turned out of what they could? Is it of such that the apostle saith these words, "They serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly." Or rather, would not one suppose that it bore upon those who possess their portion of this world's goods, in the name of doing the Lord's work, which work they do not, multitudes of them at least. As to "deceiving the hearts of the simple;" I believe that the hearts of the simple, many many of them, have been edified, instructed, and comforted, in a way that they knew not before. And in one sense, I would that all had more simplicity, and they would have here more blessing. But I believe that the simple are often deceived "by good words and fair speeches," when they are properly guarded against certain errors, and then these errors imputed unto us; when the danger of false principles is rightly insisted on, and then the false principles laid at our door. Thus are the simple prejudiced and hindered from coming where they may get communion and profit for their souls, under a semblance of zeal for truth; and it may be with a general expression of kindness and good will, but accompanied with many a caution against us, for which things I believe some will have yet to answer. I can therefore say that I feel free from the character here described by the apostle, and that it comes with a very bad grace from those who make it. I feel for myself and brethren, that we stand in the doctrine taught by the apostle, contrary to which I believe that the Church of England has caused divisions and offences, and should therefore be avoided.]

with whom I have lived on terms of affectionate intimacy, and with whom I desire to be united as much as with any other upon earth—she it is who has rent ties that I would for ever have united—she, by her anti-scriptural standing and exactions on the consciences of God's children.

But it is said, that this is the devil's work, "divide and conquer." Yes, truly will I divide God's children from all that is evil, so far as it is in my power; but God knoweth that this is all that I want; and I think I can equally appeal to Him who searcheth the heart, that I desire not to separate from any holy brother upon earth; and further I think I can say that there is no object in this world, after the communion of my own soul with God, on which my heart is more set, than the union of God's children one with another, and with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ, "that they *all may be one.*" Here it is that their weakness may be met, and that glory may be brought to the name of Jesus. I desire to see one, and but one sect, in our country, and that, comprehending all the saints in it; but this cannot be on any artificial ground; it cannot be with any of the sects who make a Shibboleth of some pet doctrine of their own, and will exclude all who "cannot frame to pronounce it;" it cannot be on the worldly foundation of the Established Church—her platform is too contracted, to embrace all saints, though wide enough for all the world. She says, Come and submit to our ordinances—the world goes, because it has no conscience; and she receives the world, by a fiction assuming it to be Christian, while she knows that it is not. Many, many of the saints—how many thousands and tens of thousands of the holiest men



our land has ever seen, could not comply, for they had a conscience, even as it is now. Then, she says, I will not unite with you in other terms than those which we have adopted. You may be holy, dear children of God, possessing the clearest evidence of the teaching and sanctifying of God's Spirit; but I will not unite with you, save on our own terms. God receives the saint—the Establishment will not, because he follows not with her. With whom does the schism here rest? We are willing to meet our brethren with any requirement that they bring to us from the Lord: they will not, without further of human invention, and which we believe in many things contrary to the Divine Will. With whom is the schism here? She requires of every minister at his ordination, his subscription to his belief, that the Sovereign's majesty is the only supreme governor of these realms, as well in spiritual and ecclesiastical things as in temporal; and consequently exercising that authority in the church, which I have pointed out in these pages: we believe this unauthorized by God's word, and cannot assent to it. Again, he must subscribe to his belief, that the book of common prayer, ordination services, articles of religion, &c., contain nothing contrary to God's word: I believe that they do, and therefore cannot subscribe. I do thoroughly and from my heart subscribe to God's Word: Oh! but this is not enough—you must further subscribe to the book of common prayer—I cannot. Then with whom is the schism here? See the decision of one ranking high in her estimation, and usually adduced as a model of reasoning—I refer to Chillingworth: "If a church supposed to want nothing necessary,

require me to profess against my conscience, that I believe some error, though never so small and innocent, which I do not believe, and will not allow me her communion but upon this condition; in this case, *the Church for requiring this condition is schismatical, and not I for separating from the Church.*" Pref. sect. 44. Again, "If you require the belief of *any* error among the conditions of your communion, our obligation to communicate with you ceaseth, and so the imputation of schism to us vanisheth into nothing, *but lies heavily upon you for making our separation from you just and necessary, by requiring unnecessary and unlawful conditions of your communion.*"\* Answer to Pref. Sect. 22. All this, I think, is plain enough, and seems to me to fasten the charge of schism on the Established Church. She requires assent to what should be left indifferent; and separation is the consequence with those who would rather not separate, but cannot with a good conscience assent to her requirements. "Propose me anything out of God's word, and require whether I believe it or no; and seem it never so incomprehensible to human reason, I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as knowing no demonstration can be stronger than this, God hath said so, therefore it is true. In other things, I will take no man's liberty of judgment from him, neither shall any man take mine from me," Ch. vi. 56. In accordance with this, I do not want to dictate to another; but I claim for myself the same liberty which I am willing to concede. If one tells me, for instance, that he can in faith use the baptismal service,†

[\* For putting these words in italics, I am responsible.

[† If it was left a thing indifferent, as it should be, to be used or

then in the Lord's name let him use it. I hinder him not, nor will I separate from him because he does so; but surely this is no reason why he should force it on me who cannot use it: just to this purpose is the author quoted above. "If there was a society of Christians that held there were no antipodes, notwithstanding this error I might communicate with them; but if I could not do so without professing myself of their belief in this matter, then I suppose I should be excused from schism if I should forsake their communion, rather than to profess myself to believe what I do not believe." Ch. v. 59.

