













(CIRCULAR.)

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Respectfully yours, &c.

THE EDITORS.





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THE  
BIBLICAL REPERTORY.

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JANUARY, 1835.

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No. 1.

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*Archibald Alexander*

ART. I.—*The Established Church of Scotland, with an account of the secession from the same.*

By a statistical table of the established Church of Scotland, published in 1720, the number of ordained ministers is 948; by a similar table of 1833, the number of pastors is 967; and the number of parishes 957. The increase of the clergy, therefore, in a space exceeding a century, does not amount to twenty; although, in that period, the population of the country must have been nearly doubled. It must be remembered, however, that the secession, which now includes one-fourth of the population, has occurred in this period; and other dissenters have also multiplied their numbers. These tables also, it is believed, do not include the ministers of the chapels of ease, and such as are without pastoral charge; such as professors in colleges, and tutors in private families; for we observe, that in the table of 1833, no minister is entered on the list, who is not the pastor of a parish. The reason, therefore, why the clergy are more numerous than the parishes, is that some parishes have more ministers than one.

In the former table, the number of synods is thirteen and the number of presbyteries sixty-seven; in the latter

there are sixteen synods, and seventy-nine presbyteries. As we think, that a new presbytery was constituted by the General Assembly, since the list of 1833 was published, the whole number, at present, is eighty. From a comparison of these tables, it appears, that both the number of presbyteries and synods has increased far above the proportion of the increase of ministers. But this matter is regulated by the Assembly, as may be found most convenient; for in the Church of Scotland, it belongs *exclusively* to the General Assembly to constitute, not only new synods, but new presbyteries. We believe there is no instance in which a presbytery has been created by a synodical act. And there is solid reason for this practice, because the presbyteries by their representation constitute the General Assembly; and because it may often happen that it is desirable to form a new presbytery out of the parts of two or more synods.

In the large towns in Scotland, where population has greatly increased, the means of religious instruction are totally inadequate; and it is found a matter of great difficulty to get new parishes erected. The interest of the patrons, and of the present incumbent, is always arrayed against the measure. In addition to which, an act of Parliament, as well as the decision of the church courts, is requisite. In consequence of these hinderances, very few new parishes have been instituted; and the astonishing fact exists, that one parish in Glasgow, at this time, contains seventy-seven thousand inhabitants; and another, seventy thousand! while, in other towns, parishes may be found, which include fifteen and twenty thousand inhabitants.

It is evident, that one pastor can do little towards supplying seventy thousand souls with religious instruction; but it must not be supposed, that these overgrown parishes enjoy no means of instruction but those of the established church. This rapid increase of population, in the manufacturing towns, has opened a wide and fruitful field for the cultivation of various sects of dissenters, which they have not been backward to improve. Thus, while the established church has neglected to furnish the people with the means of religious instruction, the object has been accomplished by the Seceders, and other dissenters. It is true, indeed, that chapels of ease have been erected, in various places, where the parishes had increased to such a size as to render it impracticable for the regular pastors to instruct the people;

but there has always been manifested a great reluctance, in the General Assembly, to establish these chapels; and, therefore, the whole number of them is totally inadequate to the wants of the people in the populous towns; and disproportionate to the rapid increase of population in the country.

A sensible writer in the twelfth number of *THE PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW*, says, "It is now nearly a century, since the secession from the established church took place. During that period, the population of Scotland has almost been doubled, and her wealth increased in a still greater proportion. The necessity of an increase in the means of religious instruction has of course been proportionate to the increase of the population. Let us see, then, if that has been provided for, and in what manner, and how far the established church has exerted herself towards this end. The number of congregations of the different branches of the Secession Church and of the Relief Church, which originated in a subsequent secession, is, as nearly as we have been able to ascertain, 470. These, of course, have all been established within the century. And during the same period, congregations of Independents, Baptists, Methodists, and other sects, not acknowledging the doctrines and form of government of the national church, have also been established, to about the number of 100. Of the Cameronian, Episcopal, and Roman Catholic communions, (which all existed prior to the secession,) there are now—Cameronians, 33; Episcopal, 78; Roman Catholic, 47; in all, 158. The exact *increase* in these denominations we have no means of ascertaining. In the two latter, however, it has been very considerable, indeed; but calling the increase in the whole only half of the existing number, it will thus amount to 80 congregations. The total increase, therefore, of dissenting congregations, in Scotland, within the last century, may be stated at 650, of which 500 concur very nearly, in regard to doctrine and form of government, with the established Church of Scotland. Now, let us turn to the provision made by the establishment, in the planting of new churches, to meet the wants of the increasing population. This consists of recently planted parishes, chapels of ease, and the churches newly planted by the government in the Highlands. We believe that no chapels of ease existed prior to the secession, and we assume that all the present chapels have been established since that period. Their number is



only 62. The government churches, planted and endowed by the state, only within these few years, amount to forty. The erection of new parish churches has been confined almost exclusively to large towns; and without pretending to give the exact number, we believe we do not fall short of the amount, in estimating that the whole increase of the congregations in the establishment, whether chapels of ease, government churches, or new parishes, do not exceed, in all, 128. This, however, is no more than an increase of ONE-EIGHTH, as compared with the churches previously existing, while the population has been doubled; and an increase of less than ONE-FIFTH, as compared with that of the various bodies of seceders and dissenters. Trifling as is this additional provision within the establishment, compared with the increased wants of the country, it will appear still more so, when we consider that the forty government churches have been planted, not in districts where the population has increased, but in those extended parishes where the distance from the church renders an attendance on public worship a matter of great difficulty to the inhabitants; so that, in truth, it is only to the chapels of ease, and the new parishes, that we must look for the additional provision made for the increased population of the country; and though the disparity between the means of religious instruction provided by the establishment, and that of the population, is sufficiently striking, on a general view of the whole kingdom, it becomes yet more so, when we attend to particular parishes. Take, for instance, the parish of St. Cuthbert's. The population is upwards of seventy thousand, being very nearly the number of souls within the bounds of the whole Synod of Dumfries, which comprehends five presbyteries, and numbers fifty-three pastors, to attend to their religious instruction and spiritual welfare. Yet to take charge of a similar number of souls, in this parish of St. Cuthbert's, there are two parish ministers, who alone have the power of discipline; and THREE ministers of chapels of ease: in all, FIVE pastors; and a SINGLE KIRK-SESSION! The case of the barony parish of Glasgow is even worse than this. There are there, no doubt, four chapels of ease, (three of them very recently erected,) but there is only one parish minister, making the same number of pastors as in St. Cuthbert's, with a single kirk-session, while the population is SEVENTY-SEVEN THOUSAND. In the Abbey Church of Paisley, again, with a population of twenty-six

thousand, there are only two places of worship connected with the establishment—the parish church, with two ministers and one kirk-session; and a single chapel of ease: and, in many other parishes, although the disparity is not so striking, the provision made for the religious instruction of the people, is utterly inadequate to the wants of the population.”

There is one anomalous fact in relation to the situation of the pastors of these chapels of ease. They have no part whatever in the government and discipline of the church. They have no seat in the presbytery within the bounds of which they live, and are of course incapable of being delegated to the General Assembly. This has been felt to be so great a grievance, that, at a late meeting of the General Assembly, a petition was presented to that body from the ministers of these chapels, praying for redress, and to be placed on the same footing with other ordained ministers of the Church of Scotland: what the result was we have not been informed. But not only are these ministers deprived of the privileges to which they are entitled, in equity, and according to the principles of the Presbyterian Church government, but the people to whom they minister, however numerous, are not permitted to have a kirk-session of their own: they are all subject to the government of the parish-session, with which, in fact, they have no connexion. It is truly wonderful, that such an anomaly should be permitted to exist in a church so enlightened. The objections which have been made to placing these ministers of the chapels of ease on the same footing with other pastors, are too futile to deserve any attention.

From the authentic facts stated above, it is evident that the established Church of Scotland has been losing ground rapidly, during the last century: and it is believed, that the United Secession Church now includes one-fourth or one-fifth of the whole population; their ministers are now about equal to one-half the number of the established clergy.

#### *The General Assembly.*

The General Assembly of the Church of Scotland consists of more than 360 members, if all the delegates should attend; but Dr. Hill informs us, that he never saw an assembly which consisted of more than three hundred attending members. “All presbyteries consisting of twelve

parishes, or under that number, send in two ministers and one ruling elder; those consisting of eighteen parishes, send three ministers and one elder; and those of twenty-four parishes, or under that number, but above eighteen, send four ministers and two ruling elders. Collegiate churches, served by two ministers, are counted as two parishes. At first, no provision was made for an increase of delegates, where the number of parishes exceeded thirty, but as the number of ministers increased rapidly in some of the larger towns, it was provided by a subsequent act, 'That each presbytery whose number doth exceed thirty ministerial charges, shall send to the General Assembly six ministers and three elders.' The sixty-six royal burghs of Scotland are represented in the General Assembly by ruling elders; of which Edinburgh sends two, and each of the others one; and each of the five universities is represented by one of its members. It will be seen, by what is said above, that the number of clerical representatives is considerably greater than that of the ruling elders. Of the first, the whole number a little exceeds 200; of the latter, not above 160."

When the General Assembly meets, which is annually in the month of May, they are honoured with the constant attendance of a representative of the king, who is styled "The Lord High Commissioner;" but this officer is merely a witness of the proceedings of the body; for he possesses no negative on their acts, nor any power to control the Assembly, or to dissolve the meeting. The Assembly, as here, is governed by its own moderator, and claims the right of meeting by its own appointment; and this right has been guaranteed by acts of Parliament. In the act of 1592, which first legally established Presbyterian government, it is declared, "that it shall be lawful for the kirk and ministers, every year at the least, and oftener *pro re nata*, as occasion and necessity shall require, to hold and keep General Assemblies." And the act of 1690, which restored Presbyterian government, at the revolution, allows "the General Meeting, and representatives of the ministers and elders, in whose hands the exercise of church government is established, according to the custom and practice of Presbyterian government throughout the whole kingdom."

When the meeting of the Assembly is dissolved by the moderator, who appoints another to be held on a certain day, in the month of May in the following year; the same



is then done by the Lord High Commissioner, in the name of his majesty.

“The General Assembly,” says Professor Finlayson, “is the corner-stone of our ecclesiastical government. The powers which originally belonged to it have been exerted occasionally, through the whole period of its history. The existence of this authority is essential to the unity and vigour of our political system. Without it the Church of Scotland would soon lose its glory, and separate into a number of petty, independent jurisdictions, scattered over the districts of country, unequal to their own defence, and insufficient for the purposes of an ecclesiastical establishment.”

As the General Assembly meets but once a year, and sits only ten days, it is impossible always to decide all the cases which are brought before it: and circumstances may occur, in the intervals between the meetings of this body, which call for the interposition of the supreme executive authority of the church. The constitution of the Church of Scotland, therefore, contains a provision, to meet such exigencies, in THE COMMISSION of the General Assembly: a court, composed of the moderator and all the members, which meets after the Assembly is dissolved, and may be considered a committee of the whole house. The quorum of this court is thirty-one, of whom twenty-one must be ministers. Their first meeting is required to be held the next day after the Assembly is dissolved, and afterwards, on the second Wednesday of August, third Wednesday of November, and first Wednesday in March; and oftener, when and where they shall think fit and convenient, with power to choose their own moderator. This body is authorized by the General Assembly, to determine in all cases which may be referred to them; provided, however, that no private processes be tried, except at the four stated diets; and every case thus decided shall be unalterable, and continue in force until disapproved of by the General Assembly. Among the general instructions of this body, it is given in charge, “to advert to the interest of the church on every occasion, that the church, and the present establishment thereof, do not sustain any prejudice which they can prevent, as they will be answerable.” The commissioners are accountable to the General Assembly for all their acts, who may reverse their decisions, and may censure them if they have exceeded their powers; that is, have meddled with matters not re-

ferred to them, or have acted contrary to the constitution and rules of the church, or to the prejudice thereof. But within these limits, the commission is vested with the executive authority of the General Assembly, and by carrying into effect the judgments of the church has maintained that subordination of judicatories, in which consists the unity and vigour of the system.

In the Church of Scotland, as in our own, which was formed on the same model, the judicial power ascends through all the courts, terminating in the General Assembly. "The legislative power," says Dr. Hill, "both originates and ends there, with this restriction, upon the exercise of it, that without the concurrence of the majority of the presbyteries, the General Assembly cannot enact any standing law. The supreme executive is lodged in the General Assembly, whose orders direct and control the inferior branches, until the whole body declare that they are illegal. In this distribution of power, there is sufficient energy; there is only a tardiness with regard to that which of all things requires the most deliberation, the enactment of permanent laws." The law imposing this restriction on the General Assembly, is denominated *the Barrier Act*; and has been in substance adopted in the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. But in Scotland, the General Assembly has adopted a practice by which they avoid the inconvenience arising from the delay of presbyteries to send up their judgment on overtures transmitted to them. When the interests of the church seem to require some new law to be immediately enacted, the General Assembly has exercised the power of converting the overture into what is called an *interim* act; and it has been almost universally acknowledged, that these acts are binding on all the members of the church, until the presbyteries express their disapprobation; and the voice of their representatives will prevent the re-enactment of the overture at the next meeting of the Assembly. The power of passing interim acts cannot therefore produce permanent evil; and has the effect of stimulating the presbyteries to act speedily upon the overtures transmitted to them. Sometimes, however, these temporary enactments, applied as a remedy to evils under which the church was suffering, have, by the acquiescence of the church, acquired the authority of standing laws.

The constitution of the Church of Scotland respecting

references, appeals, and complaints, has been copied into our book of discipline; and in all these cases, the whole cause is brought before the superior court. Dr. Hill informs us, that within his memory, it was a matter of serious doubt, whether a cause brought before a superior judicatory, by complaint, could be issued by the court above; but that by a number of decisions it has been fully settled, that a cause brought up by complaint may be decided just as if it had been brought up by an appeal. But complaints are only permitted from the minority of the judicatory, whose sentence is by them deemed erroneous.

The first General Assembly which met in Scotland under act of parliament, was in 1560, which from that time assumed the direction of the ecclesiastical affairs of the nation, which it managed first by superintendents, and then by presbyteries. In the second book of discipline, agreed upon in 1578, the powers of presbyteries and synods were minutely specified; and nearly the same powers were confirmed by act of parliament in 1592, which gave legal existence to the ecclesiastical constitution of the Presbyterian Church. In the trial of candidates and ordination of ministers, the presbyteries are in a special manner the executive officers of the church. But the supreme executive power remains with the General Assembly. According to the second book of discipline, this judicatory "prescribes the rule how the other two kinds of Assemblies should proceed in all things; and generally concerning all weighty affairs that concern the weal and good order of the whole kirks of the realm, interposes authority thereto." The General Assembly often issues peremptory orders, summoning individuals and inferior courts to appear at its bar; and also directs, restrains, or assists them in the discharge of their functions: and by its superintending and controlling authority maintains soundness of doctrine, checks irregularity, and enforces the observance of general laws, throughout the church. But as the decisions of the General Assembly, which form the common law of the church, may contravene the statute law, so its orders may infringe the constitutional liberties of the inferior judicatories.

"But when an opinion comes to prevail throughout the church," says the Rev. Professor Hill, "that the General Assembly has acted improperly, the representatives sent to the future General Assemblies by the presbyteries, will give decisions of an opposite tendency: and acts will be passed

in the ordinary course of legislation, applying the proper remedy to the abuse of authority, and preventing the repetition of that abuse. The executive power may err in the church as in the state; and in both, the errors of the executive are corrected by the voice of the legislative.”\*

*Provision for the Support of the Church of Scotland.*

The expenses incident to the meetings of the General Assembly are defrayed from a grant of £500, annually, from the exchequer. Out of this are paid the salaries of a procurator and agent, of two clerks, and the law-officers. Besides, £1500 are allowed for the expenses incident to the attendance of the king's commissioner. The king's chaplains, in Scotland, are always ministers of the established church, and receive a salary; as also the deans of the royal chapel, out of the public treasury.

The repairing of churches, and the erection of new churches, when necessary, are provided for by the landholders and inhabitants of the parish; but if they cannot agree, the courts of law determine all questions relating to this matter.

In every country, where the authority of the pope was acknowledged, that provision of the law of Moses which required a tenth of all productions for the support of religion, was adopted; and tithes were universally considered, prior to the reformation, the right of the church; of which one part was appropriated to the support of the clergy, and the other parts for the poor, and other religious uses. At the Reformation many of these purposes were declared superstitious. (In Scotland the legal name of tithes is *teinds*.) That portion of this fund, which had been drawn in to the support of monasteries and cathedrals, and was a large part of the whole, upon the demolition of these institutions, was either rapaciously seized by the nobles who had conducted the Reformation, or were disposed of by the sovereign in grants of various forms; and, in some instances, were converted into secular lordships. Individuals, of many different descriptions, became, in this way, “titulars of teinds;” that is, were invested with the right of drawing the tithes, which originally belonged to a monastery, to a cathedral church, or to some ecclesiastical person. Against this secularization of

\* See Dr. Hill's View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland.



the revenues of the church, the reformed clergy remonstrated, but without effect; and even then, when zeal against popery was so ardent, the men whose preaching was instrumental in bringing about the change, received a very scanty support. It was always understood, however, that the teinds are subject to the burden of supporting the parochial clergy; but the provision for them was not definitely fixed. During the seventeenth century, various committees of the Scots parliament granted relief to ministers, out of this fund, according to circumstances; but after the union, this whole matter was referred to the lords of council and session.

At present, the burden of supporting the ministers of the Church of Scotland falls not upon the landholders, but upon the titulars of teinds, or owners of the tithes; for in numberless cases, the landholder is not the titular of his own teinds, but while the stock is his, the tithe or teind belongs to the crown, or to some individual, or corporation, who has received a grant of it. Sometimes the teind is drawn in kind by the titular, in other cases it is held by the landholder in lease at a yearly rent. In all cases, the minister's salary is paid, not out of the stock, but out of the teinds, and is only a part of what is due from the landholder to the titular. Any increase of salary to the minister, therefore, is a diminution of what the titular was accustomed to receive, but is no addition to the burden of the landholder: it is of no consequence to him, whether he pays what is due for tithes to the titular, or parochial minister. The landholders of Scotland are, therefore, in a more favourable condition with respect to the payment of their tithes, than the subjects of any state in Europe. Teinds which belong to the crown, or have been granted for the support of ministers, colleges, or hospitals, cannot be sold; but in regard to those held by other persons, the landholder is entitled to prosecute before the court of session for a sale of them; and upon such process, the titular is obliged to sell them to him, at the moderate price of ten years purchase. By this means the stock and teind are united in the same person; and the landholder having now in himself the title to the tithes due from his land, is subject to the burden of maintaining the parochial minister. It is also the admitted right of the landholder, when he cannot purchase, to have the teinds due from his land valued by authority of the court; and that valuation ascertains, in all time to come, how much is due. This is a great advantage which the landholders of Scotland enjoy

above those of England in regard to tithes; for in the latter country if a man is at ever so much pains and expense in improving his lauds, a person who has contributed nothing to this melioration, can come in and claim his tenths; but in Scotland, the landholder, whether he has purchased the teinds, or has had them valued, is subject to no increase of debt by any rise in the property, or improvement of the lands.