But then we shall be told about the necessity of uniformity; and therefore we have a declaration from the "supreme governor of the church of England," requiring all his loving subjects (that is, all the church) to continue in the uniform profession of what?—the thirty-nine articles—and prohibiting the least difference from them. Here is man's wisdom to effect uniformity; and here consequently the unity of the Spirit is hindered, and the communion of the saints broken and despised. Communion of saints! what is it? Why, according to some, a gathering of those who have been baptized and pronounced regenerate in their infancy. Oh, this unrighteous breaking down of the very barriers between right and wrong! But "neither for sin nor errors," I will allow with our author, "ought a church to be forsaken, *if she does not impose or enjoin them.* But if she do, then we

not, according to the judgment and conscience of him who ministered, how often would it be used by the holy men in the Established Church? Ah, such an experiment would make great discovery, at least of their mind, towards it.]

must forsake men rather than God ; leave the Church's communion rather than commit sin, or profess known errors to be divine truths," c. v. 68. And to the same effect Bishop Bramhill, " if a Church shall obtrude doubtful opinions, whether they be erroneous or not, as necessary articles of Christian faith—she becometh schismatical," (*Works*, 291). And, indeed, all the controversial writers of any note, into whose works I have looked ; in arguing against Romanism, and conclusively so, furnish us with arguments against the Church of England. But it is just what we might expect. Their principle was, the right and duty of the believer to stand separate from error, even among the baptized, and even as they did, to suffer not its imposition on his conscience. It is simply our principle now, and though the character of argument in detail will differ according to the character of error against which it is directed, yet the principle is the same, whether in heathenism, infidelity, or the corrupt forms of Christianity.

But many enlightened ministers of the Established Church feel, and mourn over corruption that racks their consciences, and that they earnestly desire to be rid of. Will they ask us to unite with them in these things ? — We cannot. Most readily and happily will we labour with them, if they meet us in the name, not of a worldly establishment, much of which they disapprove themselves, but in that name that is above every name, even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ : and coming in this name, and accredited by their Master, I would put it to their consciences, if it be not an awful thing to reject brethren so coming. You may reply, our church makes

us reject them—she gives us no choice. Then, in this, I say, learn the schismatic character of your church, which rejects God's Spirit in any of his people, when it is not manifested as she thinks right—in men proving by their life, their labour, their various gifts, and the many souls which they have for their hire, that God of a truth is with them. Think on these things. Some of you give as a reason for not leaving the Established Church, because, as you say, the Spirit has not left her; and yet you will reject those as fellow-labourers whom you must acknowledge the Spirit has not left! This is hardly consistent, to say the least; but it leads me to say a word on a very common ground of defence for the Establishment.

An appeal is made to the proof of God's favour afforded by the holy men raised up in her ministry, and the general good effected by them. God has not left her, say her friends, neither should his people. Now, I readily bear witness to the number and value of the good men which she possesses; but again, I ask, are their consciences quiet and satisfied with their position?—would they, if left freely to their own choice, without the hazard of penalty or reproach, without loss of income or standing in the world—would, I say, their present position be their choice? I know that many of them are groaning under it, and suffering by the violence done to their conscience; and can they blame us for ceasing from exposure to like infliction and injury?

Again, the good that is done is appealed to, and again I cheerfully acknowledge it; but observe, that this good is just in proportion to the irregularity of the clergy, to

their unfaithfulness to the laws and ordinances of their church, shewing us that in no wise to the system are they indebted, but to the devoted men of God in it. Look among the ranks of the High Church party, as they are called, and, as I believe, the more consistent churchmen, and what do you find there? Look to the cathedrals and episcopal palaces of the land, where orthodoxy may be supposed to reign, and the principles of the Established Church understood, and what marks of God's favour do you find there? Then look to the more irregular but faithful ministers of God in the Establishment, who, forgetting the claims of their church, or probably never very accurately weighing them, and feeling the claims of perishing souls, and the glory of their Lord and Master, set their hand to the plough, and go forth in the name of Jesus. Church, Meeting, or School-house, liturgical or extemporaneous prayer, are all one to them: the canonically prescribed ecclesiastical habits, together with other canonical prescriptions, they little regard. I believe that they have one great object in view; and in this they seem to be acknowledged very much in proportion as they throw off the shackles of their church, and work in liberty—as they know nothing of rubrics or canons, or the territorial claims of parish ministers or diocesan bishops.\*—Is it not so? Let the Home Mission, and many an active hard-working minister in his parish furnish the reply, most faithful servants

[\* In contemplating the Establishment in this country, and the character of much of the work that is carrying on by its ministry, one cannot help feeling that there is some truth in the taunt of the "cui bono" bishops.]

of God, most unfaithful sons of the Church. But how are they looked upon by their more regular brethren of the church? A prophet of their own places them in this comfortable dilemma, as either deficient in "understanding, or common honesty;" and again, his estimate of their labour is this: "A systematic deviation from truth and honesty;" but it little matters; God, I believe, will bless good and faithful men, wherever he finds them, and will bear, as we daily see, with much of their perverseness, and blindness, and evil, for his own dear Son's sake. But let us take care how we convert God's long-suffering of evil into an argument for his approval of the system which harbours the evil, or into an encouragement to our continuance in the evil. I freely acknowledge much that is good in the Established Church, both in her articles and formularies, and specially in many of her dear children; but what thinking person is there who does not see how much evil lieth at her door? and let us not assume God's approval of this. He blesses his own truth in his servants, and he bears with the evil for His sake in Whom they are accepted; and if good effected be appealed to as the test of his approbation, then I know not what Christian sect or system may not put in its claim upon this ground—Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Independants, Established and Unestablished, Baptists and Pædobaptists, Calvinists and Wesleyans, Moravians, Quakers, and Separatists from all; nay, if this be the proof appealed to as the test of God's approbation, I know not but the Church of Rome may put in her claim, for she has had her Fenelons, Pascals, and Quesnels, her saints of the Jansenist School. What, then, is the value

of this argument? Simply this, I believe, that God will honour those who honour him, wherever they be;\* and such there are probably in most sects and parties; that further, they most honour him who are most obedient to his whole revealed will, and may, I believe, expect