It belongs to the court of sessions to grant augmentations of ministers' salaries, when to them it is judged to be necessary: except that, if the minister already draws all the teinds which his parish affords, in that case the salary cannot be increased, as the power of the court only extends to the fund produced by the tithes of the parish. Professor Hill informs us, that there are fifty parishes in Scotland where the provision for the minister is very small, which are in the situation just mentioned; the avails of the teinds do not admit of an addition to the salary. But so long as there is a legal fund, the court of session can augment the salaries of ministers, out of the unexhausted teinds, so as to preserve the stipends of ministers in the same relative situation as when Presbyterian government was established at the revolution. For, since that time, there has been a continued increase of the revenue of the landholder, of the wages of the labourer, and the earnings of the manufacturer; if the stipends of the clergy should remain stationary, the consequence would be, that those who minister at the altar would be sunk into abject poverty, and would thus be rendered contemptible in the eyes of the world. It is wise policy to save the established clergy from such a degradation, which would certainly interfere with their usefulness. And as this fund originally belonged to the church, it is equitable, that as far as it is needed, it should be restored to its original destination. Indeed, it appears to us to be a kind of sacrilege for secular men to possess these tithes as a part of their own income; and the whole proceeds from this source should form a fund to be entirely appropriated to religious uses; and the deficiency of the poor parishes should be supplied from the surplusage of the rich ones; and thus there would be a kind of equality. When the court decrees an augmentation of salary, at the same time, it apportiones the stipend among those who are unable to pay it; and the thing is so managed as to be easy and expeditious to the minister. He has no trouble in collecting his dues.

The salaries of the ministers of the established church of Scotland are very moderate, and yet sufficient to enable them to live decently; except in those parishes, mentioned above, where the avails of the tithes are inadequate. We speak by conjecture, rather than authority, when we say, that probably no minister's salary in Scotland exceeds £500: and the larger number may be equal to £150 or £200. And the difference is rather owing to the difference of living in large towns, and in the country. As by the principles of Presbyterianism, there is a parity among all the ministers of the church; so, perhaps, the clergy in no country in the world are, in all respects, more upon a level. They must all have had a university education, and must all have studied theology five years in attendance upon the lectures of a public professor in one of the universities—after which they pass through their trials before some presbytery. And before they are licensed, and again before they are ordained, they must adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith, in the strictest form. The questions which must be answered affirmatively, in a public solemn manner, by the candidate, are these. 1. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the word of God, and the only rule of faith and manners? 2. Do you sincerely own and believe the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith, approved by the General Assemblies of this church, and ratified by law in 1690, to be founded upon the word of God? And do you acknowledge the same as the confession of your faith; and will you firmly and constantly adhere thereto, and, to the utmost of your power, assert, maintain and defend the same, and the purity of worship as presently practised in this national church, and asserted in 15th article of Assembly, 1707? 3. Do you disown all Popish, Arian, Socinian, Arminian, Bouregnian, and other doctrines, and tenets, and opinions whatsoever, contrary to and inconsistent with the foresaid Confession of Faith? 4. Are you persuaded that the Presbyterian government and discipline, are founded on the word of God, and agreeable thereto? And do you promise to submit to the said government and discipline, and to concur with the same, and never endeavour, directly nor indirectly, the prejudice, or subversion thereof, but to the utmost of your power, in your station, to maintain, support, and defend the said discipline and Presbyterian government, by kirk-sessions, presbyteries, provincial synods, and gene-

ral assemblies, during all the days of your life? 5. Do you promise to submit yourself, willingly and humbly in the spirit of meekness, unto the admonitions of the brethren of this presbytery, and to be subject to them, and all other presbyteries, and superior judicatures of this church, where God in his providence shall cast your lot; and that according to your power, you shall maintain the unity and peace of this church, against error and schism, notwithstanding of whatsoever trouble or persecution may arise; and that you shall follow no division courses from the present established doctrine, worship, discipline and government of this church? 6. Are not zeal for the honour of God, love to Jesus Christ, and desire of saving souls, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the functions of the holy ministry, and not worldly designs and interest? When the candidate was to be ordained to a pastoral charge, the following questions were added. 7. Have you used any undue methods, either by yourself or others, in procuring this call? 8. Do you engage in the strength of Jesus Christ our Lord and Master, to rule well your own family, to live a holy and circumspect life, and faithfully, diligently and cheerfully to discharge all the parts of the ministerial work, to the edification of the body of Christ? 9. Do you accept of and close with the call to be pastor of this parish, and promise, through grace, to perform all the duties of a faithful minister of the gospel, among this people?

But although it belongs to presbyteries to try, license and ordain candidates, yet so jealous is the church on this point, that no candidate can be received on trials by a presbytery, until the synod to which it belongs, has been consulted.

#### *The Legal Establishment of the Church of Scotland.*

The Presbyterian government was fully established in Scotland by act of parliament, as early as 1592. There was still, however, a party in the country, who were opposed to this form of the church, and did all they could to embarrass the proceedings of the ecclesiastical courts. When James VI. of Scotland became the king of England also, he renounced his Presbyterian principles, and endeavoured, by art and force, to bend the constitution of the Scottish church into a nearer conformity with the church of England. But his son and successor, Charles I. proceeded to prosecute the same design in a much more tyrannical



manner; these measures produced such a convulsion in the country, as did not cease until the monarch was drawn from his throne. After the restoration, Charles II. who had been so much indebted to the Scots for his life and his kingdom, and who had himself sworn to the solemn league and covenant, attempted to establish episcopacy in Scotland; but it was still adverse to the inclinations, habits, and opinions of the people. This unprincipled monarch attempted to enforce his plan of religious worship and government upon this conscientious and high-spirited people, not only by penal laws, but by sending armies to dragoon the disaffected into compliance. Still, however, although episcopacy was established by law, the prayer-book and liturgy never became the usage of Scotland, except in the king's chapel, and one or two other congregations: the Presbyterian worship was almost universally adhered to, and the old Presbyterian discipline was still observed. But seldom has a more violent and cruel persecution been carried on in any country, than here against the rigid adherents of the solemn league and covenant. But the Revolution of 1688, restored the Presbyterian discipline and government: and since that time, no attempt has been made to interfere with the ecclesiastical establishment of Scotland. The rights and liberties of the Presbyterian church were fully recognized by king William, and secured by act of parliament. Thus affairs continued, until the union between the two kingdoms, when, by what was called, the act of security, it was declared, that the Presbyterian government and discipline should remain unalterably, as now established.

The act of William and Mary, ratifying the Confession of Faith, and Presbyterian church government, in 1690, is full and particular. "They do establish, ratify, and confirm the Presbyterian church government and discipline; that is to say, the government of the church, by Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, and General Assemblies."

And the act of Queen Anne, for securing the Protestant religion and Presbyterian church government, passed January 16, 1707, "establishes and confirms the said true Protestant religion, and the worship, discipline, and government of the church, to continue without any alteration, to the people of this land, in all succeeding generations. And more especially, with advice and consent foresaid, ratifies, approves, and forever confirms the fifth act of King William and Queen Mary, entitled, an "act ratifying the Confession of

Faith, and settling Presbyterian church government—that is to say, the government of the church by Kirk-sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, &c.”

### *Patronage.*

The settlement of ministers in the Church of Scotland is the subject which has created incessant difficulty and continued dissatisfaction. Much of the time of the General Assembly has been occupied in deciding cases of this kind; and although, for a while, the law of the church seemed to be settled, by frequent decisions of the supreme judicatory of the church, yet again the subject has come up, and at this present time occupies and agitates the General Assembly, in no small degree.

Patronage, or the right of presenting a minister to a vacant parish, is very ancient, and originated in the liberality of some person or body politic towards the parish, by building a convenient house of worship, or by establishing a fund for the support of the clergyman; or by some other benefaction to the church; in consequence of which, the right was granted to the individual, and his legal successors for ever, to present a candidate or minister to the parish. This right was also capable of being alienated or transferred by sale to others besides the original grantors; and was recognized and firmly established by the canon law, for ages, prior to the Reformation. After this event, the Kirk of Scotland claimed, for the people, the right of selecting their own ministers. This was clearly recognized, both in the First and Second Book of Discipline: the former, drawn up by John Knox, was adopted about 1560; the latter received the sanction of the General Assembly, 1578, of which Melville was a member. In both these books it was provided, “That no person ought to be *intruded* into any ecclesiastical office, *contrary to the will* of the congregation to whom they are appointed.” But while the former broadly lays down the principle of popular election, the latter only requires that the consent of the people be obtained. These sentiments of the church, however, made no alteration in the law of patronage; but they led the early reformers of the Church of Scotland to apply to the king and parliament for relief, and to have restored the liberty of electing their pastors, by the congregations. Their object was not to have patronage altogether abolished, but

so regulated as not to interfere with the liberties of the people. In 1596, the General Assembly adopted a resolution, "that none should seek a presentation to benefices, without advice of the presbytery where the benefice lies."

According to Dr. M'Crie, "the practice of the church, in settling ministers, varied in different places. Sometimes the presbytery recommended a minister, and sometimes it was done by the General Assembly. In some instances the election of a minister was by the session, or by the session and the principal men of the parish; and in others, by the votes of the congregation at large. Sometimes the congregation elected the pastor themselves; at other times they nominated electors from among themselves; and at other times they referred the choice to the presbytery. But, in all these cases, the consent of the people was considered a prerequisite to the settlement of a minister."

Now as long as, in some form, the consent of the people was considered necessary, the evils of patronage were inconsiderable. And this continued to be the case for a considerable time. In 1649, the General Assembly passed an act, directing presbyteries how to proceed in the election of ministers, in vacant parishes, in which it is provided, "that the session, under the moderation of a member of the presbytery, shall proceed to the election of a pastor; and if the people shall acquiesce and consent, commissioners from the session shall report the proceeding to the presbytery, who shall proceed to the trial of the person thus elected; and finding him qualified shall admit him to the ministry, in the said congregation. But if it happen that the major part of the congregation dissent from the person agreed upon by the session; in that case, the matter shall be brought into the presbytery, who shall judge of the same; and if they do not find their dissent to be founded on groundless prejudices, they shall appoint a new election." This act seems to be, in some degree, a deviation from the ancient principle of election, according to which, the consent of the majority of the people was indispensable.

At the revolution, King William enacted a law in relation to this matter. By this act, "the elders and heritors of a parish are authorized to make choice of a pastor, and to propose the person to the whole congregation, to be either approven or disapproven by them; and if they disapprove, they are required to assign their reasons, to be submitted to the presbytery, by whose judgment the calling

and entry of a particular minister is to be ordered and concluded." And as, by this act, the right of patrons to present ministers to vacant parishes was taken away, it was provided, that they should receive a compensation, two parts of which was to be paid by the heritors, and one part by the people. But it is also provided, that in case the patron was unwilling to accept the legal compensation, or the heritors and elders should neglect to pay the same in due season, what were called *letters of horning* might, by the king's solicitor, be directed against either of them. But if the presbytery neglected to settle a minister in a vacant church for more than six months, it was provided, that the patron might, during the continuance of such vacancy, retain the teinds, intended for the support of the minister, in his own hands. This was by an old law. But by the law of King William, the heritors and elders were substituted in the place of patrons, by paying them a certain moderate compensation for their right of presentation. Thus the law stood, in regard to patronage, until the year 1712, when, by the statute of Queen Anne, the law of King William, so far as it related to patronage, was repealed, and the former rights of patrons were restored to them: and it was moreover enacted, "that when any persons possessing the right of patronage, in any parish, should present a qualified minister or ministers, to any church or churches, whereof they are patrons, when such shall fall vacant, the presbytery of their respective bounds shall, and is hereby obliged, to receive such qualified minister or ministers as shall be presented by the patrons, as such ministers ought to have been received prior to the passing this act." It is, however, expressly provided, that nothing in the act of William, except what relates to the calling and presenting of ministers, and to the disposing of vacant stipends in prejudice of the patrons, is repealed. "Therefore," it has been argued, "that the right of the people to object to the candidate, and the right of the church to judge of these objections; both of which are expressly recognized in the aforesaid act, have not been repealed in the statute of 1712. The only thing designed to be repealed, was the part which substituted heritors and elders in the place of patrons. The general right of the people and of the church are clearly preserved by the express words of the law. Between 1712 and 1725, no material change took place in the law; and presentations were commonly made so harmoniously by the par-



ties, that there was very little complaint or litigation on account of patronage. But about 1725, a party arose in the church, who contended for a purely popular election, in opposition to patronage, and also to election by heritors and elders. It was insisted by this party, that the people had a *divine* right to elect their own pastors, and that every law or regulation which restricted that right, or transferred it to other persons, was unjust, and ought to be repealed. Their opponents did not claim for patrons an absolute right to present a candidate without respect to the consent of the people, but they were for regulating the settlement of ministers by the rules of 1649, and confirmed by the act of William and Mary, 1690; by which heritors and elders made the election, and then the candidate was proposed to the congregation; and if they objected, their reasons were laid before the presbytery; and, by appeal, might be taken up to the General Assembly.

Opposition to presenters, after 1725, became more frequent, and more unmanageable, and the decisions of church courts were not uniform; but they became more firm and resolute in carrying them into effect. "None of the least of their difficulties," says Sir Henry Moncrief, "arose from the clergy themselves. When the great body of the parishioners resisted the induction of a presentee; when a great proportion of the elders, or of the resident heritors refused to subscribe his call; and when they, supported by heads of families, came forward, in the church courts, to oppose his settlement, many of the clergy began to entertain what they called conscientious scruples against the induction of a minister, who, according to their conception, could have no pastoral relation to a people who refused to submit to his ministry. And, on this principle, many of the presbyteries refused to execute the sentences of the superior courts." This difficulty created so serious an obstacle to the exercise of church authority, that a schism in the church, even greater than that which afterwards occurred, was threatened; for the persons who made opposition, acting from conscientious scruples, were neither to be persuaded nor compelled; and as the great body of the people went with them, it became a matter of great delicacy to put to hazard the authority and peace of the church, by peremptory sentences which might be disregarded or disobeyed. To avoid this difficulty, the General Assembly adopted a policy by which they carried into

effect their decisions without the mediation of presbyteries, by appointing committees of their own body to attend to this business; or ministers living in the vicinity of the vacant parish, on whom they could depend. This expedient was first adopted in 1729, and continued to be resorted to, when this difficulty occurred, for twenty years. Sir Henry Moncrief acknowledges, that "it was a great deviation from constitutional law;" but observes, "that the times were difficult," and "the scruples of many of the most popular clergy were as sincere as they were obstinate."

This expedient, however, did not in the least allay the public agitation, but rather increased it. The opposition to presentees thus brought in, continued to be as great after their induction as before; so that the churches where they ministered were in danger of being entirely deserted.

In 1732 another expedient was adopted, the permanent effects of which on the church and on the country have been much greater. This was the passing of an act by the General Assembly, by their own authority, without sending it down to the presbyteries for their approbation, in which they establish a rule for the settlement of ministers, in all cases in which the nomination falls to the presbyteries. Although this act, in substance, established the rule of 1690, with some additional regulations, yet it met with determined and strenuous opposition from the popular party, both because it had not been transmitted to the presbyteries, agreeably to the provisions of the Barrier Act, and because it contravened the doctrine now held by many, of the divine right of the people to elect their own pastors.

"The Assembly was no sooner dissolved than Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, minister of Stirling, began to sound the alarm against their enactment, as a gross encroachment on the rights of the people, on the constitution of the church, and, (what was much more serious,) on the laws and authority of Christ. On the 4th of June, 1732, a few days after the date of the act, he preached a sermon in the church of Stirling, full of inflammatory declamations; in which, after laying down in broad and unqualified terms, the *divine* right of the people at large to elect their own pastors, he roundly asserted, 'that those professed Presbyterians, who thrust men upon congregations without and contrary to the free choice their great King had allowed them, were guilty of an attempt to jostle Christ out of his government, and to take it on their own shoulders.' In the

preface to this sermon, which he immediately published, he expressly applied these assertions to the act of Assembly in question."

"In October following, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine preached another sermon before the synod of Perth and Stirling, in which he affirmed the same doctrine, in terms equally unqualified, and of equal keenness and asperity."

Sir Henry Moncrief, whose words are cited in the preceding paragraphs, is of opinion, that the feelings of Mr. E. Erskine and his associates, were exasperated by another proceeding of the Assembly, relative to the settlement of a minister at Kinross, in the presbytery of Dumferline, in which Mr. Ralph Erskine (brother of Ebenezer) and Mr. Thomas Mair, (both afterwards leaders in the secession) were deeply involved.

"The act itself, of 1732," says the respectable writer just mentioned, "goes no farther than almost every overture on the subject, framed by the Assembly, for twenty years before; or beyond what had been the general practice of the church, since 1690. Nor will it be easy to show, that the doctrine asserted by Mr. Erskine in his two sermons, was ever held or practised by the church at any period since the revolution; or, that it can be reconciled to the language of General Assemblies, at any time before.

"Ebenezer Erskine certainly went much farther than he was warranted to do, by the doctrine and practice of the church, at any period since the Reformation. And though he inflamed the minds of the people, by placing his doctrine on the authority of scripture, and by asserting,—what was incapable of proof—that he was contending for *the original laws of Christianity*, it may be fairly admitted, notwithstanding, that he honestly affirmed what he had brought himself to believe; even while the unreasonable intemperance and pertinacity, with which he maintained it, can scarcely be denied. His doctrines, indeed, derived their chief importance from the keenness with which they were combated in the church courts; and from the violence of those who became his opponents or prosecutors. They, who read his two sermons, in the present times, will not think that they were in any respect worthy of the attention which was given them; and will scarcely find it possible to doubt, that, with all the inflammable matter which they contain, had they been disregarded by the church courts, and never brought into ques-

tion, their defects in argument and substance would soon have consigned them to oblivion."

### *Secession.*

As the synodical sermon, above-mentioned, was the origin of a very important schism in the Church of Scotland, it becomes necessary in giving a succinct history of the secession, to state, in order, the ecclesiastical proceedings relative to this unhappy affair from its commencement.

At the second diet, or session of the Synod, several offensive things in Mr. E. Erskine's sermon were mentioned, and on motion, a committee was appointed to take these and other similar expressions under consideration, and to lay the same before the Synod at their next session. This committee judged it expedient to appoint a sub-committee to deal with Mr. Erskine, and to obtain from him a confession of his fault in using such language, and a promise that he would not express himself publicly in such a manner in future. If Mr. Erskine had possessed a temper the least conciliatory, here would have been an end of the whole business. But this committee found him perfectly inflexible; and when they requested that they might have another interview with him, he said, "it was in vain, for he was *fixed*, and if it were to do, he would do it again."

The committee, therefore, brought in their report to the Synod at its next session. The first remark on the sermon was, "that he did not scruple to compare the ministers of the Church of Scotland to the priests and teachers of the Jewish Church, who crucified our blessed Saviour."

2. "That those who have their call from heritors, and others, and not from the whole church, were thieves and robbers, and had not God's call."

3. "He charged our pious ancestors, who had suffered for their religion, in the two late reigns, with a sinful silence, in not giving testimony, at the Revolution, by an express act against the encroachments made on Christ's kingly office in these reigns."

4. "That the General Assembly of 1732, instead of redressing the grievances of the church, whose cry had come up before them, had increased them, by lodging the power of election in heritors and elders, whereby Christ was deeply wounded in his members."



The above is a mere abstract of the report of the committee, containing the actual charges against Mr. Erskine.

“The Synod upon these grounds, by their vote, found him censurable for the expressions emitted before them.” But the only censure which they thought of inflicting was, “a simple rebuke and admonition.”

Mr. Erskine upon this having appealed from the decision of the Synod, withdrew, so that they could not execute their sentence at that time; they agreed, therefore, to cite him to attend their next meeting at Stirling, and receive the rebuke and admonition of the Synod.

The fault of the Synod seems to have been in undertaking to deal with a man publicly merely for rough language in a sermon, on a subject in which the preacher felt deeply interested. In their subsequent acts, they manifested a great desire to conciliate the man, and to stop the breach at once. At their meeting in April, they appointed several committees, in succession, to converse with Mr. Erskine, and he was assured that the admonition should be tendered in the mildest and softest terms; and he was repeatedly informed, that the Synod did not censure him for holding or expressing different sentiments from themselves, with respect to the act of 1732, or for expressing his opinions on all suitable occasions, in a decent and proper manner; but he was to be rebuked for exclaiming against the church, in a manner which savoured more of self-conceit and passion, than of the spirit of meekness and humility. But all expostulation and persuasion were in vain; for when the moderator was about to administer the rebuke, in the name of the Synod, he stopped him, by declaring that he adhered to his appeal to the General Assembly, and then went off; “so that the Synod could do no more in the matter, though exceedingly disposed to have it adjusted in a friendly and amicable way.”

Mr. Erskine having made his appeal to the General Assembly, had not the patience to remain quiet until the meeting of this judicatory, which was near at hand, but had his sermon printed, and with much diligence circulated among the people; several thousands of copies were struck off on cheap paper, so that it might be read by all classes of people. He also travelled through the country, and took every occasion to declaim against the abuses of the church. Even at the administration of the Lord’s supper, he is said to have

entertained his audience with invectives against the church and her proceedings.

As, however, a few other ministers chose to involve themselves in this affair, it is necessary to state that Mr. James Fisher appealed on the same grounds with Mr. Erskine, and also because the Synod refused to permit him to sit in judgment on the case of his father-in-law. Mr. Alexander Moncrief, minister at Abernethy, and Mr. William Wilson, minister at Perth, entered their dissent against the decision of the Synod, censuring Mr. Erskine; although they admitted that they could not justify some of the expressions in the sermon.

At the meeting of the General Assembly, Mr. Erskine having, in the usual form, given in his appeal to the Committee of Bills, some persons were sent by this committee to converse with him, and to endeavour to persuade him to drop his appeal; but although the most respectable ministers and elders were commissioned to deal privately with Mr. Erskine, it was found altogether useless, for he remained immoveable. Upon which the Committee of Bills brought the appeal before the house. Mr. Erskine spoke little in defence of himself, but left the whole to his lawyers.

The General Assembly, after hearing the parties, approved the Synod's proceedings, and appointed that Mr. Erskine should be rebuked and admonished at their own bar; which was accordingly done, "in a most grave and decent manner, in the spirit of meekness." Upon which, Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, together with Mr. James Fisher, Mr. Alexander Moncrief, and Mr. William Wilson, gave in a paper, subscribed by each of them. This paper the Assembly urged them to withdraw, as the proceeding was irregular and dangerous, since this paper contained a protest against the proceedings of the Assembly. But they refusing to comply, and having retired, the Assembly directed them to be cited to appear before them next day; and appointed a committee to report what would be a proper course of proceeding. The next day these brethren appeared, and a committee was appointed to confer with them and persuade them to withdraw the paper handed in the previous day; but they persisted in adhering to the protest; whereupon the paper was read, and is as follows:

"Protest by Mr. Ebenezer Erskine and others, given in to the Assembly, May 14, 1733.

“ Although I have a very great and dutiful regard to the judicatures of the church, to whom I own my subjection in the Lord; yet in respect the Assembly have found me censurable, and have rendered a rebuke and admonition to me, for things I conceive agreeable to, and founded on the word of God, and our approven standards, I find myself obliged to protest against the foresaid censure, as importing that I have in my doctrine at the opening of the synod of Perth, October last, departed from the word of God, and the foresaid standards; and that I shall be at liberty to preach the same truths of God, and to testify against the same or like defection of this church, upon all proper occasions. And I do hereby adhere unto the testimony I have formerly emitted against the act of Assembly 1732, whether in the protest entered against in open Assembly, or yet in my synodical sermon, craving this my protest and declaration be inserted in the records of the Assembly, and that I be allowed extracts thereof.

EBENEZER ERSKINE.”

It was something entirely novel, and apparently unreasonable, to protest against a court to which he had solemnly appealed for redress from a supposed injustice, in an inferior judicatory. On this subject, the writer of the “ Narrative of the Proceedings, &c.” observes, “ But let us suppose that the Assembly had given their decision in favour of Mr. Erskine, and against the synod of Perth, and had acquitted him and condemned them, and that the synod had refused to submit, and acted the very same part that Mr. Erskine has done, by protesting against the Assembly; [and declaring] that they shall be at liberty to testify against the decision, upon all proper occasions; and at their next meeting rebuke Mr. Erskine, and go to the pulpit and table of our Lord, and in stated harangues, defend their own sentence against Mr. Erskine, would not Mr. Erskine, and the ministers, his adherents, and the good people his admirers, have blamed such a practice, and exclaimed against the conduct of such ministers? It is, therefore, necessary, that the sentence of the supreme court of the church should be submitted to by the inferior judicatories, and much more by any particular minister appealing to them; otherwise, anarchy and confusion shall be introduced, and the regular and beautiful subordination of church judicatures, a main and essential part of the Presbyterian government, shall be sur-

rendered, and betrayed by those, who by their ordination vows are religiously bound to maintain it. Now pray, where does this non-submission, nay rather rebellion, terminate at last, but in this, that Mr. Erskine shall be his own supreme judge upon earth, and the synod shall have the same supreme power in themselves, and be subject to no church authority whatever? . . . It is extremely absurd to suppose, that a man appealing from an inferior judicature to the highest, is bound only to stand to their determination, provided it shall make for him and no further; for this is in effect to tell the supreme judge, I will give you leave to judge in my cause, if you will give sentence in my favour. Did the judge suspect any such thing, he would never show the appellant any manner of regard, nor allow his cause so much as a hearing."

"Mr. Erskine protests against the foresaid censure as importing that he had in his doctrine before the synod of Perth, departed from the word of God, and the approved standards of our church; but the synod's inquiry was by no means whether Mr. Erskine was orthodox, in his doctrine, or not; nor was their censure inflicted for any heterodoxy in doctrine, but for railing, and declaiming against the church, and his brethren, as "intruders," "thieves," and "robbers." So the General Assembly took it up, and knowing very well that soundness in matters of doctrine might be where there is malice and calumny in the practice, ordained him to be rebuked for the offensive expressions vented in his sermon, tending to disturb the peace and good order of this church. And nobody will deny, that the uttering of indecent expressions by a minister any where, much more in the pulpit, and still more on such a public occasion, not only against ministers, but the judicatures of the church, even the highest, tending so disturb the peace and good order thereof, is contrary to the word of God."

Although the protest was at first signed only by Ebenezer Erskine; yet James Fisher, Alexander Moncrief, and William Wilson, sent in their adherence to the same.

The committee of the Assembly being unsuccessful in their conference with these four protesting brethren, made their report upon the whole affair, which was adopted by a great majority; and is as follows, viz.

"The General Assembly ordains, that the four brethren aforesaid appear before the Commission, in August next,



and then show their sorrow for their conduct and misbehaviour, in offering to protest, and in giving in to this Assembly, the PAPER by them subscribed, and that they then retract the same. And in case they do not appear before the said Commission, in August, and then show their sorrow, and retract, as said is, the Commission is hereby empowered and appointed, to suspend the said brethren, or such of them as shall not obey, from the exercise of their ministry. And further, in case the said brethren shall be suspended by the said Commission, and that they shall act contrary to the said sentence of suspension, the Commission is hereby appointed and empowered, at their meeting in November, or any subsequent meeting, to proceed to a higher censure against the said four brethren, or such of them, as shall continue to offend by transgressing this act."

Our business is merely to state facts, and give a true history of all material proceedings in the case: our readers will judge for themselves of the wisdom and justice of the proceedings of the Assembly, in this affair.

When the Commission met in August, the inquiry was made of these brethren, whether they were prepared to comply with the order of the Assembly. Mr. Erskine requested, that they should be allowed till the afternoon to give their answer. This was conceded, but they were informed that the Commission would expect each of them to answer *viva voce*, to the interrogatory of the Moderator. In the afternoon, Mr. Erskine and Mr. Fisher offered a paper signed by them, and Messrs. Moncrief and Wilson another paper subscribed with their names, which they said contained their thoughts relative to the act of the last Assembly. The question was then put to Mr. Erskine, whether he was sorry for his conduct and misbehaviour, in offering to protest, and in giving to the late General Assembly the *paper*, by them subscribed, and if he would now retract the same. Upon which he said (with a very haughty air, says our narrator) "that the *paper* now offered contained his answer," and desired to have it read. And upon being asked, whether the said paper contained a retraction of his protest, he would return no other answer, but as before, that the paper contained his answer. The Commission perceiving that the papers handed in were of great length, and that the reading of them would consume much time, urged the brethren to give a direct answer to the question; especially as the contents of these papers would be of no

use, unless they contained a retraction of their protest, and a declaration of their sorrow for giving it in. They were told that the Commission were bound by the express instructions of the Assembly. But finding that the resolution of the brethren could not be conquered, the Commission at length permitted Mr. Erskine to read the paper signed by himself and Mr. Fisher, as their answer to the question which had been proposed. This paper contained no expression of sorrow for past conduct, nor retraction of the protest. And Messrs. Fisher, Moncrief and Wilson declared that they adhered to the protest, and could confess no sorrow or retraction. The Commission, instead of proceeding at once to pronounce the sentence of suspension, in conformity with the order of the Assembly, appointed a committee of their number to deal with them, and endeavour to remove their mistakes. The committee having used their utmost efforts ineffectually, reported that these brethren declared, "that they neither could profess their sorrow for the protest offered to the Assembly, nor retract it." Messrs. Wilson and Moncrief expressed the same mind, but insisted that their paper should be also read, but the Commission deemed this unnecessary. They were then heard at great length in their own defence, and requested liberty to complain to the next General Assembly against the resolution not to permit their paper to be read; and protested against any sentence of suspension which might be passed, as null and void. To which protest Messrs. Erskine and Fisher adhered.

The Commission now proceeded to give sentence in this affair, and by a great plurality, according to the power committed to them, and in conformity with the order of the late General Assembly, "did suspend the said four brethren from the exercise of the ministerial function, and all the parts thereof." And the brethren being called in, to have the sentence intimated to them, the Moderator told them he was sorry to pronounce a sentence, which he reckoned would be grievous to them; and admonished them, "not to be rash in saying any thing against it; for if they yielded obedience to it, they might still, through the good providence and blessing of God, continue to be useful ministers of this church, which he earnestly wished: but if they should act against it, this would widen the breach, and perhaps make it irreparable." When the sentence was pronounced, and they began to speak against it, the Moderator again

intreated them in the most earnest manner, that before they said any thing, "they would at least sleep and wake upon it, for this night." But they positively refused. Whereupon the Moderator cited them to appear before the Commission, the second Wednesday of November next." The four brethren then declared that they adhered to the protest made in the forenoon, which is as follows, viz.

"We do hereby adhere to the protestation taken by us before this court, for ourselves, and in the name of all the ministers, elders, and members of the church of Scotland, and of all and every one, in our respective congregations adhering to us, bearing that this sentence is in itself null and void, and that it shall be warrantable for us to exercise our ministry, as hitherto we have done, as if no such censure had been inflicted. And that if, in consequence of the sentence any minister or probationer shall exercise any part of our pastoral work, the same shall be held in repute as a violent intrusion upon our ministerial labours; and we do hereby protest for extracts of the paper given in by us, and of the whole of the Commission's procedure against us; and hereby we take instruments.

EBENEZER ERSKINE,  
WILLIAM WILSON,  
ALEXANDER MONCRIEF.  
JAMES FISHER."

If there was any thing unduly severe in this sentence against the four ministers, it must be attributed to the General Assembly, who directed the commission expressly, to proceed to suspension, if these brethren did not show signs of repentance, and retract their protest. The commission had no alternative, unless they had chosen to disregard the General Assembly's order. But the very nature of government requires, that men who will not submit to the supreme authority of any society ought to be separated from it. The supreme judicatory may have judged erroneously, but with their views, every principle of just subordination required, that these brethren who obstinately persisted in protesting against the judgment of the highest court, and refusing that obedience to authority, which is essential to the existence of society, should be suspended from their ministry. These suspended ministers paid no regard to the sentence of the commission, but, as they had intimated, in the paper handed in to the commission, they went on in the public exercise of

their ministry, as though no such sentence of suspension had been pronounced.

When the commission met again, in November, the moderator, although he knew that they had disregarded the former sentence, yet moved that a committee should be appointed to converse with them, and to endeavour to bring them to a proper view and feeling of the irregularity of their conduct. When this was intimated to Mr. Erskine, he desired not to be interfered with, but to be permitted to manage his cause in his own way; and, contrary to usage, began immediately to read a paper, but was prevented from proceeding. The committee of conference was then named. Communications were received from six or seven synods, and from two or three presbyteries, relative to the proceedings against these brethren, at the previous meeting of the commission. The committee reported their unsuccessful conference with them. Then they were interrogated, whether they had submitted to the sentence of the commission? Mr. Erskine answered, "that the act of the late Assembly, executed by the commission, was, in his opinion, inconsistent with the commission he had received from God; and that he had determined for himself to obey God rather than man, and therefore had not submitted to the sentence of suspension."

Messrs. Wilson, Moncrief, and Fisher acknowledged also, "that they had not submitted, but had exercised all parts of the ministerial work, as if no such sentence had passed."

The writer of the narrative, which we have followed in the above statement, makes some forcible remarks, to show the unreasonableness of the conduct of these brethren. He observes, "that they were ministers of parishes by virtue of an admission or ordination by the established Church of Scotland, and upon terms to which they themselves had consented. As it was by the authority of this church that they were ministers, it is altogether absurd to decline this authority, and refuse submission to it. Upon these principles every erroneous person and immoral minister may protest against the censures of the church, and continue to exercise his ministry; and may allege, as Mr. Erskine does, that he has a commission from God."

The letters and communications from certain synods and presbyteries were read; but the commission, who acted under a peremptory order of the General Assembly, did not



judge it proper for them to decline inflicting the higher censure prescribed, on these ministers; but before they proceeded to the final sentence, it was suggested by a member, that possibly some one of the number might be disposed to satisfy the commission; therefore another committee of conference was appointed, and these brethren requested to be indulged until the ensuing day. Several papers were drawn up by the committee of conference, and presented to them, as a ground of reconciliation. The first was a proposal, that upon condition the commission would make a declaration distinguishing between the *matter* and the *manner* of Mr. Erskine's sermon, and that the censure inflicted related entirely to the latter, that the brethren should agree to withdraw their protest, and to resolve, in the strength of God, to behave with all regard to the peace and authority of the church, exercised in the Lord."

Another proposal was, "that if the next Assembly shall declare that it was not the design of the last Assembly to deny, or take away, the privilege of ministers preaching against defections in the church, then we will withdraw our protest, with the distinct understanding, that we reserve to ourselves the liberty of testifying against the act of 1732, on all proper occasions."

The suspended brethren, after deliberation, made a declaration, that they could not accede to either of these proposals, for reasons which they specified in writing. Upon which the committee reported, "that they had met with the suspended brethren, and that for some time they were in hope to have some success; but that they at last have declared their resolution to continue of the same mind as formerly, and declined to go into any proposal made to them by the committee." The commission then called in the suspended brethren, and, after prayer to God for direction, they proceeded to depose these men severally from the ministry, and to loose their connexion with the respective congregations of which they were pastors; and it was provided, that this sentence be published to their presbyteries and respective congregations.

They were declared to be no longer ministers of the church, and all ministers of the Church of Scotland were prohibited from employing them in any ministerial function; and their churches were declared vacant from that time. Although the highest censure was now passed upon these men, yet the hope was held out that if, under this sentence,

they should conduct themselves peaceably and submissively, the commission, at their next regular meeting, would recommend them for favour to the next General Assembly.

When this sentence was announced by the moderator, Mr. Erskine read a paper, subscribed by himself and his adherents, and then threw it on the table; but the moderator, by the direction of the court, ordered it be given back to them; and they refusing to receive it, some person present took it up. The contents were as follows, viz.:

“We do hereby adhere to the protestation formerly entered before this court; and further, we do protest in our own names, and in the name of all and every one in our respective congregations, adhering unto us, that notwithstanding this sentence, our pastoral relation be held firm and valid. And, likewise, we do protest, that notwithstanding we are cast out from the ministerial communion of the established Church of Scotland, we still hold communion with all who desire, with us, to adhere to the principles of the true Presbyterian, covenanted Church of Scotland, in her doctrine, worship, government, and discipline; and particularly with such as are groaning under the grievances we have been afflicted with. But, in regard to the prevailing party in this established church, who have now cast us out from ministerial communion with them, and who are carrying on a course of defection from our reformed and covenanted principles; and particularly are suppressing ministerial freedom and faithfulness in testifying against the backsliding of this church, &c. Therefore, we, for these and many other weighty reasons, protest, that we are obliged to make a SECESSION from them, and that we can have no ministerial communion with them, till they see their sins and mistakes, and amend them. And, in like manner, we protest, that it shall be lawful and warrantable for us to exercise the key of doctrine, discipline, and government, according to the word of God, and the Confession of Faith, and the principles and constitution of the covenanted Church of Scotland, as if no such censure had passed upon us. Upon all which we take instruments, and appeal unto the first free, faithful, and reforming General Assembly of the Church of Scotland.

(Signed)

EBENEZER ERSKINE,  
WM. WILSON,  
ALEX. MONCRIEF,  
JAMES FISHER.”

It appears that Mr. Erskine and his associates were determined to be even with the commission, by whom they were separated from ministerial communion in the Established Church of Scotland; for, in this last paper, they fairly excommunicated the ruling party, in the said church, from all communion with themselves.