[\* Indeed, if the corporation of any municipal town was to send out its beadle, who were converted men, to declare the gospel; or if they went out of their own accord, and were faithful in their work, I assuredly believe that blessing would follow. If a body of priests of the Church of Rome were to preach the gospel faithfully, I believe, as we have known in times past, that blessing would be the result. But I should be slow to adduce this as a proof of God's favour to their community; a proof that the Church of Rome was a true church. But this is just the kind of argument that is now in high favour, in lack, we may suppose, of any better. God we see acknowledging those who are faithful to Him in the main everywhere, whatever their details of error may be; because he sees them, and deals with them in Christ. He acknowledges them not for the system, but notwithstanding the system; and the practical conclusion of multitudes is, "we experience God's blessing amid all the evil, therefore will we abide in the evil"—a poor return for a redeemed sinner. In this country, the vast bulk of Protestants are members of the Established Church, save in one province alone; and in this bulk we of course look for more in number of those who have been converted, than in smaller bodies, though *in proportion* the number is nothing equal. In the northern province they have, I believe, a more scriptural creed, or rather church system, than in the Establishment; but far less of vitality, for they have tolerated the deadening doctrines, dishonour to the person of the Son, "who is over all God blessed for ever;" and to the person of the Holy Ghost, "the eternal Spirit," without whom no man knoweth the things of God. Now that in measure they have separated themselves from these things, they may expect a greater measure of blessing; but it is to be regretted that it is still only in measure. Some time since, I asked the principles of a minister where I happened to be in the north of this country. In reply, I was told that they were dubious, and that with him, as several others, their principles were rather to be gathered from what they did *not*, than from what they *did* say. This is very pitiable. Surely we should shun all religious association with those who will leave us in doubt as to their allegiance unto God, or who will hesitate to give the fullest and freest testimony unto the Lord Jesus Christ.]



most of his favour ; and if this be in any wise estimated by the increase of light, and love, and devotedness, then assuredly, without wanting to detract from the members of the Established Church aught of what they have from the Lord, I do feel very fully persuaded that they are not the most favoured of the Lord in these respects ; for, so far as my opportunity of information has extended, I have never met the instruction in the Word, the love, the devotedness, in the Establishment, that I have out of it, that I have in those who have separated from it.

Somewhat akin to this is an argument often made use of, and, therefore, I suppose not without its weight, though, I believe, very undeservedly. It is asked, will you leave the communion, where God was pleased to visit and to bless your soul ? Then, on this ground, I suppose that if God is graciously pleased to enlighten our souls amid the superstitions of Romanism, or the blasphemies of Socinianism, still must we dwell in these unclean abodes. To shew where the principle leads, one would think, should be enough to refute it ; but, further, I feel it is to our God, and not to the system, that we are bound to shew forth our gratitude. It was not the system enlightened us, but our God, even amidst the darkness of the system, as it often is ; and I believe that it is in bowing down in obedience to His holy will, and forsaking whatever is contrary thereto, however dear to us, that we shew our gratitude for God's mercy to us.

But, it will be replied, the Established Church is not one of those dark and unhallowed systems—her principles are sound, her foundations have been laid in the blood of martyrs. To her principles I have before

alluded. Amid much that is good and true, there is that which is false also; and it is equally bound upon her members with the truth. But supposing all her principles perfect, what is the value of principle without practice? And I suppose that few men of God, if a single one, will rise up soberly to defend her practice. Principles are but means to an end: the principles of God's truth are his instruments for carrying his holy will into effect in us; and principles should ever be manifested in practice; and, I confidently add, will be manifested, just in proportion to the hold which they possess on our hearts. Now, what is the exhibition which the Established Church makes to one not knowing her principles (as millions do not)? Is it not merely a multitude of worldly people, in no wise distinguished from their neighbours, except that they go, such of them as do go, to a different place of worship on the Lord's day. How do they manifest the truth? It would be hard to say. They cannot manifest what they have not. The world is their principle, and worldliness they manifest, always acknowledging the good men in it, where I am thoroughly persuaded they should not be, wasting their strength in vain endeavours to prove the world to be the church, and then labouring most inconsistently, but I rejoice to add, often very successfully, to convert the members of their church.

But her foundations are laid in the blood of martyrs. Her martyrs did not adopt all that is now adopted by the church, and all that they did was not from choice but from necessity, as those intimate with their writings, and the

historical records of their day well know;\* and moreover, of what they truly did hold, some, at least, I do believe, was of the darkness through which they did not clearly see, just emerged from Romanism. But is their imperfect light to be the measure to us? Is the light which first broke in upon the church at the period of the Reformation, while the dark and heavy clouds which had long been gathering were slowly rolling away—is this to be our light—this alone, and are we not to gather more of our Father's will, as the Spirit unrolls the sacred record unto us? In a word—is the growth of the church in light and knowledge to be ever stationary, to be cramped and stunted within the limits of the men of one day or generation? So, indeed, it would appear was the will of the Established Church, from the restrictions under which her articles, liturgy, rubrics, and canons have placed her children; for let them remember, that while they are faithful to their mother, the Church, they must keep in mind these her requirements, and see that they receive nothing contrary from the Scriptures: if they do—in honesty they should cease from her communion, and not profess what they do not believe. I believe few in the church are aware, certainly no honest churchman, of the contraction of mind incident to their position. But to return to the martyrs—if I mistake not, the church was

[\* Consult on this subject a note in Mc Crie's Life of Knox, vol. 1, it will shew how little the reformers were satisfied with much that is now contended for. In truth, I have often felt while looking through the histories of that period, at least most of them, how little of sympathy those holy men would have with some of the sons of the church of these days.]

not then established when her sons and daughters suffered martyrdom. She was not of the world *then*; but that which was of the world, the establishment of the day (ah these establishments!) persecuted unto death the faithful witnesses of Christ, and faithful they were found; but I discover that by-and-by, when she got on good terms with the world, when she became the Establishment, that she soon imbibed the principles of the world, and did not shame to adopt the same persecuting spirit. Witness the treatment of the Puritans in Elizabeth's time, and the sorrowful efforts to establish episcopacy in Scotland under the Stuart dynasty.

Further, I am told of the body of Scripture which is brought forward in her services, what Church is like her? True; and a body of what is not Scripture also, mixed up with what is; and that without any note of difference for the ignorant. The Apocrypha received—the Apocalypse rejected! the very book which begins with a blessing on him that readeth.—But suppose a meeting of Socinians or Arians, every Lord's day, to read an entire Gospel with one or more Epistles or portions of the Old Testament, would this constitute them a sound Church, or recommend them as safe guides? No; it is *obedience* to the Word, and not the mere reading it, that stamps the character of the body.