It is not our purpose, at present, to pass any judgment upon the course pursued by these men; or to consider whether the principles on which they acted are not subversive of all ecclesiastical control and government. Our object is to furnish our readers with a concise and faithful history of the secession, which, in its consequences, has been far more important than the dominant party in the church had any apprehension of; since, by this means, one-fourth part of the whole nation have been drawn off from the communion of the established church; and not only remain in a hostile attitude to her, but, at present, are earnestly endeavouring to obtain a dissolution of the religious establishment of Scotland.

But to return to our history. The decision of the Commission, inflicting the highest censure on these four ministers, in their report of the proceedings, is said to have been passed only by the casting vote of the moderator; and they requested that the state of the vote might be recorded on the minutes of the Commission, which was not granted. However this might be, it is certain that seven ministers of the Commission entered their solemn protest against the decision. These were, Gabriel Wilson, Ralph Erskine, Thomas Mair, John Maclarine, Jos. Currie, James Wardlaw, and Thomas Nairne; who declared it to be their intention to continue to hold ministerial communion with the four ministers, as if no sentence had been passed against them. All these, as a matter of course, joined the seceding brethren. Being condemned by the highest judicatory of the church, they were not slow in appealing to the people in vindication of the course which they had pursued. Their first publication was a *Historical View of the Church of Scotland*, both in her reforming and declining periods; to which was appended, "Reasons by the *Protesting Ministers*, for their *Secession from the Prevailing Party in the Established Church*."

When the General Assembly met in May, and received the report of the proceedings of the Commission against the four ministers, they passed an act authorizing the Synod of Perth

and Stirling to take the case under their consideration, and to proceed therein as they should judge expedient for restoring the peace and preserving the authority of the church; and especially, for uniting the said four brethren to the communion of the church, and restoring them to their ministerial charges. This authority was accompanied with an express direction, that the Synod should not take upon them to judge of the legality or regularity of the former proceedings of the church judicatories in relation to this affair, either to approve or censure the same, but should "proceed to take such steps for attaining the above ends for the future, as they shall find just, and tending to edification." And that the business might be brought to a satisfactory conclusion without delay, the Synod of Perth and Stirling was directed to meet on the first Tuesday of July, and afterwards on their own adjournments. The Synod met at the time appointed, and entered upon the consideration of the business assigned them. After a preamble, in which the reasons are given for the course now pursued, the Synod did, "by virtue of the foresaid delegated authority, and in the name of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, with one voice and consent, take off the sentences against the foresaid brethren, declaring the same of no force nor effect in future. And they did restore them to ministerial communion with the church, and to their charges, and to the exercise of all the parts of the ministerial function, as fully and freely as if there never had been any act or sentence against them. By this proceeding, the seceding brethren obtained a complete victory; but they were not now easily to be conciliated. They had found that their cause was popular, especially with the more serious and strict members of the church; and they did not perceive that this act of amnesty removed any of the grievances against which they had protested and complained. They, therefore, declined to avail themselves of the benefits of this conciliatory act of the Synod, and immediately published a paper, containing at large their reasons for not returning immediately to the communion of the Established Church. They went over again all the reasons which had induced them to secede, and laboured to show that these are not satisfied by the course now pursued. And, in particular, they alleged, that the act of the General Assembly of 1733, had not been rescinded by the last Assembly; and they moreover took exception to several things contained in the act of the last Assembly, as not giving a correct view of the



true state of the church; and also, they complained that no steps had been taken by the said Assembly to further the covenanted reformation, which their fathers had so auspiciously commenced; and that no security was granted against the intrusion of ministers into parishes, contrary to the wishes of the people. The truth was, these men had already proceeded too far to retract. They had formed a party, who were zealous in support of the principles for which they had contended, and whose opposition to the course pursued by the General Assembly was exceedingly strong. They determined, therefore, to continue their secession, and laboured indefatigably to increase the number of their adherents.

The Assemblies of 1735 and 1736 appeared disposed to remove the grievances arising from patronage, which had been the occasion of so much dissatisfaction, and had recently produced so serious a schism in the church. In the latter year an act was passed, forbidding "that any minister should be intruded into any parish contrary to the will of the congregation." They also enjoined it on ministers, to warn their hearers against every thing which tended to the promotion of atheism, deism, Arianism, Socinianism, Arminianism, Bouregnianism, popery, superstition, Antinomianism; and in their sermons to insist on "men's lost estate by nature—the necessity of supernatural grace, and of faith in the imputed righteousness of Christ; and chiefly, to lead sinners from the covenant of works to the covenant of grace, for life and salvation; and from sin and self unto Christ, as surety and saviour;—and in pressing holiness, to show men their inability for, and aversion to, every thing spiritually good; and that union with Christ is the true and only source of all grace and holiness; and that all man's best performances are of no avail in the point of justification before God." And they enjoined it on professors of divinity to teach their students in accordance with these principles. These acts furnish evidence that the majority of the Assembly were strictly orthodox, and therefore good men should have been reluctant to separate from a church so sound in the faith. But unhappily, several cases occurred in this Assembly in which ministers were settled in parishes contrary to the wishes of the majority; and in the case of Professor Campbell, they were thought by the seceders to have treated his errors with too much lenity. Another event, which in its origin had no connexion with ecclesias-



tical matters, in its progress produced a serious effect. A certain Captain Porteus, a profligate man, was condemned to suffer death on account of several murders; but was relieved by the influence of some great men. The mob in Edinburgh, provoked by this ill-timed indulgence, seized Porteus, and hung him up in September, 1736. The king and parliament, probably suspecting that the mob had been instigated by some of the stricter ministers, enacted a law for the discovery of the murderers, which all the ministers in Scotland were required to read to their people on the first Sabbath of every month for a whole year; and it was provided, that for the first neglect, "they should be declared incapable of sitting, or voting, in any church judicatory." Many ministers considered this act as a serious infringement of their privileges as ministers of Jesus Christ, and as a violation of the Sabbath: others got over these objections, and read a part or the whole of the act; which diversity of practice produced some contention and alienation, but this was soon buried in oblivion: but was made a handle of by the seceders in their Act and Testimony.

The seceders now published their second TESTIMONY. Their first has been already noticed, and was published in 1734, immediately after the sentence of deposition was pronounced by the Commission.

This paper is very long, extending to considerably more than one hundred duodecimo pages. It was agreed upon at Perth, 1736, December 3d. At which time and place, THE ASSOCIATE PRESBYTERY met; for these seceding ministers had before this formed themselves into a Presbytery, under the aforesaid name.

The title of the paper now issued was, "THE ACT, DECLARATION AND TESTIMONY, for the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the Church of Scotland, AGREEABLE to the word of God, the confession of faith, the national covenant of Scotland, and the solemn league and covenant of the three nations; and AGAINST several steps of defection from the same, both in former and present times, by some ministers, associate together, for the exercise of church government and discipline in a Presbyterial capacity."

In 1738, the General Assembly finding that all their efforts to conciliate these seceding brethren had proved ineffectual hitherto, passed a long act in relation to them; but although they declared that these brethren, by their schismatic conduct, had laid themselves liable to be again cut

off from the church; yet they "chose still to treat them in the spirit of meekness, brotherly love and forbearance," and enjoined it upon all the ministers of the Established Church, as they should have opportunity, to be at all pains, by conference and other gentle means of persuasion, to reclaim and reduce to their duty and the communion of the church the seceding brethren. And Synods and Presbyteries were required to make reports of their proceedings to the next Commission; and this court was authorized and empowered, if they should judge it expedient, to cite the separating brethren before the next General Assembly to answer for their irregular conduct; and it was enjoined on all to exert themselves to prevent the increase of the schism, which threatened to disturb the peace of the church, and which was so contrary to the spirit of the gospel; and to endeavour to reclaim the poor deluded people, who had been seduced to take part in this division.

When the commission met, they received a letter from the Synod of Perth and Stirling, with an extract from their proceedings relative to the conduct of the seceders; and also representations from other synods and presbyteries of their extraordinary and schismatical proceedings. Whereupon, after much deliberation, they resolved, in conformity with the power vested in them, to prepare a libel [charge] against these ministers, and to cite them to appear before the next General Assembly. This paper is too long to be here inserted. It is addressed to Ebenezer Erskine, and others, ministers, who have seceded from the Church of Scotland; and is written with peculiar force and solemnity; specifying a number of ministerial and presbyterial acts which these seceding ministers had taken upon themselves to perform, in violation of the laws of the Church of Scotland, and in contempt of her authority.

When the Assembly met, in May, 1739, the seceders having been regularly cited, appeared before that body. "The moderator signified to them that they were called to answer to a *libel*, but if they would manifest a disposition to return to their duty and to their obedience to the church, the Assembly was ready to forgive all that was past, and to receive them with open arms. They, instead of accepting the offered lenity, produced and offered to read a paper, entitled, "An act of the Associate Presbytery, finding and declaring, that the present judicatories of this national church are not lawful and rightly constitute judicatories of

Christ." The Assembly permitted the seceders to read their paper, which was done by Mr. Thomas Mair. This paper extends to several closely printed pages, and contains an absolute declinature of the authority of the General Assembly, and of all the other judicatories of the established church, on the grounds mentioned. When they appeared before the Assembly it was not in their individual capacity, but in a body, and as a presbytery. For having met at Edinburgh while the Assembly was in session, they deliberately formed an act, in which it was declared, that the present judicatories of the established church are not lawful nor rightly constituted courts of Christ; they agreed to continue together in their constituted capacity, and were called before the Assembly to go in as a presbytery. Accordingly, when they understood that their names were called by the officer of the Assembly, having first offered a prayer for the Lord's presence and countenance in this weighty affair, they presented themselves before that body. The moderator of the Assembly having informed them that they were called to answer to a *libel*, Mr. Thomas Mair, the moderator of the presbytery, said, "We came here as a presbytery, constituted in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only Head and King of his church." The *libel* framed by the commission was then read; after which Mair was permitted to read the presbytery's "Act and Declinature," and then delivered it into the hands of the moderator of the Assembly.

When the presbytery had retired, the Assembly proceeded to form an act relative to this matter, in which it is declared, that these ministers, by their irregular conduct, had justly incurred the sentence of deposition; but it was resolved by the Assembly, "that they would not then proceed to a final sentence, but forbear the same another year, to give them time to return to their duty; and to render them still more inexcusable, if they should persist in their unwarrantable separation." During the preceding year, Mr. James Thomson, minister of Burnt Island, had seceded from the established church, and joined the Associate Presbytery.

In 1740, the General Assembly of the established Church of Scotland, pronounced the sentence of deposition on the eight ministers who had seceded; and appointed that their several churches should be declared vacant.

"On the principles on which the Assembly had proceed-

ed," observes the judicious Sir Henry Moncrief, "this measure had certainly become at last unavoidable. And, on the other side, it can scarcely be denied, that the seceding ministers, trusting to their influence with the populace, and no doubt relying on what they considered the argument in their favour, conducted themselves with no small degree of intemperance.

"Be this as it may, dispassionate men, at this distance of time, must be compelled to admit, that great errors were committed on both sides. If Ebenezer Erskine and his associates were intemperate in their attacks on the ecclesiastical courts; and assumed as original principles of the establishment, what had never been acknowledged nor acted upon, at any period of the church; if they were obstinate and unbending, beyond what either the weight of their argument, or the merit of the questions at issue could warrant; it may be fairly conceded on the other side, that the party in the church, who originally decided against them, were rash and injudicious, in taking up questions which were much more likely to be set at rest by time than by authority. The high tone of ecclesiastical discipline which they adopted, was not to be easily reconciled with the language of indirect concession afterwards resorted to; which was in a very slight degree supported by the particular decisions of the time, or by any part of their general practice at a subsequent period. The injudicious mixture of forbearance and severity, manifest in the treatment of the seceding ministers, so far from being calculated to reclaim or persuade them, had an obvious tendency to confirm their resolution to form a separate sect for themselves, and by its natural influence on the people who followed them, to place them in open and determined hostility with the establishment. They relied on their popularity to secure them followers, and probably believed, that it would have accomplished much more than at first it did; though the remote consequences of the secession have certainly been more extensive and considerable than they could have anticipated at its commencement. On the other hand, they who, at that time, had the lead in the management of the church, affected to despise their influence, and to consider their secession as incapable of producing any serious or permanent effects. The anticipations of both are at sufficient variance with historical truth, to afford a most impressive lesson to later times.



“But though the consequences of the secession have not been precisely what was on either side foreseen, it has undoubtedly made a material and permanent change on the ecclesiastical condition of Scotland. The seceders were soon divided among themselves, and their party distinctions, embittered by their perpetual appeals to the people, had an obvious tendency to lessen their influence in the country, and to retard the progress of their sect. Notwithstanding this disadvantage, the number of their followers was gradually, and almost imperceptibly, augmented, in every quarter of the kingdom, till they have at last comprehended a proportion of the population, which neither the nature of their controversy with the church, nor the weight or talents of their original leaders, could have led either their friends or their opponents to anticipate.

“There was, indeed, from the commencement of their separation, one obvious source of their influence and progress, of which they well knew how to avail themselves. Every new subject of discontent among the people, occasioned by decisions of General Assemblies, and every unsuccessful opposition to the induction of an obnoxious presentee, gave to the seceding ministers a new sphere of activity; and held out the prospect of a new congregation to be added to their sect.

“Besides, they did not confine themselves to their original grounds of complaint against the establishment, arising out of the act of 1732. They brought forward to the people every other species of defection, which they could impute to the church; and it is obvious, that there could be no great difficulty in discovering many objectionable facts, in the management of ecclesiastical courts; such as may be found in every institution in which human beings are concerned; or in framing exaggerated statements of real defects and corruptions in ecclesiastical proceedings, sufficient to influence the minds of the populace, and to resist whenever they could excite their prejudices against the establishment.

“They, at the same time, devised expedients and restrictions, by which, for many years, they excluded their adherents from all communication with the established churches; and, in this way, from all opportunities of information, beyond what they received from themselves, or by their direction.”—[*Appendix to Sir Henry Moncrief's Life of Rev. John Erskine.*]



It must be considered as a coincidence somewhat remarkable, that just about a century after the adoption of THE ACT AND TESTIMONY, by the seceders in Scotland, against the errors and alleged defection of the Church of Scotland, connived at by the General Assembly, there should be published a paper, under the same title, and complaining of a similar defection in the General Assembly of the American church. Whether the similarity of name in this latter instrument was accidental or designed, we are not informed.

It was our purpose to give an abstract of the aforesaid document; and also to continue the history of the Secession Church; particularly, to give an account of the troubles which arose within this body, and which terminated in a schism of the seceders nearly into two equal parts; and, also, of the remarkable fact, that Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, the originator of this separation, was a second time solemnly deposed from his ministry, by the majority of that very ecclesiastical body which he had been the chief instrument of forming. But our paper has already exceeded a reasonable limit; so that we are reluctantly obliged to stop short of the object which we had in view; and to defer the remainder of the history to another occasion.

If any should be disposed to inquire, what benefit can accrue from raking up, at the present time, these old disputes and divisions in the church, we would answer, that all parties now existing in our beloved, but perturbed church, may derive useful lessons from a calm consideration of the transactions of former times.

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ART. II.—*Necessity of Popular Education as a national object: with Hints on the treatment of Criminals, and observations on Homicidal Insanity.* By James Simpson, Advocate. Edinburgh, 1834.

*J. N. Alexander*

THE Scots seem, more readily than the English, to burst the ties of ancient prejudice, and to overleap the barrier of habitual methods. It is a quality for good and for evil. It has its manifestation in all the history of the Scots. When England, at the Reformation, ventured only to lop off the

excrescences of the Romish tree, Scotland tore it out of the soil. While the English universities were still clinking with the Baroko and Bokardo of the dark age, the Scotch professors were dissecting away the last ligaments of the scholastic jargon. How far this was good, we say not. The temper is evident, and it is progressive in its unfolding. The wand of thorough reform is now brought to bear upon the hoary systems of education, and we are startled at the prospect before us. All our surmises are not, we own it, of good; for innovation may be the reverse of improvement. But we also flatter ourselves that in the process of tearing down, much of the useful and time-honoured will be reverently spared; that much of what the pick-axe strikes out may well be relinquished, and that the bulk of the new arrangements will prove to be dictated by sound philosophy, and to be consonant with the reasonable requisitions even of sticklers for antiquity.

The Edinburgh Review, under the potent guidance of Lord Brougham, has been throwing floods of light on the prescriptive enormities, and unpardonable defects of the universities. It has even befriended the system of Hamilton. The leaders of reform in the Scottish metropolis have gone further in realizing the plans of the Infant School, and of Bell and Lancaster, than any other men living. M. Pillans, memorable as the respected correspondent of Dr. Parr, and now Professor of Humanity in the University of Edinburgh, has ventured on the astounding innovation, of introducing the monitorial system into the Senior and Junior Classes of that Institution, as an improved way of teaching Greek and Latin. And the Rev. Mr. Cunningham, headmaster of the Edinburgh Institution for Languages, Mathematics, &c. published in March, 1834, his persuasion, from experiment, that two hours a day are abundant for the acquisition of the classical languages; so far as these are pre-requisites for the university; and this without giving more years to the study than is common in other schools. All this fills us with vague wonder. But we marvel yet more at the advances which are said to be making in popular education; and most of all at the views opened by Mr. Simpson, in the work before us.

Taking the conceded ground that *popular ignorance is an enormous national evil*, this author maintains that *the education of the children of the manual labour class ought to be free*. He exclaims, with all the energy of patriotic fire, that a na-

tion which could pour out her forty millions sterling on the combinations which issued at Waterloo, can and must give the people the protection of education *at any cost*. He argues that education, from the nature of the case, is always, in point of fact, at the public expense; that voluntary schools are precarious; and, above all, that "the very ignorance which we deplore is a mountainous barrier in the way of its own removal," and that, in the words of Chalmers, it is necessary "to *excavate* the population firmly imbedded in a mass of practical heathenism."

These are unexpected and daring positions, but mark his specifications: Manual labourers are seven-eighths of the population of Britain. Perhaps not a fiftieth part live entirely independent of labour. The physical condition of the class chiefly regarded is such as, we have reason to thank God, is comparatively unknown in America.

"In too many instances the light and air, which Heaven bestows and man excludes, very imperfectly enter to cheer and purify their dwellings, noisome with animal and vegetable effluvia, and accumulated refuse. In the worst cases they sleep in beds,—often several persons in one,—which rarely know cleanly change, and have become infectious as the depositories of weeks of insensible perspiration, ascertained to be nearly a pound weight from each adult in twelve hours. The nocturnal consumption of the air of a crowded room, renders it a positive poison to the lungs, the heart, and the blood; and when the workman has to contend with a deleterious trade during the day, what must the effect be, upon his health, of the atmosphere and contact of his repose? Rising from this dormitory, of whose operation on his constitution he is profoundly unconscious, the manual labourer resumes his day garments, in part of which he has probably slept, and 'unwashed' returns to his labour. He has never learned the import of the word 'unwashed,'—the diseases external and internal of an unheeded skin,—the consequences of obstructing that exquisite organ which exhales waste, and therefore hurtful, matter from the system, aids importantly in the regulation of the animal heat, is an agent of absorption, and the seat of touch and sensation. Nature lavishes water, as she is profuse of pure air for which every vital function pants; but water is refreshing, detersive, and luxurious, in vain to the son of toil."

"Some kinds of manual labour, and these besides often in the open air, exercise generally the muscular frame, and

such labourers are the most healthy; while other kinds are carried on in confined and ill-aired rooms, or manufactories which are loaded with flying dust, and deleterious effluvia, and afford no exercise beyond a movement of the fingers, or a turn of the wrist. A few minutes of fresh air between his work-shop and his home, is the workman's portion of that cheapest and best of luxuries; and worn out in mind as well as body, by the monotony of twelve or fourteen hours' employment, he swallows his meal, often drinks ardent spirits, which aggravate greatly the power of every other destroyer of his constitution; and in the same bed, and the same air, he spends the night, as he did the night before, in the unrefreshing sleep of already-formed disease. Can we wonder that fevers, cutaneous, and other infectious diseases, originate in the unheeded persons, neglected beds, and unventilated dwellings of many of this class of the people? When the irruption of the cholera forced us—I wish I could say from higher impulses than 'fear'—to enter the manual labourer's abode, and explore the state in which he lived, a very general want of cleanliness was discovered, and in many houses a horrible state of filth. Swine-sties were in some instances found in the same room, already squalid with human crowdedness. The disclosure was too humiliating and alarming ever to be forgotten, and it was the first step to the cure of so great an evil, that it should be fully known."

"The manual labourer whom filth, foul air, muscular and nervous relaxation aggravated by ardent spirits, have combined to predispose to and affect with disease, has had no lesson ever taught him that his weakened frame, predispositions, and actually formed diseases, will be the wretched inheritance of his children, if he shall become a father. The same ignorance that has induced his own condition, renders him reckless of the misery if not guilt of transmitting it. He himself derived a tainted constitution, perhaps, from his progenitor, and, with his own actual deteriorations superadded, conveys it to his offspring; a few such generations must extinguish the stock—the very source of such a population. If infants are born in poisonous air, nursed in infectious beds, swathed in scanty and unchanged clothing, denied those ablutions so notoriously indispensable to the skin, when most vasculent and more active and important in the infant economy than all the viscera put together,—the last tasked beyond their power by the reflux circulation which an un-



contracted and unobstructed skin would have disposed of,— is there just cause of wonder that they are swept away in thousands by convulsions, croups, and bowel complaints, or that the seeds are sown in infancy of the numerous diseases of after life? The London bills of mortality prove that *nearly a fourth of the infants baptized, die within the first two years from their birth.* This mortality is not the design of the Creator: it is not true of the inferior animal, and therefore must have removeable causes; which causes will assuredly be found in gross ignorance. The animals are guided aright by their instincts; man ought to be directed as truly by his observing and reflecting powers, which were given him for that end; but then the condition of cultivation and improvement was annexed to the gift, and that command of the All-wise is forgotten or disobeyed.”

The intellectual condition of such a people is what might be expected. The working-man, under these circumstances, is narrowed in soul; “he is the creature of impressions and impulses, the unresisting slave of sensual appetites, the ready dupe of the quack, the thrall of the fanatic, and above all, the passive instrument of the political agitator, whose sinister views and falsehoods he is unable to detect.” Flattered by the demagogue, he believes his hypocritical slang, that his class because the most numerous are the most enlightened and generous and noble. His home is uncomfortable, or rather he is homeless in his garret or hovel. His toil is incessant, even beyond nature; and he falls a victim, in a multitude of cases, to the seductions of a pauper-system enormously corrupt, or to the tempting influence of criminal examples.

These are the statements of a Briton concerning Britons; and when he draws the moral picture, the details are still more harrowing. The poor-law system is represented as a fountain of demoralization.

“The evidence is overwhelming of the destruction, by this system, of the ‘veracity, industry, frugality, and domestic virtue of the labourer;’ of ‘the rapid increase of vice, and profligacy,’—‘the prevalence of the opinion that destitution, however produced, constitutes a claim to be supported by the community, and that dependence on the parish is preferable to independent labour,’—‘the destruction of reciprocal feeling between parents and children,’—‘desertion of wives by their husbands,’ ‘gross sensuality,’—‘improvident marriages, to the great increase of the evil of



an over-stocked labour market,'—'crime as the result of pauperism,'—'increase of illegitimate children, the allowance for an illegitimate being greater than for a legitimate child, and illegitimate children being a great advantage to their mothers under the present laws.' "

Mr. Simpson avows his belief that education, in its higher sense, has reached but a small distance below the surface among that class of the people which is above manual labour. Against the selfishness, avarice, and fashion, of this class he eloquently inveighs. Especially does he denounce the scorn of the higher for the lower ranks. "It is this habitual contumely which separates the great body of the manual-labour class from all who merely enjoy more physical comfort and ease of life, in a scowling attitude of distrust, envy and hostility." The British are not, he says, an educated people, and he touches in bitter sarcasm on some of their customs.

"We have our game laws and criminal code also to account for. Brought to the standard of sound ethics and reason, there are many of our customs that have as little chance as these of escaping the reproach of barbarisms which an educated people would disown, cruel rural sports, for example, fox-hunting, horse-racing, betting, gambling, prize-fighting, duelling, and *excessive conviviality*. The character and engrossing claims of rural sports, as they are called, will astonish a future better educated age. Such an age will scarcely believe 'the butcher work that then befell' the unsparing slaughter of all that is furred and feathered and finned, in field and flood, 'on mountain, moss, and moor;' they will discredit the graft of the hunting stage of the race upon a civilization, at its lowest, immensely in advance of that stage; they will reject the story that the boast of the Iroquois and the Esquimaux was also the distinction of the most polished ornaments of our drawing-rooms, namely the havoc of their unerring aim, the life they have extinguished, the blood they have shed, the 'head of game' they have gloried over as trophies spread out dead before them, and the larders which they have outdone the butcher in stocking! All is not right in our habits of thinking,—in other words in our education,—when our 'elite' can claim, and multitudes can accord, a certain distinction to a 'capital shot,' the victor in what the Olympics knew not,—'a steeple chace,' or *the proprietor of a pony which can trot sixteen miles an hour.*"

To our own country, blessed as it is above most, we might apply some of his remarks on the subject of covetousness. Here, also, it is true, that love of money, hurry to be rich, still afflict our imperfectly educated capitalists." The grand defect, in his opinion, is *the want of moral training*. The science of Man—physical, mental, and moral—is not taught. Reading, writing, and arithmetic, are but the keys of knowledge; the means to an end, not the end itself; and even these are denied to a multitude.

On such premises, largely expanded to the reader's view, he grounds his grand position: that education must be free as air, and that the government must provide it. "The manual-labour class have a claim on the nation for the means of educating their children. If education can be adapted for the people at an expense only which would overwhelm any means short of national, it must be provided by the nation. But this is but another form for the expression that it must be provided by the people themselves; not in a partial and inefficient way, but by the agreeable means of a general contribution passing through the coffers of the state; the waters would but partially irrigate the soil if they were not first carried by evaporation high into the atmosphere, and scattered in genial, impartial, and partial showers." The indirect taxation is largely shared by the class under review. In return, all acknowledge they have a just claim for *protection*.\* But, according to our author, they have scarcely any thing to be protected, and they demand the safe-guard of education. Education (he exclaims) denied to seven-eighths of a nation, should rouse a nation's energies: that it will be costly there is no concealing, but it must be attained at any cost. All half-measures, and voluntary expedients, present the phasis of general ignorance, diversified with a little knowledge in the garb of a harlequin, with no two of its patches alike. But, agreeably to the ideal of Mr. Simpson, the education of the people,

\* But these is another side of this subject. These are states of society in which the higher rank need protection against an uneducated mob. Let us hear the language of the radical. "The question of a national system of education is, as regards all the shopkeeper class, large or small, wholesale or retail, a question of reduction of taxation. As regards the higher or wealthier classes, it is a question of security; of the portion of wealth, or influence, or political power, which they *may* retain, but *will not*, if the numbers, with whom must be physical force, be not so enlightened as to become a righteous moral force."—*Westm. Rev.*, April 1834. Art. "*National Education*."

from two years of age to fourteen, ought to be furnished at the national expense, and the government ought to direct this national system. As Prussia and France have each a Minister of Public Instruction, so Great Britain should have the like; or, previously to this, a Board of Commissioners under the superintendence of the Secretary of State for the Home Department. Then let a code of universal direction, a programme of national education, be prepared; let it go immeasurably beyond France, and even Prussia, in that which the author expressively calls the *WHAT* of education. Let every thing be subservient to *early moral training*.

Here, then, is the first step. The next, is to localize schools, and *provide teachers*. And here we must leave our cold analysis, and earnestly bespeak the attention of every American reader to this grand desideratum among ourselves. In vain do we construct theories, and plan courses of study; in vain do we declaim about popular ignorance, and condemn national supineness, so long as we are unable to point out the men who are competent to teach. Until our machinery can be made to secure instructors, we are beating the air. This is a topic which does not depend for its interest on any peculiar scheme, whether transatlantic or indigenous. Once grant that schools—of whatever sort—are needed, and we are struck with the impossibility of supplying them with teachers, under the present conditions of literary society. It is with us a serious question, whether a moiety of the thousands annually disbursed by our state treasurers, for the support of schools or the instruction of poor children, might not be advantageously laid out upon the training of teachers. There is encouragement to throw out such hints, because we find that the long neglected suggestions of Woodbridge, Dwight, and other patriots, on this subject, are beginning, like good seed, to germinate, and show a blade of promise. The executive of several states have commended this very enterprise, in their late annual messages to the legislatures. Particularly would we call attention to the sound doctrines held by Governors Lumpkin and Vroom.

Our colleges should speedily take this matter in hand. It is acknowledged, by all who have considered it, that to ensure good teaching we must make the name of *school-master* an honourable title. And as it is every day becoming the passport to greater emolument, so it is actually be-

coming more reputable. The sneer of ignorance is giving place to respect for useful labour and self-denial. But we wish for more—we confidently look for more. We expect the day, and that not long hence, when the teacher shall assume his professional rank with the three faculties, and when our academical seminaries shall compete with one another in sending over the land a host of well-trained instructors. The university or college which shall so far anticipate the coming ray of improvement, as to stand high before the public as the supporter of popular instruction, will at once secure its own eminence, and be the nation's benefactor. In Prussia, and in Switzerland, it is now generally known there are schools for teachers. These are called *Normal Schools*. Young men, in great numbers, are here instructed, at the public expense, to be the teachers of others. The most effectual method of training teachers, as our author observes, is to place them in the position of pupils; and, when sufficiently advanced, to practise each in conducting the studies and exercises of the rest. A *certificate* or *diploma* might be given to all such as pass the ordeal, and this would be the most honourable and satisfactory testimonial which any candidate for a vacancy could present. In the 117th number of the *Edinburgh Review*, there are some excellent suggestions, touching these normal schools. "Our readers," says the reviewer, "are aware what consequence the Prussian law-givers attached to this object, wisely considering that the best plans of teaching are a dead letter, without good and able teachers; and that to expect good teachers without good training is to look for a crop without ploughing and sowing. In all their regulations on the subject of the *Schullehrer Semina-rien*, there is an anxious consideration of whatever can minister to the moral and intellectual improvement, and even to the personal comfort and happiness, of the young teachers, which reminds us more of the tenderness of parental care and admonition, than the stern and authoritative precepts of law. Every department is enjoined to have one of these seminaries; the pupils to be admitted between sixteen and eighteen, to the number of from sixty to seventy in each."—"Might not a lectureship or professorship of the *Art of Teaching*, (or, if a name be wanted for the new subject, of *Didactics*,) be appended to one or two of the Scotch universities; and, if such a novelty could not be in-



grafted on the old establishments of Oxford and Cambridge, tried, at least, in the infant institution of Durham.”

The difficulties and obstacles in the way of the proposed British reform, are frankly stated by Mr. Simpson. These are some of them:—The counteraction of an adult population, now uneducated: but we are *to sow at a vast expense, that which a generation, not even the next, shall reap.* The denial of leisure to the overworked British operative is another difficulty, which lies less in the way of American enterprise. The reform must begin in the sanction, by society at large, “of less extravagant ideas of accumulation than at present impel all who possess the means, to engrossing and ceaseless efforts to make large fortunes.” The poor laws are an impediment. The mingling of the criminal population with the rising race is a baleful antagonist power. The grand obstacle is *public indifference.* This is to be removed by throwing light broadly and constantly on the corruptions which must be purged away. The costliness of the measures is a gigantic obstacle. But “the elevation of an entire people by education is beyond all price.” The dread of too much light among the working classes, need not be touched upon in America. The prescriptive claims of existing defective systems stand in the way. And the author names *sectarian zeal* as the most formidable obstacle to any plan of national education. What we think on this point will appear in the sequel.

Some facts which we glean from the book before us may here be stated with advantage. The British press is boldly and efficiently at work in this cause. The Edinburgh Review has taken the lead. The Foreign Quarterly Review comes next, to the pages of which we refer for a minute account of the Prussian system. The Westminster Review, though advocating the mischievous ethics of the Benthamite school, and the infidelity of the radicals, devotes many articles to this subject. The London Quarterly dreads “over-educating.” The Quarterly Journal of Education, published under the superintendence of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and conducted by Professor Long, formerly of the University of Virginia, is expressly dedicated to these interests. And among weekly prints, the Courier, Times, Morning Chronicle, Herald, Spectator, and Examiner, of London; the Scotsman, Weekly Chronicle, Chambers’ Journal, Information for the People, and Historical Newspaper of Edinburgh. At the head of all individual



action stands Lord Brougham. In the same field of labour are found the Combes, Dr. Drummond, Professor Pillans, already named, Dr. Mayo, Mr. Bruce, Mr. Cunningham, and Mr. Black. The last named gentleman is of Glasgow, and under the sanction of the University, has pursued a plan for teaching Latin and French simultaneously to any number that can hear his voice or see his illustrations. Our own self-devoting countryman, William C. Woodbridge, is honoured with a notice which places him in his merited place among the first "educationists" of the age.

Such are a few of the particulars which we select from this book, for the sake of readers who may not be attracted by the volume itself. We must now spend a few paragraphs upon some peculiarities of the work, which we regard as questionable, liable to abuse, or positively false and dangerous. And first, Mr. Simpson is a *phrenologist*; and the characteristics of this hypothesis are made the basis of his practical recommendations whenever he treats of mental training. It is no part of our task to refute the doctrines of Gall, Spurzheim, and Combe; we do not even at this time question them. But we are both amused and pained when we behold their most unsettled points held up as cardinal in a plan for *universal education*. Much good suggestion is woven in with the aforesaid phrenology, but, in our judgment, it would be more effective if set by itself. There is also much whimsey, and the evident traces of a darling theory. We therefore enter our protest against the phrenological postulates of the essay.

Again, if we understand the author, he too much coincides with Bulwer, in dissevering ethics from religion. He does not indeed, like the latter, devote a chapter to show how morals have been adulterated by Christianity, in the common ways of teaching, but the whole drift of his argument is to establish the importance of what we are tempted to call a self-sufficient, independent, natural ethics. True, he is a believer in revelation, an eloquent panegyrist of the Bible, a member of the Kirk of Scotland, and we doubt not, a hearty friend of general Christianity; but he has ploughed, we fear, too much with the heifer of liberalism. He does not allot to the Bible its great place in the scale. There is another favourite project of our author, in which he will be upheld by a growing sect of educators in America; it is to displace the ancient classics from their present eminence. He desires to "abolish the *exclusiveness* of the dead lan-

guages; to allot them their proper place as subjects of study"—but "to substitute in early and general education, objects of study more practically useful." When popular, universal education is contemplated, there are few who have ever thought of introducing the profound study of the classics into their scheme; and therefore the proposal, when stated as above, excites no feeling of opposition in our minds. But when Mr. Simpson comes to array his arguments, we find that they are valid, if valid at all, against precisely that select study of the ancients, which we regard as all-important. Here, as in a multitude of instances, there is a remarkable coincidence of his opinions with those expressed by Bulwer, in his recent works on England and France. And as we have not been able to pick out one new objection, we shall leave the topic, as one still guarded well enough, by the verdict of the learned world.

It now remains that we should touch upon the peculiar notions of our animated author, as it regards moral and religious training. They may be thus summed up: although a costly and elaborate system for popular religious culture exists in the churches of Great Britain, the results are deplorably small. "Education is the only excavating process; preaching, in its utmost conceivable perfection, is a defective engine for the purpose; purely doctrinal preaching is utterly impotent." There must be a preparation before religious instruction can be communicated with effect. The reason why *religious* instruction is so fruitless, is that there is a want of previous *moral* training. Sectarian training is ruinous. "Most sects, so empowered, would proceed to instil into the young, nay, even the infant mind, *theology* almost exclusively." Secular education should precede "the inculcation of revelation." "By secular education the pupil is introduced to the God of Nature." "Is it wise to reverse this order?"

Now the difficulty of dealing with such statements as these, arises from the mixture of truth and error which they contain. What there is in them of truth, is so far from being new, or open to objection, that we cannot call to our mind, the most sectarian bigot who would or could gainsay them. They are almost self-evident, and we should wonder why the author so determinately sets himself in a polemical attitude, if we did not descry an ulterior object, which is best attained by imputing to certain Christian phi-

lanthropists the absurdity of denying cardinal truths in psychology and morals. It is, beyond a question, true, that multitudes are never duly imbued with the preceptive morality of the *pulpit*; perhaps we might, upon search, find also an occasional inefficacy in the *school*. It is true that the simple truths of religion must precede the abstruse, no one ever denied it. It is true, that the general idea of God the Creator, must precede the ideas of atonement and salvation. It is true that moral susceptibility must so far be presupposed, in the developement of conscience, as to have a child cognizant of right and wrong, as such, before it can appreciate the nature of sin. And if this is what the author means, he has our hearty concurrence, as well as that of every theologian who ever, in a sane state, viewed the question.

Mr. Simpson intends much more than this; otherwise his reasons would not be germane to the scope of his argument. He alludes to the absurdity of the sectarian plan according to which *theology* is taught to infants. "It must *begin* with the creed and catechism." And he holds that revelation, (that is, if the argument means any thing, the Christian doctrines as distinguished from theism, and natural religion,) must stand back, until the latter have been fully inculcated.