But it is said, do not leave her *now*—now in the time of her persecution, and in the prospect of her reformation. I reply, that if I saw her as the body of Christ, with ever so many infirmities, suffering for His name, then would I not forsake her, but cling to her closer than to my own existence; but, in truth, I cannot see her so. I see her in her wordly standing, her wealth,

and dignity, and pretension, exciting the hatred and the covetousness of the world, and calling down the opposition, and in some cases it may be the envy, of hostile systems ; I see her persecuted on account of her tithes, her rich and lordly bishoprics, her political power, and not for godliness. Then, as to reformation, I confess I have no confidence in any thing of the kind — it can be but the patching up of a thing evil in itself, while she is established by the state ; and thus, as I believe, in an unscriptural position, necessarily identified with the world. While she is moreover sectarian in her requirements, demanding terms of communion which God does not demand of his people, narrowing what his word hath left open. While these evils exist, I do not value what reformation can effect. The worldly association may indeed be made a little less worldly, and some evils may, in a measure, be rectified ; but if truly reformed, she ceases to be what she now is, a worldly establishment — she comes into a new position of separation from the world to which is now united, and union with the saints from whom she is now separate ; and when truly reformed, I shall have but a little step to take (if any), to enrol myself again in her ranks ; but till then, I must not suffer myself to linger in allegiance to my Master—I am not to stand waiting in the commission of what I believe to be evil, and I know to be hurtful to souls. No ; I must now cease from the evil — now while I may. This is duty, and not passively to wait till the evil cease from me.

Before I close, I feel it necessary to notice a few of the Scriptures which are commonly adduced against the

principle of separation. That which is probably most frequently quoted to satisfy the saints in what many of them feel to be an evil position, is the parable of the tares—our Lord's words—"Let both grow together till the harvest" (Mat. xiii. 30). Assuredly; but where? In the church? No, in truth; and yet, even if it was so, it would not, I do believe, afford the support for promiscuous union with the world for which it is relied on, which would be just to contradict the burden of the Apostolic epistles: it could, at the most, only sanction communion with those who make a sound profession without bringing forth corresponding fruit. A tare is said to be like unto the wheat, and only distinguishable by its emptiness at the season of ripening; and hence the question of the servants, "Didst not thou sow good seed in thy field, from whence then hath it the tares?" is not till the time of bringing forth fruit: it was not till then that the tares appeared; and if there was not this likeness\*, what danger

[\* It is very strange, that Christian people should, from this parable, contend for the mixture of good and *manifested* evil. It is only against *manifested* evil we contend, what is secret God knoweth. The Church of England *professes* to restrict her communion to believers: this is as it should be. But then she will give credit to those for believing *who manifest that they do not*: this is as it should not be. But if she so professes, why will her children give this parable an interpretation to contradict her. Yet, so it is. After all that has been said on it, and considering it as diligently as I may, I hold to our Lord's own word in interpretation, "the field is the world." The mode of answer is to prove that it is *not* the world, for in v. 41. the tares are represented as gathered out of *His kingdom*; thus our Lord's own word is denied, and Scripture pitted against Scripture. This is sad interpretation, but take system out of the way and it all becomes harmonious. The field *is* the world, *now* it is the field, where all are mixed together, but at the end of this (*awv*) dispensation, v. 40. the world becomes the kingdom, observe, of the Son of *Man*, marking

could there be of rooting up the wheat with them? Now, what likeness is there in the great bulk of those who frequent the church—what likeness to the saints of God, or what is the sound profession that they make? I am sure I know not. Are they the “members of Christ,” and the “members one of another?”

But our Lord’s own word in interpretation shews us His meaning “the field is the world.” He does not say that the field is the church. No, the field is the *world*, and there, and not in the church, must both grow together till the harvest; and any effort to root up the tares now, could not be by separation, or the exercise of

universality of dominion; not the kingdom of the Son of God, this is heavenly:—nor of the son of David, this is Israel:—but of the Son of Man, the Adam dominion, when the kingdoms of *this world* become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. This world (*κοσμος*), which is *now* usurped of Satan, and therefore the field, where the good and evil are mixed up together, *then* becomes the kingdom of the Son of Man; when Satan is cast down, “all things that offend, and them that do iniquity” gathered out, and “the earth filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.” Thus, I think, it appears plainly that the field is *now* the world where the mixture is: the field assuredly is not the church; nor is it in the church, that the mixture should be, except you take the tares according to the sense in the former part of the text, as undistinguishable from the wheat till the harvest come; and to this, of course, I do not object. I only want to have removed that which is very distinguishable.

I was not aware, when writing the matter of the text, how entirely I was agreed with the view taken of the parable by Chillingworth, in his controversy with the Church of Rome. “Our blessed Saviour foretold, you say that there should be in the Church, tares with choice corn. Look again, I pray, and you shall see, that the field He speaks of is not the church but the world; and therefore neither do you obey our Saviour’s command, “Let both grow up till the harvest,” who teach it to be lawful to root these tares such are hereticks, out of the world, neither do protestants disobey it, if they eject manifest hereticks and notorious sinners out of the church.”—c. 5—57.]

discipline however rigid, but by extinction, by the sword, even as it was attempted by the Church of Rome in the slaughter of hundreds of thousands without her communion, assuming herself to be the true church, and all who would not submit to her dominion, the tares, to be rooted up.

Again, an argument to prove that we are not to look for any church purity, is drawn from the consideration of the church of Corinth, in which so many and great offences abounded, and many and great indeed they were; but let us consider the case. The church was planted by the apostle Paul, who abode with them a year and a half; after his departure, deprived of his care, and exposed to false teachers, and many of them doubtless in much ignorance yet, just emerged from idolatry, and young and weak in faith, grievous offences entered in amongst them; but do we find them left in this corruption, and discouraged from the hope of rising out of it into renewed purity and obedience? No; but we find the apostle writing unto them in all tenderness and yet in all faithfulness—"To this end did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether you be obedient in all things." We find him reproofing both their false doctrine and evil practice, exhorting, instructing them, and executing punishment on the more notorious offender. Let us now turn to his Second Epistle, and see what has been the result of the means which we find him adopting for their restoration. In the 7th chapter we find the joy and consolation of Titus, the refreshing of his spirit by them all. Then we read of their earnest desire, their mourning, and fervent mind, so that the apostle rejoiced



that he made them sorry by a letter, for they sorrowed to repentance after a godly manner. And then in the 11th verse, we find what carefulness was wrought in them—what clearing of themselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what revenge, so that he could rejoice and have confidence in them in all things. Now, really I cannot see what argument for corrupt and worldly communion can be drawn from the case of the Corinthians. Error comes in—the apostle writes, and exercises discipline—the error is corrected. This is, I think, just as it should be, and I am sure if I could see anything of this kind, most happy would I be never to separate; but in truth I do not.