Preaching, especially doctrinal preaching, is, in his view, useless to the desired end. Preaching is declaring religious truth. Now any declaration of truth may be faulty, as being unintelligible, needless, or in any way unreasonable. Much preaching is thus faulty. Much preaching is comparatively useless for want of a previous culture of the hearer's mind. But *what* culture? Here is the question. Mr. Simpson says, *moral culture*; and lest we should mistake, he distinguishes this from *religious* or scriptural culture. That is, if we catch his meaning, there is a system of ethics which must be infused into the infant mind before the great truths of revelation can be received to advantage. If any thing more is intended, than the truism, that a child must be able to think aright and feel aright in order to comprehend religious lessons, we hold the position to be dangerous. God has not laid us under the necessity of any such complicated succession of disciplines. The infant, who is capable of knowing that a lie is bad, and that God sees him, is capable of knowing that God's Son died for sinners. But the latter is a truth of revelation, and therefore, according to the scheme of our

author, must be kept in abeyance, until a certain process of development is completed in the organs of the brain.

It is evident from all these arguments of the ingenious and excellent author, that he has suffered his mind to become the prey of a fallacy, and has altogether misapprehended the nature and extent of *revealed theology*. He arbitrarily lays off one set of truths, as ethical and even secular, elementary and simple doctrines, and these he maintains are suitable for the child. He lays off another set of truths, which he regards as inscrutable, or at least profound, revealed truths, theological dogmas, and these he maintains are unsuitable. We maintain the very same thing. We have formally conceded it above. But we protest against the injurious fallacy which would make such a division. All these are equally embraced in the circle of *theological truth*. The only legitimate conclusion from the author's premises, is one in which all will accord: namely, that milk must be given to babes, and strong meat reserved for men. But both the milk and strong meat are provided in the Holy Scriptures.

In education, as in all human pursuits, the chain of means and instruments is conditioned by the end in view. If a false or limited, or extravagant result is set before the planner's mind, we may expect the system to be wrong, or narrow, or visionary. When the great object of human training is considered to be something bounded by the temporal wants of the race, to the exclusion of that immortality which gives the stamp of real excellence to soul and body, it is not wonderful that the means which are proposed should be such as may consistently leave out that body of truth which the Creator has revealed as the nutriment and discipline of the soul. But as Christians, who believe in a hereafter, with reference to which all things, great and small, are to be planned and conducted, we cannot for an instant lose sight of the life and immortality brought to light in the Gospel. "The end of learning," says Milton, "is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith, makes up the highest perfection." And we believe the time to be approaching, when Christian education will, from its very alphabet, regard its scholars as creatures of God, at once fallen, and capable of restoration.



It were an indignity to the Scriptures, to suppose that their contents are not intelligible, without a previous training in natural religion. While the Bible does assume as the common basis of all its teachings, the first principles of theism and morals, it also *teaches* these very principles in the very best way. To be plain, we would put every infant mind at once in contact with Bible-truth. The author seems to sneer at catechisms. Now we concede that catechisms may be, and often have been, bad, in various respects, and that the best may be used unseasonably; but so long as he allows that certain elements of natural religion and common duty may be taught, and must be taught, to children, we challenge him to find a better way of teaching them, than by means of the Scriptures. And a good catechism is nothing else than a selection of such scriptural truths as may suit a budding mind. The Bible teaches of God and duty, not in theorems, but in illustration, not in cold, abstract definitions, but in palpable action. One tale, one parable, shall do more to lay the foundation of even natural religion in the juvenile soul, than a discourse of hours according to the improved method. The impression which the divine method makes on the infant is corroborative of our position that the Bible is the grand instrument in education. And Mr. Simpson, when he comes to practical directions, suggests means far more consonant with our scheme than with his own; for while he says—"no creed or catechism of any sect whatever, dominant or dissenting, is taught [in the Edinburgh Infant Schools] because religion taught to the very young in this form, has been found at once unintelligible and repulsive"—he adds what we rejoice to read: "Scripture history, illustrated by well-chosen engravings, coloured to attract, conveys to them, in a pleasing manner, the leading facts of both Testaments, and always with a heart-improving application; while their prayers and hymns are of the simplest, most improving, and least sectarian character." "The author has been assured by Mr. Wilderspin, and the statement has been confirmed by the two successive teachers of the Edinburgh Model Infant School, that whenever the children are allowed a choice of the kind of story to be told them, *the vote is almost invariably for a Scripture story.*"

We do not therefore dissent from Mr. Simpson when he says that *things* must be taught before *mere words*; or that *simple truths* must precede *mysteries*; or that catechisms

may be used amiss; or that the distinctions of sect are incompatible with a popular system of education. But we dissent from him when he hints, that catechisms are in their very nature injurious; that natural religion must be deliberately inculcated prior to revelation, and independently of its modifications by revealed truth, and without Scriptural illustrations; that worldly ethics shall be the basis of Bible precept; that theology is to be reserved for some undefined future epoch; and that preaching is not a mighty engine in the formation of the national mind. As to the last assertion, the history of his own unparalleled church is a standing refutation.

In conclusion, we believe that no man can read Mr. Simpson's volume without feeling obliged to him for the syllabus of important pertinent facts which he has afforded, and for the noble, warming influences which he has made to bear on the subject of popular illumination. It is a book, of which the faults are superficial, and the excellency inwrought. We wish it might be extensively perused. The matter of education is, in this country, becoming more and more nearly allied to the grand action of governments; it would be dreadful, indeed, if our worthy legislators were to go to work after a wrong fashion. Our author is immeasurably far from supposing that the mere increase of intellectual culture will prevent crime. He admits all we ask as to the need of religious sentiment; while he takes a ground as to the methods and order of training, against which we have protested. But the book is a worthy book, and will set many readers upon trains of thought which may yet issue in great good.

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*Archibald Alexander or Prof. S. Miller*

ART. III.—*The present State and Prospects of the Presbyterian Church.*

IN the last number of our Journal, we made some remarks on the document, styled the "Act and Testimony." This was not done without serious consideration, and a deep and invincible sense of duty. Nor was it done without counting the cost. We had no doubt that, in taking this step, we should greatly offend and alienate some of

those whose piety and orthodoxy we highly esteem, and whose past services in the Presbyterian Church none appreciate more highly than ourselves. Little as we know of human nature and of history, we know enough to be aware that moderate men have always fared badly between ultra partisans; and that the *odium ecclesiasticum* is never more unrelenting than between those who approach nearest to each other, without being able entirely to coalesce. This we regret; but we cannot regret the course we have taken. We have acted under conscientious conviction; and we are well assured that even those revered brethren, from whose course we have felt constrained to dissent, would be among the last to deny to others, what they prize so highly for themselves—the privilege of obeying the dictates of an honest conscience.

In regard to the convictions expressed, and the positions taken, in our last number, we have nothing either to retract or modify. Our deep and unwavering persuasion is, that the course we have marked out for ourselves, is the course best adapted to promote, not merely the present peace, but also the eventual purity and order of the Presbyterian Church. Our only object, in the present article, is to exhibit a little more at large some of those views which were hinted at, rather than explained, in our former paper, and which we have no doubt have been misapprehended by some of those brethren whose censure we have been so unfortunate as to incur. We intend also, before we close, to suggest what we think, in present circumstances, ought to be done. We owe it, perhaps, to our censurers, to the church with which we are connected, and to ourselves, to be more explicit on some points heretofore imperfectly developed.

In one respect, we acknowledge, that some late publications have somewhat surprised us. The course of remark adopted in our review of the "Act and Testimony," in our last number, seems to be considered, by some of the friends of that document, as a *new* and *unexpected* movement on our part, of which they have a right to complaint. Now, we had supposed the spirit of that review to be in perfect accordance with the course which, as conductors of a theological journal, we have been pursuing for several years past. It ought to be known that the editors of this work, as such, cannot be identified with any public institution, or its officers. We protest against any such attempt. We

choose to be known simply by the spirit and character of our own pages. These, we took for granted, had sufficiently disclosed, that our opinions and feelings did not entirely coincide with EITHER CLASS of the ultra partisans who have, for several years past, divided and agitated our church.

On the one hand, we wished it to be understood, that we were the determined opponents of all those in our communion who manifested a leaning toward Arminian or Pelagian opinions in theology; or who discovered a disposition to invade the principles of Presbyterian church government, or to exchange them for those of the congregational system. We did believe that there were some such individuals who had "crept in unawares" into our church, and were exerting an injurious influence. Against these, and against all who manifested a desire to favour them, we have lifted our voice from time to time—feebly, we acknowledge, but, according to our ideas of propriety, as distinctly and decisively as we were able. We have also taken the part of our beloved church in opposition to various forms of what we deemed adverse policy. We have, again and again, warned our churches, that *preferring* irresponsible associations, especially those intended for training up a sound and able *ministry*, to boards formed and superintended by our own ecclesiastical bodies, was adapted to exert a most unfriendly influence on the Presbyterian Church. We have proclaimed, from time to time, as faithfully as we knew how, that invigorating and building up the former, to the *neglect*, or at the expense of a *reluctant* and *sparing* support, of the latter, is directly adapted to produce the most injurious effects. We have warned them that this course, however well intended by many who pursued it, was really adapted to divide, weaken, and depress our portion of the American Church; to destroy its homogeneous and peaceful character; and eventually to bring about revolutions as painful as disreputable; and, above all, consequences deeply injurious to its spiritual interests, and fatal to the efficiency and enlargement of its benevolent efforts. We have entreated every well-wisher to our church not to pursue such plans or policy as *must*, without a miracle, issue in bringing into our ministry, and sending forth as our rulers and guides, not merely a "diversity of gifts" and graces, which is desirable, but inflamed and fierce partisans of opposite systems; men who, instead of bending their whole force,



with fraternal harmony, to the enlargement of Zion, and to the conversion of the world, would feel conscientiously bound to exhaust a large portion of their time and strength in fighting with one another. We have besought them to consider how much more honourable to Christian feeling, and conducive to Christian edification, it would be, to employ every practical method of harmonizing our ministers and churches, and to guard against every plan or agency which might tend to perplex the minds of our people with the appearance of hostile claims, and unhallowed rivalships, in the great work of "holding forth the word of life," and extending the Redeemer's kingdom. We say deliberately, and with more unwavering confidence, the more we reflect upon it, that we see in the Assembly's Board of Education, under God, a firmer pledge of the future union, harmony, and strength of the Presbyterian Church, than in any other human institution connected with it. If that radical institution shall be efficiently sustained, upon its present simple and wise plan, we may cherish the hope that the merciful King of Zion will not permit us to be riven asunder. And, to mention but one topic more; we have uniformly endeavoured to warn the churches against that system of novel and exciting "MEASURES" for promoting revivals of religion, which has made so great a figure in some sections of our church, and in the hands of some ministers of high claims. We have deemed it a solemn duty to cast our influence, such as it is, decisively, into the scale of opposition to these measures; because we cannot doubt that, however *apparently* useful, in some cases, all experience has shown them to be rather adapted to promote animal excitement, and the temporary reign of a spurious sympathy, than the power of genuine religion.

Such are the principles which we have always endeavoured to sustain and disseminate with the utmost of our ability. We appeal to our pages for proof, that our course, as to all these points, has been neither temporizing nor equivocal. They are the principles which have guided us hitherto, and they, with unimpaired force, guide us still. Nay, it is because we cordially adhere to them, as both true and important, and desire to secure for them universal currency, that we take the course which some are pleased to consider as a departure from our wonted path. It is, however, no departure. Of the same sentiments our readers will ever find us the undeviating advocates. On the other

hand, we have felt unable, for several years past, to accord with all the views and movements of what has been sometimes called the *ultra* old-school party, composed of a portion of the Synod of Philadelphia, and a few brethren in other judicatories of the church. We have, indeed, venerated their piety, and honoured their ardent zeal in pursuing a course which we doubt not they have honestly considered as adapted to promote the best interests of truth and ecclesiastical order. Our unfeigned desire has always been to act with them, knowing the elevation of their character, and the general soundness of their opinions; and feeling that their principles and ours are, in all important respects, one. But, within the last four or five years, they have repeatedly advanced principles, and pursued a course, which it was impossible for us to contemplate without regret. We have seen them, as we thought, on several important occasions, for the purpose of carrying their points, advancing doctrines which we were verily persuaded genuine Presbyterianism did not warrant. And we have seen, with no less regret, that, when they did bring before the highest judicatory of the church, matters of just complaint, in regard to which sound principle was on their side, and redress ought to have been obtained, and, under proper management, would have been obtained;—these matters were so unhappily involved with questionable theories, or inadmissible or offensive demands, as almost to insure their rejection. On one occasion, indeed, (we refer to the famous *memorial* from the west, presented to the last General Assembly,) we deliberately thought, long before the meeting of the Assembly, that the result must be what it proved. That some of the requests contained in that document were rejected, was with us matter of sincere regret. That it was not, in a mass, treated with more respect, we also lamented. But had we been members of that Assembly, and had a vote been pressed on the whole, as it stood, our vote must have been given decisively in the negative.

Such have been, for some time, our views and feelings. Of these we made no secret; and we supposed that by the readers of the *Repertory* they were distinctly understood. True, we forbore publicly to assume an attitude hostile to those excellent brethren. We forbore to lift a standard round which to attempt to rally a counteracting party;—because we loved them; because we saw that they were conscientiously fighting the battles of the general cause

which we wished to promote; because we thought it was not our province to attempt to be leaders; and because we feared that we might, by such an attempt, increase the morbid agitation, and still more reduce the strength, of our already bleeding church. We had no doubt, indeed, that *our* views and feelings were those of a large majority of the church; and, of course, could have had no apprehension that, in raising a standard somewhat different from that of our respected brethren, we should be found siding with the weaker party. But a sacred regard to the feelings of those brethren; a fear of the consequences which might result from dividing the old-school ranks; and a conscientious doubt as to the safest and best means of offering our counsel, in the trying circumstances in which we were placed, prevented our formally attempting to interfere. We abstained from this decisive step as long as we could with a good conscience. And it was not until the appearance of the "Act and Testimony" completely satisfied us that a crisis had come, which threatened incalculable evils, that we felt it our duty no longer to be silent. As guardians of a periodical publication, consecrated to the best interests of the Presbyterian Church, we have thought it our duty to speak a language for which we expect to give account at a tribunal higher than that of the most venerated of men. This deep sense of obligation led to our review of the "Act and Testimony." If ever an act was extorted from us by an overpowering sense of duty, it was that act. We asked ourselves—"Shall we calmly sit by, and see our beloved church torn in pieces by honest, but misguided friends, on the one hand, and a really small hostile junto on the other, without lifting a hand or a voice to stay the catastrophe?" Could a doubt have existed as to the proper answer? We have spoken without reserve; and to Him who can make the feeblest word useful we commit the result.

Having said thus much concerning our own course—perhaps more than was necessary, or even proper—we proceed to make a few remarks on what we deem to be the present state of the church, and the probable influence of measures proposed for her benefit. And in the first place, we are far from believing that the apprehensions of those fathers and brethren who have emitted the Act and Testimony, as to the existence of unsound opinions in our church, are without foundation. We have no doubt that there are ministers and elders in the Presbyterian Church, who ought

never to have been admitted to a place among its teachers and rulers; who cannot with propriety remain in it a day; and whose influence, so far as it goes, is, in a high degree, unfriendly, both to the purity and peace of the church. We think, too, that some others, whatever their real sentiments may be, frequently employ *language* which very strongly savours of error, and which is adapted to excite alarm among those who desire to "hold fast the form of sound words once delivered to the saints." Some of this language we have heard with our own ears; and the rest has been reported to us by witnesses on whose testimony we have just as perfect reliance as upon that of our own senses. We have read statements from the press, which, unless theological language has lost its established meaning, must be considered as importing the adoption of very serious errors. We have perused with intense interest, and with all the scrupulous impartiality which we could summon to our aid, the numbers of the *Christian Spectator*, of New Haven, for several years past, and have read defence after defence of its editors, when accused of holding erroneous opinions, and the deliberate conclusion which we are constrained to admit is, that those brethren do really appear to hold and advocate sentiments at which all the friends of evangelical truth have reason to take the alarm, and against which they are bound to lift up a warning voice. We find, too, in confirmation of this conclusion, that a large body of the most pious, learned, and venerable ministers of New England take the same view of this subject with ourselves; and have erected a seminary, the main object of which is to counteract the corrupting influence of New Haven theology, and to secure to candidates for the ministry a purer fountain of instruction than that which their neighbours furnish. Is it possible to misunderstand the language of these facts? Can those venerable and discerning men be under an entire mistake as to the real character of the system which they oppose? And when we have so much reason to believe that the erroneous sentiments just alluded to, are by no means unknown within the bounds of our own church, can it be consistent with fidelity to our Master in heaven to close our eyes against the fact, and to persuade ourselves that there is no danger to be apprehended from the spreading of these sentiments? We think not. Every line in the history of the rise, progress, and prevalence of the Pelagian and Arminian errors;—every memorial which remains of



the conduct of the early advocates of those erroneous systems,—their dissimulation, their studied concealment, their artful evasions, until they had attained strength enough to throw off all disguise;—all admonish us to be on our guard against the encroachments of speculations in their very nature insidious, and which easily prepare the way for a radical departure from the system of evangelical truth. We repeat, then, we do not consider the respected framers of the “Act and Testimony” as mere causeless alarmists. There is, we think, no small reason for the warning which they give with so much emphasis and solemnity. If the apprehensions expressed by them and others be wholly groundless, we must reject every rule of human testimony.

Neither do we dissent from our brethren in regard to the *malignant and dangerous character* of the errors which they denounce. We do not think that, in describing them, they have used one word too hard, or laid on one colour too dark. We cannot resist the evidence that THE errors in question amount to the essence of Pelagianism; that is, although no case has come to our knowledge in which that system, *in all its parts*, was avowedly adopted; yet we cannot avoid the conclusion, that there are cases in which the deviations from truth are so wide and serious as to comprehend the essential principles of the Pelagian scheme; and, of course, to amount to “another gospel.” Against such errors we are constrained to acquiesce in the most severe denunciations which have been uttered. We believe them to be wholly irreconcilable with that confession of faith which all Presbyterian ministers and elders have solemnly subscribed; adapted to undermine all the fundamental doctrines of the gospel; in a high degree unfriendly to vital piety; and, under the guise of promoting revivals of religion, calculated directly, and in a high degree, to pervert, dishonour, and destroy them. Wherever errors like these are found, we would be among the last to extenuate or defend them. In every case in which the charge of holding them can be legitimately fixed on any man, we say, with our whole hearts, he ought not to be in our church. Let him be dealt with promptly and faithfully in the spirit of our public standards.