Again and again do I admit that corruptions and abuses in the Church of God are not a sufficient ground of separation, and that this is not my ground of separation from the Establishment, but her altogether leaving the position of a true church in dependence upon Christ, and going over to the world for her support; and again, her insisting upon terms of communion that sit light enough upon her unconverted members, but are galling to the saints. I do not, as we are often charged, indulge any hope of perfection in church discipline or select communion. No; I well know that we shall have nothing perfect while our Lord is absent—it is to his coming again, and to that only, that I look for the bringing in of any thing perfect; till then I expect but weariness and tribulation *in the world*, but in Him peace, O how full and blessed! And though I may not have what my soul desires in church communion, yet, surely I am not to continue passive under the power of evil, but arise and see

how far His grace will carry us. I freely confess that in every communion upon earth I expect trial and disorder more or less. God, indeed, may keep it down, but I believe it is rather His way to bring in blessedness amid trial, and thus may we see whence the blessedness is. This is my answer to those who may accuse me of a visionary pursuit after perfection in discipline and communion; I expect it not while my Lord is away; I expect trial and disorder more or less; I have seen it—I do see it: I believe that I shall continue to see it,\* enough still to induce the cry—“Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” But I do not see a passive sitting down under evil—I see discipline applied, and I see discipline acknowledged, and I find our God still carrying us on, enabling us to meet evil according as it presents itself—and the many disorders arising among every little meeting of saints, and the many difficulties and trials consequent thereon (and in this world we shall know nothing of good without trial and difficulty), are to me just a proof of our standing in the true position of a church. I feel myself placed in a position where I can recognize the experience of the Apostolic Churches; but, in truth, it was not so with me in the Establishment. I see nothing in the New Testament in any way like to her cumbrous, artificial, and worldly system; I see nothing that sanctions it.—I see nothing sanctioning me to receive the world as the church, and commune with it as with the church, and

[\* And yet after writing thus plainly and unequivocally, again and again, am I accused, and by those who profess to reply to me too, of a pursuit after church perfection, or of professing to gather a church of those exclusively the Lord's people; it is very little matter to some *what* one writes, or *who* writes it, if it make against their system.]

know nothing of the meaning of the communion of saints, and therefore I cannot do it.

As to select communion,\* it has been frequently set before me that the exhortation is—"Let a man examine *himself*"—himself, not another. I acknowledge the truth of this word—I bow to it, and prize it. But why should this word be forced beyond the extent of its Scriptural value? Why, by a codicil, made to speak that for which it was not given; why, to contradict other parts of Scripture—Does not this look suspicious? "Examine yourselves," strictly would I enforce it on the saints, in order that they come behind in no good thing; but as strictly, "be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," and "if any obey not our word, note that man, and have no company with him." I find, in the former interpretation, a partial meaning, contradictory to other truth, and therefore I fear to serve a purpose; I see in its true meaning a great truth, consistent with all the Word. O may God keep us from forced interpretations for our own purposes! let us hear Scripture speak, and not force it to speak. I only want to know *what* the truth is—the *where* is comparatively indifferent to me.

The case of Judas I have before alluded to: he was a believer to the eyes of all the disciples, just as much as

[\* It is often said in favour of open communion, and by those who should know better, that they had rather receive a hundred sinners to the table of the Lord, than turn away one saint. To turn away a saint, manifesting himself as such, without cause, would indeed be grievous, but on what ground is it that we receive any one till he so manifest himself as God's child, and where is the evil in God's sight in rejecting ever so many who do not come to us as God's children, who do not come in the name of Jesus; it is, I believe, all one to reject one coming in this name, as it is to receive one not so coming.]

any one of them ; received and acknowledged as such ; yes, it will be said, but all the while our Lord says of him, " One of you is a devil," (John vi. 70.) even so, but this is the secret known unto the Lord, and to the Lord alone ; and in the church, it is not on what is secret, but what is manifested, that we are to act. Judas, of course, manifested righteousness, or the semblance of it, or he would not have been acknowledged as he was ; the question of the apostles, " Lord is it I ?" when our Lord opened the fearful truth of His betrayal to them, I think proves this, if it needed proof ; and whatever amount of evil may have been in him, it was hidden, probably in a great measure even from himself, till the particular occasion of its being drawn out (See John xiii. 27), and *then only* could it be dealt with ; for we cannot search the heart, and detect the latent evil there : the Lord can—all things are open to him ;\* and here he has shewn us, in this case of Judas, what is to be the rule to us ; and had he not thus acted, then his church had been deprived of the practical exhibition of the principle to guide her on the subject. Any one making a profession of the truth, and walking accordingly, we are bound to receive ; whether or not he be a Judas, the Lord knoweth, we cannot ; but while the evil is dormant or concealed, and righteousness manifested, we must, we cannot but receive him as a righteous person ; and even though he prove a Judas, the act of our Lord shews that we are free from blame in having received him. Had

[\* All secrets are open to Him, but surely it is not on His omniscience that the Church is to act, but on what is manifested ; and this our Lord plainly shews us in the case of Judas.]

we proof of our Lord's receiving Judas without repentance, after he manifested evil, then indeed would there be strong ground for the open communion of the church : but there would be ground also to shew, that we may receive and commune with traitors and devils. This would be to prove rather too much, but if the case of Judas be made at all to bear on the question, it is just what it proves.

Again, that passage from the Proverbs is not unfrequently quoted against those separating from the national establishment: "Meddle not with them given to change;" and accordingly "the love of novelty" is often attributed to them as their moving principle. I recognise the value of the principle contained in this word of God ; but I am assured that it has nothing whatever to say to one feeling, as I do, the pressure of evil, and wishing, in obedience to God, to cease from it. With as much propriety might it be urged against the early separatists from the Church of Rome, or the still more early separatists from heathenism, as against those separating from evil now; not that I mean to institute any comparison between the Established Religion and Romanism, or Heathenism—no; this is neither my purpose nor desire; but if change from evil was allowable in those cases, I believe it is equally allowable now—the principle is, "cease to do evil;" it is one of universal obligation ; it is not a question of degree, how great must the evil be before we cease from it; no, cease from it *wherever* it is, *whatever* it is, and leave the event with God.

But surely no child of God will argue that the text makes against those who "are given to change" from evil: no; but against those who are given to *change*

abstractedly, from novelty or caprice, or some carnal motive; and in truth, with all my power would I enforce the charge, and check the tendency to it, for I have ever seen its injurious effect, and I know nothing but the pressure of evil that can warrant it in disciples. I can truly say, I feel that the old way, if it be the good way, is very much the more desirable; and I confess that every thing in the way of novelty in principle should be looked upon with a very jealous eye, and without hesitation rejected, if contradictory to acknowledged principles; but that which is as old as the Bible may be new to us, through our ignorance; and novelty is not culpable then; and of all the truth which we hold, probably we see but a little part of what is in God's mind, and daily should we make advance according as his mind is revealed unto us. Growth, not change, is the principle of the truth. There is provision for unceasing growth in grace, in knowledge; and so it should be with us, ever growing up into Christ; but there is no provision for change, and a tendency to *change* is often a proof of our being taught rather of man than of God, for the saints are not so much given to change from the Spirit's teaching. And while on this subject, I would express my own thankfulness to the Lord, that now, after nearly twenty years, since I have been graciously led of him to receive the truth, I have not to retrace my steps, and to yield or deny any doctrine that I have received. This I venture to mention, as I know how prone are some to trace one's conduct when it differs from their own, to some weak or unworthy motive, as discontent, novelty, &c., and thus (not very honestly), to weaken

the value of one's practical testimony to principle. I say, then, cessation from evil is of the Spirit, and obedience to the word of the Spirit—change, merely the restlessness of the flesh.

But the Scripture which I find of late most frequently appealed to in support of things as they are, and against separation, is the account of the Apocalyptic Churches, especially that of Sardis. Here we find a church that had a name to live, but was dead. Yet it had a few names undefiled, and they—here is the point—are not directed to separate.

Now, in the first place, I observe, that the character of the Apocalyptic Epistles is, as I believe, prophetic; and that this prophetic character exhibits the features of the whole church in different periods of its passage through the world. Now, if this be so, it would have the tendency to discourage us from looking for our duty as individual saints, under existing evil, to the Apocalyptic Epistles. This seems to be brought out very fully in the Apostolic Epistles, to which accordingly we should the rather turn for light, as to duty in our individual course. With this the Apostolic Epistles deal, while the Apocalyptic Epistles seem to have been given for a further and distinct revelation of God's mind; they probably shew us the church in its successive states through time,\* the evil in these states, God's warning

\* These Epistles may thus instruct us as to the successive states of the Church through time, or possibly the different states of the Church at the same time; but this I merely mention in passing, I build no argument on, or deduce no conclusion from it. One who has published a reply to me, thus deals with my argument on the apocalyptic churches. "Are we to regard their circumstan-

and judgment on them; and all the exhortations seem addressed to the church generally, or rather to the angel of the church: and any defence of the Establishment, from the interpretation of the Apocalyptic Epistles, is but an effort to make their testimony contradict that of the Apostolic Epistles. These latter are clear and decisive in enforcing discipline in the churches. In the Established Church no discipline is exercised, and consequently there is a great accumulation of evil; and this appeal to the Apocalyptic Epistles seems to be to shew, that even under great evil, separation is not the duty of the disciple. Now, separation from the Church of God I am sure is not; though this is not the truth, I believe, intended in these epistles; however, I admit it; but if a church puts itself into a position where I can no longer recognise it as a church of God—what then—am I still to be submissive unto it? Sardis was, I believe, in the standing of a church of God. I see, by the address of the Spirit to her, that she is recognised as such; and the exhortations of the Epistle would be unintelligible on any other supposition: “Hold fast;” “be watchful;” “strengthen the things that remain.” I find Sardis, then, in the position of a true church, but in great infirmity: she seems to be among churches, somewhat as Judas was among disciples—outwardly fair, but deadness within, except indeed that she had life. I see her recognised and exhorted as a true church;

tial details as a mere allegory? Alas for the cause which requires such expedients!” I really am not aware of having used any allegory in my treatment of the subject, but most heartily can I respond with my opponent, “alas for the cause which requires such expedients!”



and why her members should separate from her under these circumstances I know not. They should indeed cease from the evil, but not from the church; they would, I believe, have been guilty of schism in so doing; they were exhorted to duty—their appropriate duty, to “strengthen the things that remain,” for they were in the true position of a church; but how this case affords support to the Established Church, I know not. Sardis, I say, was in the position of a true church, amid all its infirmities and deadness; but I cannot see that the Establishment is. Sardis was not endowed and established by the state—the temporal ruler was not her supreme governor—her overseers were not appointed by him; and though evil was in her, we do not find it bound on the conscience of her members. This no church can do—no disciple should submit to—if he does, he is making more of the church than of the church’s Lord. I believe then that Sardis, amid her infirmities and deadness, was still in the standing of a true church; and that therefore the duty of her members was not to separate, but to help her in her weakness. I find the Established Church the opposite of Sardis in these respects; and I confess, that to me, the exhortations to Sardis seem absurd, when applied to the Establishment, “Be watchful—strengthen the things that remain—hold fast.” To whom are these exhortations addressed; are they to the angel? Who is the angel of the Established Church? Are they to the Church? Then, if to the Established Church—to a body, of whom at least eight or nine hundred out of every thousand manifest that they are of the world, and not of the Church of God. I can see

nothing of this in Sardis, and I believe that duty in the Established Church is simply separation; for I know not, (and long have I thought on it,) how else to cease from her evil and her worldliness.

It is melancholy to think that the end of all these reasonings from Scripture, or elsewhere, is the defence of what is evil and worldly (for with her good I quarrel not): it is labouring to enable saints to sit down contentedly under what a host of them acknowledge to be evil; it is, I fear, something very like to practical unrighteousness. Oh! that believers would search the word not for salvation, nor their daily food and comfort only, but to know their Lord's will, and do it!—this is blessedness. John xiii. 17.