But, while we make these acknowledgments, and mourn over the evidence which constrains us to make them, we see no reason to believe that the evil in question is either so *extensive*, or so *deeply seated*, as some excellent brethren

imagine. Were we to measure the prevalence of the errors in question by the representations given by some of our "Act and Testimony" friends, we should conclude that they had gained, indeed, a most fearful extension. They are sometimes spoken of as pervading the church; as infecting the whole mass; as boldly lifting up the head in every Synod within our bounds. In one word, it would seem to be supposed that a moiety of our whole ecclesiastical body has become deeply infected with this theological pestilence. Now, to statements of this kind, we can by no means yield our assent. After giving much attention to the subject; after making diligent inquiries, for several years past, of persons intimately acquainted with different parts of the church; and after making every allowance for that kind of denial, concealment, and prevarication, which seem always to be more or less connected with the errors alluded to;—we are persuaded that nine-tenths of our ministry are in a great measure free from the unsound opinions in question. We believe, moreover, that the errors to which reference is here made, are declining rather than gaining ground; that is, that some who once thought well of them, have, within a year or two, become convinced of their erroneous character; and that the standard which has been, in various forms, lifted up against them, has been blessed to their discouragement and depression. This is, most distinctly, our impression. And the impression has been made by a variety of circumstances. If the fact be not so; if the whole church is flooded with these errors; if they are preached in many hundreds of pulpits, and published without reserve from the press, in every part of the land;—why, in all the public documents which complain of them, and bear testimony against them, are only three or four names, out of two thousand, mentioned as implicated in this charge? Surely, if the country every where resounded with these errors, nothing would be more easy than to produce hundreds of culprits on whom the charge of theological delinquency might be invincibly fastened. There are, undoubtedly, a number of Synods, and a still greater number of Presbyteries, in which there are large old-school majorities. Why have not they arraigned, and caused to be brought before the proper tribunals, some of the offenders, who are supposed to be so numerous and bold? We are utterly unable to account for this, but by supposing, either that the cases of infection with error are much less numerous than some imagine, or that some old-

school men find it much more easy to complain of the General Assembly by signing an "Act and Testimony," than to do their duty as members of their respective Presbyteries. How has it happened, that, for a number of years past, a charge of heresy has never been brought before the General Assembly, in such a manner, by reference, appeal, or complaint, as enabled that body to take regular cognizance of it, excepting in a single instance? And even that was connected with so many peculiar personal and local circumstances, as rendered a calm and dispassionate decision of it all but impracticable.

The truth is, we totally disbelieve that corrupt opinions exist among the ministers and elders of our church, *to the extent that is proclaimed by some*. That such opinions are found in our camp, we have already declared that we have no doubt. But if a few dozen men, whom we could name, had either the honesty to withdraw from a church whose formularies they never really believed, or the discretion to keep their speculations to themselves, we are fully persuaded we should have occasion to hear little more on this subject in the Presbyterian Church.

This leads to another observation, which is, that, of almost all the decisions of the General Assembly, for the last four or five years, of which our old-school friends have most loudly complained, as favouring heresy—scarcely one has been brought before that body, in a manner which admitted of a calm and impartial decision, on its own merits. We have deeply lamented this; and we know that it has been lamented by many others. It is the part of wisdom, in contending for the truth, to present her claims in an unembarrassed form, and to fight her battles on well-selected ground. We have no doubt that sound, old-school principles would have fared far better in the General Assembly—nay, that they would have invariably triumphed, IF THEY HAD BEEN MANAGED AND PRESENTED WITH EVEN TOLERABLE DISCRETION. But, in most cases, if not every one—not only had the previous management been unskilful and injudicious;—but each case was finally brought before the highest judicatory, under such an aspect, and so unhappily mixed up with other and highly exciting matters—as almost to ensure an unfavourable reception. We have often thought, that if our respected brethren of the Philadelphia Presbytery and Synod had really intended to make their own defeat in the General Assembly certain, and to render the Presbyterian

Church a "hissing and a by-word" throughout the land; they could scarcely have taken a more direct course than on several occasions they did, to attain their end. We say this with unspeakable pain, but with unwavering confidence; and we know it to be the deliberate opinion of hundreds who ardently wish well to the old-school cause, and mourn over all its disasters.

On such a subject it would be an irksome task to enter into details. Suffice it to say, as a specimen of what we mean—that the original complex management, and final presentation to the Assembly of the first striking case which occurred in 1831; the whole management of the case relating to the division of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, in 1831 and 1832; the pertinacious denial of the right of the General Assembly to erect new Presbyteries; the refusal to acknowledge the Presbytery formed by the Assembly in 1832, and shutting out all its members from their seats in Synod; the attempted dissolution of that Presbytery, by a Synodical act, in 1833; the adoption and presentation of the *Western Memorial* in 1834; and last, though not least, recommending in the "Act and Testimony," that no Presbytery or Synod formed by the Assembly on the *elective affinity* principle, should ever be acknowledged as a judicatory at all; these are a specimen of the management and the measures over which we have never ceased to lament, as most unwise; as adapted to weaken the hands of old-school men; and to bring their system, and their portion of the church into disrepute. We take no pleasure in adverting to these things. Our hearts, we say again, were in general, unfeignedly with the brethren who adopted these measures. We cordially wished them success in their efforts for promoting the purity and order of the church. But in these things our conscientious judgment forbade us to concur with them. Our doubts and our disapprobation were freely expressed, as we had opportunity: but they were disregarded. Of this we make no complaint; for we felt that we had no claim either to lead, or to be consulted: and we only mention the fact for the sake of showing that we have endeavoured, in our humble place, to do all that belonged to faithful men, who loved that portion of their brethren of the old-school ranks of whom we speak; and sincerely desired their honour and success, as opponents of theological and ecclesiastical innovation.

As one proof that our estimate of the character and ten-



dency of the measures referred to is correct, let any one who witnessed the proceedings of the General Assembly for the last four years, or who has looked over the record of the *yeas* and *nays* called on a variety of interesting occasions, recollect a moment, and he will find the evidence complete. He will find in the list of votes in opposition to those measures, the names of men as decided in their attachment to old-school principles, both in regard to doctrine and order, as the church contains; and men whose lives have been marked by a fidelity and zeal in this cause, as steady and as exemplary as any, without exception, of their brethren. It is easy, we know, to say of such men that they were timid; that their prudence degenerated into trimming; or that they were actuated by jealousy; that they were not consulted, or permitted to take the lead. But, surely, it is neither kind nor wise to bring such charges against men of quite as much reputation for honesty as any of their accusers. Surely those who wield such weapons forget that they are quite as much exposed to imputations of a different kind, indeed, but equally unworthy of disinterested conscientious men, as those whom they thus unceremoniously denounce. A number, then, of the most adverse votes in the General Assembly, within the last four years, were really and truly brought about by our brethren of the ultra old-school party themselves. They took ground on which some of the best men in the whole church—who knew its history, understood its interest, and felt for its honour quite as much as they—could not go with them, or sustain them. They loaded their cause with principles and claims which did not belong to it. They waged battle on wrong grounds; and then imputed their defeat to those who had seen their mistake, and warned them of the result.

In the next place, we must declare our utter incredulity as to all prospects of relief to our divided, struggling church, from the measures prospectively proposed by our respected brethren of the "Act and Testimony." We are not sure that we understand all the principles of conduct proposed by those brethren, and solemnly pledged to the public, for their guidance in time to come; especially as some disavowals have been made respecting purposes which we thought had been intimated. But, as we read their language, we understand it as importing, that they are determined to continue, without abatement or deviation, the policy which they have hitherto pursued; that they will not

acknowledge as parts of the Presbyterian church, any of those judicatories which have been formed upon the principles of *elective affinity*; of course, that they will never receive an individual member, or recognize an official act of one of those judicatories, however sound and unexceptionable the individual or the act in question may be; and that they will never cease to present and urge their claims, until they either succeed in obtaining their end, or are cast out of the church. These we understand to be the resolutions which they have formed and publicly announced. Now, concerning these resolutions, we are firmly of the opinion, that the course which they mark out is a course which never can lead to the benefit of the church; but must lead to a result either destructive to the influence of the brethren who pursue it, or destructive to the church which they wish to save.

We do not claim to be prophets, and may entirely err in our estimate of this matter. But we are persuaded, that what *might* be gained by wise and prudent measures, never *will* or *can* be gained by such a course as is here supposed. And we cannot help fearing that the venerable men who express their fixed and unalterable determination, as we understand them, to pursue this course, will find that every successive step they take in it will diminish their own influence in the church; impair their power of doing it good; confirm and extend prejudice against Presbyterianism; and render deeper, wider, and more embittered the strife which now agitates and divides our portion of the American Church. Indeed, if they enter on the course supposed, with a deliberate determination to pursue it until their end shall be obtained, they will, by this very announcement, preclude the possibility of attaining that end. There is every reason to fear that a series of references, appeals, and complaints, and a succession of "Acts and Testimonies," will follow each other in a painful round, for ten, perhaps for twenty, years to come, which will, after all, leave their authors disappointed, disheartened, and broken; the church a miserable wreck; her piety and benevolent effort scattered to the winds amidst the din of war; and all who wish well to her, mortified, and ashamed of the Presbyterian name. Are these consequences to be contemplated without dismay? We think not. And we are very sure that if those beloved brethren, against whose course we are now pleading, had only one-tenth part of the apprehension of them that we

have, they would, at the present stage of their progress, come to a solemn pause.

If any are disposed to ask, what course will, in our opinion, best conduce to the attainment of that purity and peace which it is the earnest desire of every consistent Presbyterian to see established in our bleeding church, our answer shall be frank, unreserved, and short.

1. Let us begin by assembling in our ecclesiastical judicatories, not with a spirit of suspicion, jealousy, and war, but with a sincere desire to think as well of our brethren as we possibly can, consistently with fidelity to our Master's truth and honour; and with a sincere desire to do the great benevolent work for which the church was founded, as quietly and effectually as we possibly can. Our counsel is, not that we should overlook, or close our eyes against, corruption in doctrine or in practice in the church; but that we should guard against a predisposition to find it where it is not; to magnify it where it exists; or to place individuals in the list of heretics without sufficient evidence.

2. Let every effort that we make, either to reform the church, or to maintain its purity, and promote its edification, be made in a regular, constitutional manner: not by *voluntary, irresponsible* assemblies; but through the medium of her *regular, constitutional judicatories*; whose existence is permanent; whose members are fairly and proportionably authorized on the representative principle; whose acts are recorded; whose doings, at every step, are responsible to the whole church; and whose constitution and order are, as we think, founded on the word of God. Let us not so far dishonour Presbyterianism, as to resort to irregular and unauthorized assemblies to sustain it. We are friendly to private fraternal counsel, in reference to important business about to be brought before judicatories of the church; but cannot approve of ORGANIZED CONVENTIONS, sitting by authority, that is, made up of commissioned delegates deliberating by the side of General Assemblies, for the avowed purpose of intimidating or controlling them.

3. Let us not expect the General Assembly to transgress all constitutional principles, and to *commence process* against men suspected of holding erroneous opinions, over the heads of their presbyteries, when those presbyteries themselves, (consisting, perhaps, of a decided majority of old-school men,) have not thought proper to act in the case; or, if they have acted, have not condemned the implicated

individuals. It really seems to be forgotten by some that our constitution declares, that "all process against a gospel minister shall be entered in the presbytery of which he is a member." Most of the cases of imputed heresy, specified and complained of in public documents, have never, that we know, been recognized by presbyteries, or, in any way, brought up from them to the General Assembly. When the Assembly shall have had such cases, of a plain and palpable character, regularly brought before them, and shall fail to do their duty, it will be time enough to denounce them as recreant to the principles of our public standards.

4. If we desire to bring the character of our General Assembly to a just and candid test, let the first case of plain and palpable heresy that occurs, be brought fairly before that body, in as simple and unentangled a form as practicable; and we will answer for it, that an overwhelming majority will be found on the side of truth. If it should prove otherwise, we will be among the first to denounce and complain. When war shall be waged on *such ground*, we will pledge ourselves to be found fighting side by side with our "Act and Testimony" brethren; and if not equal to them in skill or valour, yet quite equal to the foremost of them in zeal and decision.

5. Let alleged departures from the letter or spirit of our constitution by our higher judicatories, be opposed by the lower, not by attempted "nullification," or by violence, (in which the most ignorant and lawless are as capable of being active and forward as any,) but by regular, constitutional means. Advantages gained in the former way, are generally gained at the expense of Christian character and comfort, and seldom wear well. All wise men advise a resort to such means, unless in extreme and desperate cases, which make a rule for themselves. Whereas advantages gained, at every step, by regular, judicial measures, are always safe, generally comfortable, and may confidently be expected to receive the benediction of Him who is a God of order, and not of confusion, in all the churches.

6. Let all our judicatories, from the lowest to the highest, resolve, that, henceforth, they will be careful to carry into faithful execution our public formularies, according to their spirit as well as letter, in all their ecclesiastical proceedings; and thus endeavour to convince those, in every part of the church, whose suspicions are deeply excited on this subject, that there is a more general fidelity in respect to it than is



commonly imagined. If the apprehensions on this subject, which are undoubtedly to some extent just, have been, in any minds, excited to a morbid degree, the best way, beyond all question, to remove them, is, not to denounce or reproach those who honestly entertain them; but to demonstrate by the renewed and vigilant fidelity of all our judicatories, that these apprehensions may be safely dismissed. Surely if a private member of a church, whose walk has hitherto grieved his fellow members, is bound, upon every gospel principle, in time to come, to set a double guard on his conduct; so we think our ecclesiastical judicatories are called, at the present day, to exercise a greatly increased care in conforming themselves to all the requirements of our ecclesiastical constitution. Let us mutually respect the feelings of our brethren in every part of the church, and strive to be, in spirit as well as in name, one.

7. Let us, with one consent, endeavour to make all the meetings of our respective judicatories, from the highest to the lowest, chosen opportunities for nourishing and extending practical piety, benevolent effort, and enlarged desires of evangelical usefulness. No spirit is better adapted to kill heresy than this; especially when it is manifested in the greatest degree, and in the most active manner, by the friends of old-school orthodoxy.

8. As our covenanted correspondence, and ecclesiastical intercourse with our congregational brethren of New England, is a correspondence of great delicacy, as well as importance, let it be kindly, but carefully, guarded on both sides. Let us take every opportunity of convincing those highly respected brethren, that, while we prize their friendship, and pray that it may long continue to our mutual edification; and while we feel that we are engaged in a common cause with those faithful men who are now employed in raising a standard against error, most cordially wish them success in their hallowed enterprise; let us, at the same time, not scruple to remind them, that we are deeply sensitive to every occurrence, on either side, which may seem to interfere with the ecclesiastical peculiarities of each other. Let us take every suitable opportunity of assuring them that it is, manifestly, of the utmost importance to the comfort of our intercourse, that the most delicate regard be constantly had to this matter. While we would by no means interfere, in the least degree with a form of government which those brethren believe to be best

adapted to their edification; and would beg that if we should ever be chargeable with the remotest suspicion of such interference, it may be promptly pointed out to us; we have no doubt that they will see the justice and the importance of a similar caution, on their part, with regard to the Presbyterian Church.

9. Let us, one and all, strive to hold up Presbyterianism to view, not as a system of everlasting conflict and bickering; not as an ecclesiastical constitution chiefly adapted to promote and regulate the forms of ecclesiastical warfare; but as a system of fraternal union and co-operation, and better adapted than any other to bind all its constituent members together as "one body in Christ, and every one members of one another."

10. Finally: let all who accord with the general scope of the principles here laid down—by whatever party name they may have been heretofore called—all who really love the Presbyterian Church, as such, and cordially desire to preserve her doctrines and order in purity; all who feel determined to oppose whatever appears hostile to genuine Presbyterianism; let them come forth, in this day of conflict and peril, and show themselves. Let them henceforth resolve, that they will no longer be divided; that they will know and support each other; that they will "fight with neither small nor great," but with the real enemies of our Zion; and that they will hereafter labour to have but one matter of strife—namely, who shall love the Master most, and who shall serve him with the greatest zeal. Let this principle be adopted, "not in word only, but in deed and in truth," and all will be well.

Such is our whole heart on this subject; a subject to us, and to the mass of our readers, unspeakably momentous. Never were we more firmly determined to contend earnestly for the honest maintenance of the Confession of Faith, Catechisms, and Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church, than at the present moment; never had we a deeper sense of the importance, the vital importance, of purging out error, fanaticism, and "new measures" from our beloved Church, *by all constitutional means*. This, as conductors of a public journal, is our flag. We have lifted it up that it may be seen by all who think it worth while to look. We have done more; we have NAILED IT TO OUR MAST, and have resolved, in humble dependence on the grace of God, calmly to wait the issue.

*J. W. Alexander*

ART. IV.—Review of *Bush's Commentary on the Book of Psalms.*

*A Commentary on the Book of Psalms; on a plan embracing the Hebrew text, with a new literal version.* By GEO. BUSH, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Literature in the New York City University. New York. Leavitt, Lord & Co. 1834. (No. I. Ps. I.—III. pp. 80, 8vo.)

THIS is a welcome and encouraging phenomenon. Our critical commentaries are, after all, to become *bona fide* articles of domestic manufacture. And we are glad to see that this important art is not to be monopolized. We are glad to see that a generous emulation has already been excited by the successful efforts of a few pioneers. This will have the good effect, not only of pressing into the service of the Bible a large number of gifted minds, but of preventing that uniformity in method and manner in style, which are almost unavoidable when many kindred works proceed from the same school or class of writers. The diffusion of a taste and zeal for sacred learning over a greater superficies, will also tend to interrupt the process of mere mechanical book-making. The usage of the present age allows too large a license, both in Europe and America, to the mere compilatory mode of composition. The fame acquired by such men as the Rosenmüllers shows to what extent this is the case in Germany, the very country where original research is carried to the greatest length. Even there, as well as in America and England, there is a strong propensity, among inferior writers, to this economical sort of manufacture. A few trifling changes in expression and arrangement are, by many, held to justify the substitution of a new name on the title-page. To this corps of *chevaliers d'industrie* Mr. Bush does not belong. Whatever the defects of his productions may be, there is always satisfactory evidence, that he made them himself. Originality at all points is impossible; but even where the ingredients of his books are old, there are unambiguous symptoms of the process of digestion, on the author's part. There are no crude, heterogeneous fragments, surreptitiously abstracted from their native mass, and thrown into the teeth of an inappropriate context. Mr. Bush may borrow yarn; but the web which he presents us, we can see at once, was woven, warp and woof, in his own peculiar loom.

We have now before us a pamphlet of eighty octavo

pages, neatly, and even elegantly printed, though without that scrupulous correctness of typography, which, in Europe, would be regarded as essential to the respectability of such a publication. But we know so much of the appalling difficulties which attend such printing, even in the most advantageous situation, and still more where the business is a mere experiment, that we are rather disposed to plead for Mr. Bush, before the public, than to pronounce his condemnation. A numerical computation of the *errata* we leave to critics who are capable of deriving pleasure from that species of arithmetic. We earnestly wish, however, that this most important item may be carefully provided for, in all the coming numbers.