It is a searching test, which, if they would soberly consider it, might lead some to see the evil of their position, how much of the Established Church could stand the Lord's presence, were he now to appear? How many of the things which are now defended, would be defended before him? How many would fall, and be swept away by the brightness of his coming? Shall we, then defend that which cannot stand before him?—that which is marked for judgment! I know not (God knoweth) of a principle that I hold, either individually, or as the member of a church, that I have to recede from in the prospect of that glorious day. I do indeed know of enough that is evil, and that I desire not either to defend or deny. But I allow it not—no; even *now* do I desire to judge and condemn it in the holy energy of God's Spirit. How can the member of the Establishment do this?—He is pledged to the evil along with the good.

In the last place I notice an argument which, with many, has as much weight as any other; but to which comparatively little is due. I refer to that drawn from *expediency*. When subservient to principle, it is not without its value; but when it is not, then is it connected with infidelity and presumption, thinking that we can devise better than the Lord for the effecting his own purpose. The expediency is generally presented to us in this way: The greater good that may be effected in the Established Church—the increased opportunity of usefulness—the larger congregations, and the many more doors open to us, and the freedom from that prejudice which, among the members of the body, attaches more or less to those separating from her communion. Now, I believe, that any one giving himself to the service of God, will never have to complain of the want of opportunity of usefulness in a world of sinners, and in a world where the church is so low—no; he will find doors of usefulness ready for him, if he but lift his hand to open them; and I am sure my own experience abundantly shews me, that it is not of work that we are in want, but of labourers for the work. But even supposing that it was not so, are we to “do evil, that good may come?” I say evil, for such it would be for me, or any one seeing the Establishment so contrary to God’s mind as I do, to abide in it. I acknowledge that it is not so, for one not seeing the evil, but then is he responsible for not examining; and I confess I know not how one can examine, and not discover it bound up in the system. I much doubt if there be a truly godly minister in the Established Church, who has examined into the subject,

without having his mind shaken on it. There may be many a one who has examined, now confirmed enough; because, whenever we slight any truth given to us, the progress is to insensibility on that given truth—there the Spirit is grieved; and thus do we find many of the clergy sitting comparatively easy under errors now, which but a few years hence they saw clear enough in their true character, and which then were galling enough to them; and this, I believe, is also at the root of the fearful high-churchism of some of the evangelical clergy in England, which, I believe, is creeping into this country also. It is a great thing to keep our conscience tender—sensitive to the touch of truth, and truth only; and here is the great failure with many—they do not see the necessity of it. One tells me, that he sees many of the evils that I do in the Establishment, but that he must not mind his conscience! Another says, he knows the evil well enough, but that I should swallow it for the sake of the good I had the opportunity of doing. Why, really, this is to me amazing: what is it but to say, that God is in such need of our assistance, that he cannot carry on his work without us—nay, further, that he needs our temporizing and tampering with principle to effect his purposes—that he rewards our disobedience. Now do I say in answer to all these expediency brethren, that no possible amount of good, even to the converting of ever so many souls, is to me an equivalent for the recognition and adoption even of one principle evil in itself. It is thoroughly dishonouring to God—it is taking the government of his church out of his own hands. He does not stand in need of our poor, dubious, double-

minded ways to accomplish his will; and our simple duty should be, to stand true to the principle He has given us, and leave the event without a fear or a doubt to Him. And in so doing, let us see that we cast no hindrance in the way of another, because, it may be, that he follow not with us. It is very distressing to witness this poor sectarian feeling any where, preferring the honour of our little sect or system before our common Christianity; for truly, with pain do I say it, that the only hindrance I have encountered since my departure from the Establishment, has been from men of God in that Establishment—men, I do believe, whose objection to me might be thus expressed: “we forbade him, for he followed not with us.” I would simply remind them of our Lord’s reply.

And now, dear brethren, to conclude: I have shewn you the ground of the step which I have taken. I believe from the Scriptures, that the church is a body of faithful men (at least so far as we can see), in subjection to Christ. I see that the Establishment in these countries is a body of unfaithful, worldly men, in subjection to the state, with some saints among them, where, I believe, they should not be. To these saints do I address myself. Dear brethren, I would solemnly put it to your conscience in God’s presence: are you in the position that you should be for the welfare of the church—for the glory of God? and will any arguments from expediency, or any other source, justify you in thus justifying what is evil? for I will assume it, that with the Bible in his hand, and God’s Spirit in his heart, the believer must see to be evil, this union and identity with the

world which the Established Church exhibits. Will you, then, as a member of the church, still walk after the course of this world; or will you be obedient to God's Word, and stand out from every worldly system? You may, indeed, *individually* live separate from the world, and *individually* possess health in your souls, and that many of you do, I well know; but it is a health, I do believe, hindered from its vigour by the worldly system under which you are in bondage, and which, as a system, will never minister to your health—will never afford communion to your soul. You may have health in your own closet exercise—you may have communion in part, in your own select circle; but from the round of your church ordinances, you will neither have the one nor the other; for when you cross the threshold of your church, then you meet with the world. Your soul, indeed, may be fed by the word, even as it would any where by the word.

I am aware that very plausible things may be said in defence of the system; but where is the believer, who has examined into the subject, whose soul has been satisfied with these plausibilities? The Bible is not a book of plausibilities, and I cannot but think that if we had more of simplicity, and less of plausibility, our Master would be more honoured, and our own souls more happy. The Bible is the depository of God's truth, to be received, to be obeyed—yes, to be obeyed. This is what God wants of us: obedience to his word; sincere, true-hearted unhesitating subjection to the word which the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of his servants of old—to the word, to nothing but the word; for where else may we

look for our Lord's will, or where else discover the answer to that all-important query to the saint, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Obedience, if we knew it, is just true wisdom—the wisdom of God's children; expediency is man's wisdom, and the end will prove its folly. Let us do God's will simply as he would have us to do it, and not after the fashion of our own devices. I see nothing else for it; no other ground for the saints to stand in security, amid abounding delusion and false pretension.

Should these pages fall into the hands of any one indulging political hatred against the church establishment, and working for her overthrow, with such I say I have nothing to do; I feel no sympathy in the radical crusade against the Establishment of the country, nor should I move one step in such evil association. Nay, when I think on the precious saints which she has marshalled in her ranks, and their bold and faithful testimony to the world, I confess I feel more sympathy with her than with those, her enemies, who rage against her. If the state must have a national religion, I dare say that which it has, is about as good as any other for the purpose; but to a national established religion I object, or rather to the saints being found in it; and this is my one desire, to bring them out of this which I believe is worldly and contracting to their spirit, and to lead them into holy fellowship and service for the Lord: the Lord graciously lead them!

And should these pages fall into the hands of any careless unconverted sinner, I say, that to you they are not addressed—to you I have nothing to say about

churches—to you I have but one message, and that the same with my brethren in the Establishment—that you would think of your immortal soul now in the accepted time. God is love. God hath manifested his love. He hath sent forth his well-beloved from His own bosom, and He hath opened a way into the blessed presence of the Father, where is the fulness of joy. The way is now open, and open for you. Jesus is Himself the way: He hath removed the hindrance; He hath “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” He hath made peace through the blood of His cross. Come unto God through Him; there is acceptance for you through Him. There is full, free pardon of all and every sin; for the blood covereth all. Come then now, while Jesus is at the right hand of the Father—while He is in the place of intercession, the place of mercy—while He waiteth to be gracious. O come, and be not the destroyer of your soul by your indifference, or by resting in your own devices, and rejecting the salvation which God in His love hath provided. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; only believe—and thou shalt be saved.

But, further, it may happen, it very likely will, that these pages come before one who has experienced in his soul the Lord’s pardoning love, who knows that He is gracious, and whose desire is to serve Him, but who, not being in the ministry of the establishment, thinks himself free from the abuses to which the minister is more immediately committed as being the most prominent actor, and who, with this feeling, thinks he may abide in the establishment without injury to his own soul or dishonour to God. Now, I do believe that the



guilt of the layman, as he is called, is all one with that of the minister; he sanctions the system, he lends the weight of whatever influence, gift, or spirituality he may possess, to the upholding and accrediting the system which he acknowledges to be evil; for it is surprising what multitudes do so. He may, probably, be confirming others who may be too weak to act of themselves, and are looking to and following him as their guide, confirming them in a system hurtful to their souls' liberty and joy in the Lord. Any dubious way in us may be the source of more evil than we can easily calculate. Then, dear brethren, in or out of the ministry, you who see the evil of the system, take heed how you confirm others in a course of disobedience; be decided, be no longer half-hearted to the Lord, but stand out in His holy name, in holy separation from every worldly system. True, indeed, you may expose yourself to the loss of credit, to the loss of worldly standing and individual importance, to privation, to evil tongues and evil motives—then, the more like our Lord and Master. Oh, if we would but follow Him closely, if we would but keep in mind the Christian's standing and the Christian's hope, it would all be plain, even as it would be easy to us—strangers and pilgrims here, then not in our home, then not seeking after this present evil world: it is not our rest, it is defiled. We seek a heavenly country; let this be ever before us, and let us remember the provision for the way, the exceeding great and precious promises—"I will receive you, I will be a Father to you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Doth the Almighty One so speak to us—then what should we fear?

And now, dear brethren, do not accuse me of writing harsh things, or in an evil spirit, and then throw aside these pages and try to still and quiet the voice of conscience within you—it is your conscience I would specially address, for I know the capability and tendency of man's reason to tamper with all truth, however plain and simple it be, the wretched working of our corrupt nature to flinch from truth when unpalatable to us, even though it be God's truth, and to devise and calculate at how little sacrifice we may still be Christians, how much that is gratifying to the flesh we yet may spare, and thus niggardly to dole out our devotedness unto Him who gave Himself for us, instead of taking up the language of the Psalmist on our lips—“What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?” Brethren, accuse me not of writing harsh things against you. God knoweth that I desire not to do so. I have sat down and continued writing desiring to avoid them, and desiring to blot them if such did fall from my pen. But while I trust that I have been kept from speaking harshly of you, I cannot but testify strongly against the system which holds you in bondage, which I believe, amid much good, has much and great evil mixed up with it, and is therefore the more dangerous. Then, count me not your enemy because I tell you the truth, but weigh it in the balance of the sanctuary; examine it diligently; ask yourselves, can that be a true system wherein there is such indissoluble oneness with the world? Can that be according to God's mind, which suffers you not to labour with brethren who are willing to labour with you in the

name of the Lord on the ground of every requirement which His word maketh? Are you in your proper position in upholding this, wherein there is so much contrary to the mind of the Lord?

I now conclude the second edition of this little work. In it I have had to expose much error, and it is no pleasing task. I have also had to publish much that I believe to be God's truth, and this is work more grateful to one's spirit.

I do not remember that I have passed over any objection touching the subject in hand that has been presented to my mind; and a very blessed evidence I have found it of the truth wherein I stand—the weakness of all objections when tried by the testimony of God. Much in the way of answer has been sent forth; it is easy to answer any thing; but I am not aware that one principle that I have set forth has been refuted: and, if such was my object, it would be no difficulty to shew the inconsistency and contradiction of my different opponents with each other, and with themselves, and with the communion of which they are members; but this, I fear, is not the extent of their offending. Of course, with many, every answer will appear triumphant and overwhelming; but it is with the many, whom, if the Pilgrim's Progress had been published with a new title page, professing to reply to me, would esteem it triumphant and overwhelming also.

I would, in conclusion, guard against the supposition that it is merely separation I advocate. No: one may separate from any communion, and be little or nothing

the better. It is separation unto God that I desire, more entire submission unto His holy will that I covet for myself and for my brethren ; more of the answer unto our blessed Lord's prayer, that His people be one. This the Established Church, and many of the systems of the day, hinder, because they stand on the order and requirements of man, which many many thousands of the saints cannot submit to, who are yet willing to submit to the word—the whole word of God. This I advocate ; but ah ! I have been made to feel how feeble the advocacy of man ; how inadequate every effort of his to cope with the hardness of the heart, to chase away the darkness and prejudice from their lurking place in his soul. It is the Lord's work. He only can do it. On Him I would wait for the blessing ; unto Him I would lift up mine eyes, that He by His Spirit would do, what man of himself cannot, but rather hinder.

Lord, it is an easy thing with Thee. Oh do unite Thy children. Bring them together in subjection of soul, in holy obedience to thy word, in holy separation from the world—separation to thine own self. Bring them together, their loins girded about, their lamps burning, like unto men that wait for their Lord.

It is an easy thing with Thee : speak the word only, and thy children shall be one.

The Lord give us grace to see His will with us—and the Lord give us grace to do it ! He has been very gracious to us—let us be faithful to Him.

THE END.

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