The present pamphlet is the beginning and the specimen of an extensive work, the plan of which is stated on the cover. At first sight, we were very much disposed to apprehend, that the author had been guilty of a huge miscalculation, in engaging to complete the work within the compass of a dozen numbers. When we saw that the first included three psalms only, of which there was but one that could be looked upon as rising above the average standard of obscurity and difficulty, we inferred at once that the compression of the rest into ten or twelve numbers, was a hopeless matter, without the supposition of a change of plan. These first impressions have been greatly modified, though not removed, by more minute inspection. The reasons cannot be intelligibly stated, till the author's plan is understood. Mr. Bush proposes to insert the Hebrew text of every psalm, with the common English version, and another of his own. This is to be followed by the commentary, which, we find, consists, and is intended to consist, of a full exhibition of the "parallel usage" of Hebrew words (phrases.) This must, of course, be most extensive at the outset, when the terms make their first appearance. As the work advances, the verbal exposition will be superseded, in a multitude of cases, by a simple reference to previous explanations. This circumstance undoubtedly reduces Mr. Bush's pledge within the bounds of possibility; but we are still afraid that some deliberate modification of the plan, as it appears in this specimen, will be unavoidable. Nor do we think that such a change would be a sacrifice of any real advantage to the force of circumstances. We believe, on the contrary, that the necessity of abridgment would enhance the value of the commentary much. The



power of rejection and excision is among the last attainments of an author. Pascal did not speak at random when he said, that his letters were long because he had not time to make them shorter. Our judgment is actually blinded by parental fondness for the product of our intellectual labour. The only remedy for this mistaken kindness is the pressure of necessity, the sense of limitation, and constraint *ab extra*. What practised writer can have failed to learn how potent this compulsory conciseness is, in giving nerve and vigour to a flaccid style? Without the knife and cauterium, composition languishes; and without a strong necessity, they will not be applied. Mr. Bush needs these remedies, in general, less than most of his contemporaries. We have ourselves borne witness to his muscular and pregnant style. But we confess that, in the present case, he seems to have been writing too much at his ease; too much as though he had a big book in prospect, and could therefore well afford to lavish words. We say this with confidence, because we know the feeling to be natural and almost unavoidable, without a preventing cause. At the same time, we say it with all kindness and respect, not in the spirit of invidious cavil, but in that of candid friendship. We have adverted, in the first place, to this topic, because it strikes the eye as an obvious objection to the purchase of the work, and is more likely, therefore, to destroy its sale than any other fault whatever.

We now proceed to notice more particularly the contents of this first number. We have first an introduction of twenty pages, on the collection, arrangement, titles, authors, musical accompaniments, and poetical characteristics of the psalms; the principle on which they ought to be interpreted, together with a list of the most important critical commentators. On the general character of this introduction we can only say, that it is likely to be useful to the students of the psalms, though it appears to us to be somewhat slight and meager, when considered as the Prolegomena to a work so extensive and minute. This probably arises from the fact, that Mr. Bush intended to exhibit here simply those items of important information which could not find place in the body of the work. To this method we have no objection, and indeed regard it as an improvement on established usage. *Minutiae* are often better understood in detail, than when collected into masses. We

shall briefly notice a few detached particulars in our author's introduction.

At the end of the second section we observe a statement which may possibly mislead the reader; and as it relates to the way in which the verses of the Psalms are numbered and referred to, it is worth while to correct it. The statement is that "on numbering the verses in Hebrew, the title is numbered as the first verse." This would imply, that the number of verses in the Hebrew Bible is always one more than in the English, which is not the fact. Some Psalms, as for instance the eleventh and fourteenth, are numbered alike in both, because the title forms only *a part* of the first verse in Hebrew. This is a little matter, but facility of reference is far from being a trifle.

We are not entirely satisfied with Mr. Bush's tone in relation to the antiquity and authority of the titles to the Psalms. He does not indeed reject them, like the modern German critics; but he expresses a sort of uneasiness about them, which we think unreasonable. External evidence places them precisely on the same foundation with the Psalms themselves. Let them remain there, till external evidence requires their removal. Their clearness or obscurity is nothing to the purpose. As soon as we begin to settle critical questions by the measure of our own exegetical capacities, the foundations will be out of course. Such a course involves the germ of neological scepticism. The true principle is a very simple one. Let the question of genuineness be determined by historical evidence, or inspired authority. When so determined, let it not be shaken by any accumulation of exegetical difficulties. Dispute about the meaning as you will, but let the text alone, till authority or testimony interpose to change it. With this view of the matter, we consider Mr. Bush as making large concessions when he says, "How far these titles are to be regarded as genuine, is a matter of doubt." The minds of the students of the Bible ought not to be troubled with gratuitous misgivings, where nothing decisive can be said on either side, for lack of evidence; and where the presumptive proof is all on one side, there is surely no necessity for breeding doubts in favour of the other. The present case is one of small importance; but the principle involved is of extensive application.

Another subject, in regard to which Mr. Bush is not entirely satisfactory, is the principle on which the interpreta-

tion of the Psalms should be conducted. The defect in this case, is a want of clearness and precision in the statement of his views. The whole section on this subject is obscure, and might induce a careless reader to suppose that it was penned by one whose mind was not decided. This, we know, is not the case, but we are really in doubt with respect to the precise ground which our author takes, on the contested subject of a double sense. He professes to accord "in the main," with Bishop Horsley, and quotes a passage from that writer, full of strong expressions, in favour of a double sense in many of the Psalms. "David's complaints against his enemies are Messiah's complaints." "David's afflictions are the Messiah's sufferings," &c. "In a word, there is not a page of this Book of Psalms, in which the pious reader will not find his Saviour, if he reads with a view of finding him." This phraseology implies, nay asserts, that the very same passage, may, and often does, refer to a two-fold subject. Yet Mr. Bush immediately proceeds, after "admitting the general principle of a prophetic and spiritual interpretation of many of the Psalms," to lay down two rules for determining when this prophetic and spiritual meaning may be put upon the language. The first of these rules is, that "the sense resulting from a cautious and critical explication of the terms of the passage, and an impartial construction of the whole sentence, according to the known usage of the language and the writer, must be such as naturally and justly to refer to the Messiah, and such as *cannot without violence be applied to any other subject.*"\* This doctrine may be sound, and Mr. Bush may hold it, but nothing surely can be more directly in the teeth of Bishop Horsley. This involves the whole section in a mist, which is far from being dispelled by the concluding statement, that "although by no means disposed to adopt the *polydynamic* hypothesis of Cocceius, and other spiritualizing interpreters, yet on the other hand, we are equally averse to that jejune and frigid theory of exposition which sees nothing beyond the mere letter of the Psalmist. As our views on this subject will abundantly disclose themselves to the reader in the course of the ensuing commentary in the actual mode of interpretation adopted, it will be unnecessary to dwell longer upon them at present." He also says, that an adequate example of the way in which his canons are to be applied

\* Page 17.

is furnished in the preface and notes to the second Psalm. But the second Psalm is not a fair criterion. After once admitting that the Messiah is at all referred to there, it is easy to admit that he is the only subject. There is no perplexing complication of the past and future, the divine and human character; no express mention of David and allusions to his history in connexion with expressions and representations which are wholly inappropriate to an earthly King. These are the cases which must try the strength of the conflicting theories. When our author reaches the sixteenth Psalm, we shall expect to see his principle of interpretation thoroughly evolved. Till then we stand in doubt. We think, however, that we can explain this want of clearness and consistency. It arises from a practical blunder, into which we think, that Mr. Bush has been betrayed. He should have written his book first, and his introduction afterwards. It might then have comprised the *residuum* of his valuable thoughts, all for which he had not previously found a proper place. In that case, too, he would have known distinctly what his own opinions were, and not have been obliged to anticipate by a sort of guess, his own unformed conclusions. If the work should be completed, we would seriously advise the author to re-write the introduction. His mind would then be teeming with appropriate materials, and his imagination glowing with the aggregate impression of this divine anthology.

The introduction closes with a catalogue of commentators on the Book of Psalms. It might of course, have been enlarged with ease; but not perhaps to the advantage of the reader. In our author's brief remarks upon the writers named, we meet here and there with sentences exhibiting that characteristic felicity of expression which distinguishes most of his continuous productions. Of Venema's commentary it is well observed, that "its great defect is the immense expansion into which the author beats out the ideas of the Psalmist, like a little mass of bullion converted into acres of gold or silver leaf." "Hammond," says Mr. B., "is often peculiarly happy in seizing and displaying the precise import of a word or sentence, though he sometimes overladens\* his interpretations by heaping upon them a mass of authorities, and sometimes alternates them by a kind of critical wire-drawing, to the barest filaments of meaning."

\* There is no such word.



This is excellent criticism; but there are two allusions in this catalogue of writers, with respect to which we are constrained to ask our author what he means. Speaking of Henry Ainsworth, he observes that, "Considering *the age* and the circumstances in which he wrote, his philological attainments were truly astonishing." And of Henry Hammond he says in like manner, that "his knowledge of the original may be considered, for *the day in which he lived*, profound." Had Mr. Bush underrated these two writers, we should have held our peace; but as he has chosen to exalt them at the expense of their contemporaries, we boldly join issue and defy him to make good his innuendo. We are glad of an opportunity to say a few plain words upon this topic, not in relation to Mr. Bush, whose remarks already quoted may be merely inadvertent, but in reference to a sort of slang which has long been current among half-taught Hebraists and nursling critics. The impulse which the study of the Hebrew Scriptures has received within a few years in America, had its origin in Germany. It was German books that introduced the new régime, and especially the writings of Gesenius, as presented to the public by Professor Stuart. A natural consequence of this fact was, that in the minds of Hebrew students, the study of that language was associated closely with the name of that distinguished German scholar. Gesenius himself was in the zenith of his reputation, and the extravagant expressions of his worshippers at home were taken for more than they were worth by his admirers in America. The idea was thus engendered in the minds of many that Gesenius had, as it were, created the whole science of Hebrew philology. He had indeed added a few links to the long chain of improvement, upon which a train of sturdy Cyclops had been hammering since the days of David Kimchi. In the eyes of sciolists, these antecedent links were confounded with the new ones which Gesenius had been forging, and the whole massive series was miraculously looked upon as his exclusive property, to the shameful disparagement of all who went before him. Hence it became common to refer all questions of lexicography and grammar to the paramount authority of this one man. This foolish admiration soon extended itself to other kindred works, and as the circle of acquaintance with German books enlarged, one after another was exalted to a like bad eminence. This ignorant idolatry must of necessity excite contempt in the real scholars of the

old world; first, because they know how much they are themselves indebted to their predecessors; and secondly, because the worship of particular writers is, among the Germans, periodical. Before one had reached the acme of its paroxysm, the exciting cause had begun to disappear. The fame of Gesenius had begun to wane, and he is at this moment looked upon by many of his ablest countrymen as wholly *antiquist*. Is his real merit therefore lessened? Not at all. His supplemental links are still appended to the chain of improvement, while the skill of younger labourers is appending more. It would be as foolish to deny his merit as it was to overrate them. But for another reason, this excessive admiration of living German writers must be thought ridiculous in Germany itself. Inferior scholars, even there, adopt the same cant phrases that are current among us. But the leading orientalisists of Germany are very far from sharing in the folly. They know too well that they are standing on the shoulders of a race of giants, and they laugh at the pigmies, who affect to treat these giants with disdain. The extravagant praises of Gesenius, as the inventor of Hebrew grammar, cannot be more absurd in any age than those of the grammarian himself; for he knows best how much he is a debtor to those who went before him. What would Rosenmüller think, if he were told that his unconscionable extracts from Vitringa, and even from the margin of Michaelis's Bible, are regarded in America as the fresh coinage of his own exhaustless mint? And we need not ask how Tholuck must enjoy himself, on being gravely thanked for classical quotations, which he himself had copied, word for word, from older writers. If the muddy stream of traditional quotation were sometimes followed up a little nearer to its source, a good deal might be gained on the score of correctness as well as reputation. Mistakes of the same sort, but on a larger scale, have sometimes been occasioned by the mania for translation from the German, a disease engendered by the same ignorance of the past, and the same false estimate of the present, which we have been exposing. The most striking instance is afforded by the laborious English version of Jahn's Hebrew Commonwealth, the best part of which, as the Germans say themselves, is extracted from a work, now obsolete of course, but known in former times by the name of the "Connection between the Old and New Testaments." The consequence is, that Mr. Stowe employed a large pro-

portion of his time in translating out of Jahn, what Jahn had himself translated from Prideaux! Of the triplicate thus presented to our choice, we must confess that we prefer Prideaux himself.

We beg Mr. Bush's pardon for connecting with his name a train of observations which are so very far from applying to himself. Aside from the two brief phrases which suggested this discussion, we have not the slightest reason to suppose that he partakes of the hallucination now described. On the contrary we have the strongest reasons for believing that he stands on higher and more enlightened ground. And we entertain the hope, that he will be a zealous agent in restoring public sentiment to sanity on this point, and (if we may for once usurp the prerogative of coining words) exploding *Germanolatry*. In Germany itself the older writers are beginning, under the happy auspices of Tholuck and his fellows, to resume their right position; and already we begin to see the symptoms of obedient imitation in America. A few years ago an extensive commentary might be published without the name of John Calvin being seen upon its pages. But now that the reformer is revived again in Germany, we too are to be told, forsooth, that he was a man of merit! The rage for translation is, we think, subsiding, and along with it the notion that the present race of Germans made the Hebrew Bible. Some who have studied in the German school begin to talk cavalierly of their former masters. We trust that the day is coming, when both extremes will be avoided; when no man will pretend to be a finished philologist without a familiar knowledge of the German writers; but when no man will imagine that the age of Gesenius and De Wette has a right to disparage that of Lightfoot and the Buxtorfs; and when American scholars will be more disposed to draw from the capacious cisterns of the olden times than to drink stolen waters from the shallow troughs of plagiaries and compilers.

We have already mentioned that the present number contains the first three Psalms. The text of each is preceded by a preface. We are glad to see that Mr. Bush has not fallen into Rosenmüller's method of writing about nothing. That laborious critic, not content with stating what may happen to be known in regard to the historical occasion of the Psalms, undertakes to do the same in cases where there is not even a trace of information, or a hook to hang conjecture on. If nothing else will answer, he de-

lights the reader by informing him in many words of what we do not know and what we cannot tell. The same charge lies in some degree against the livelier De Wette. He too indulges in sagacious guesses as to questions which do not admit of historical solution, and would scarce be worth solving if they did. Here is a characteristic difference between the Christian and the infidel interpreter. To the latter all things in his text are equally important, or rather equally trivial. The Hebrew text of every verse is given at large. This is a great convenience to the student, though the style of execution is to us unsightly. A smaller Hebrew type, in the body of the page, would please us better. The common translation of each verse is given from the English Bible, together with another by Mr. Bush himself, which he calls the *literal version*. Would it not have been sufficient to insert a literal version of particular phrases, in the notes where they occur? The execution of this version in the first three Psalms, is not exactly to our taste. Here and there a word is more significantly rendered; but the only variation from the English Bible, consists, for the most part, in adhering closely to the vulgar distinction of the Hebrew tense, as preterite and future. This is one of the points in which we think that the grammars of Gesenius and Stuart are behind the real improvements of the age. We cannot of course discuss that subject now. Suffice it to say, that in our opinion Mr. Bush is frequently less true to the original than the common version; for example, he corrects the common version of the first Psalm, by changing *the man that walketh not*, to *the man that hath not walked*. It would be hard to convince us that the first is not decidedly the better of the two. Nor would we very readily abandon our belief, that in the poetical books both the future and the preterite (so called) are, as a general rule, to be translated by the present indefinite, without some positive reason to the contrary in the context, or the meaning of the verb itself. On the critical notes we have two remarks to make. The first is, that they are confined almost exclusively to one sort of exposition, viz. the comparison of verbal parallels. The references to the ancient versions are few and unimportant; and the analogy of the cognate dialects is entirely untouched. Our second remark is, that the exposition, on the principle adopted, is very fully and satisfactorily executed. A novel feature of the plan, to us, is the insertion of the passages at large, in which the word to be explained



occurs. This method may appear to favour laziness; but even that is better than to crowd the book with references which by nineteen readers out of twenty would be utterly neglected. Mr. Bush's collection of illustrative texts, thus printed at full length, has afforded us much pleasure. The mere perusal is a pleasing exercise, and the effect upon the judgment, for the most part, very strong and satisfactory. This part of the work we would not wish to see curtailed, nor had we any reference to this when we charged it with prolixity. There is but one improvement that we can suggest. In many cases, where the texts illustrative of certain doubtful words are numerous, there are one or two which may be looked upon as *loci classici*, decisive of the question. These should in every case be given at large, and the rest either merely referred to, or set forth in full, as might be found convenient.

We shall now briefly notice some of Mr. Bush's annotations.

Under the second verse of the first Psalm he traces the various meanings of the word rendered "*he meditates.*" We think that in so doing he inverts the process. It is certainly more natural to derive the sense of *meditation*, through the intermediate notions of *soliloquy* and *muttering*, from the general idea of *uttering sound* or *making noise*, than to reverse the order of deduction. It is very unlikely that a term expressing originally a mental act, should, by any modification, be employed to denote, not only inarticulate groans and signs, but the tone of a harp, the cooing of doves, the growling of lions, and the voice of distant thunder. We despise the fantastical vagaries of mere verbal etymologists; but the logical distinction of primary and secondary meanings is essential to perfect lexicography.

In his notes upon the fourth verse, Mr. Bush develops the peculiar syntax of the relative in Hebrew. In a case so plain, mistake were scarcely possible. We merely wish to notice the effect produced by the transfer of occidental forms to oriental grammar. After stating that the relative is used absolutely, he translates the sentence thus—" (as to) which the wind driveth away." The words in the parenthesis are not merely superfluous; they confuse the whole affair. It does not follow, that because the Greeks and Romans used an absolute accusative, with a governing preposition understood, we must explain a Hebrew form by a supposititious particle. "Which the wind driveth it away,"

is an exact translation of the Hebrew words, and a perspicuous exhibition of the peculiar syntax. So likewise in the case from Jeremiah, "who the word of the Lord came to him," and in that from Deuteronomy, "which thou shalt not understand its tongue," are English phrases formed exactly on the Hebrew models, and convey a precise idea of the idiom in question.

In the notes upon the first verse of this Psalm, there is a very clear though brief exhibition of the forensic meaning of the words rendered *to condemn* and *to justify*. We were therefore disappointed when we found that in the fifth verse, Mr. Bush had left entirely out of view the forensic phraseology and figures which to us are most apparent, and without which this fine passage would be shorn of half its strength. "The allusion couched," says Mr. B. "under this term (judgment) is perhaps in many instances to the judgment of the last day, but in the present passage we take it as a general expression implying that *whenever God shall arise in his displeasure, and shall bring his controversy with the wicked to an issue*, as he often does in the calamitous visitations of his providence in this life, they shall not be able to stand, *they shall be discomfited and overwhelmed, convicted and condemned*; their erect attitude, their bold front, their lofty bearing, shall be exchanged for the lowly crouching of conscious guilt and suppliant shame. To such an effectual and utter subversion are the wicked often brought by the stern discipline of the providence of God in this world." (p. 39.)

This is resolving the figure, not explaining it; transmuting poetry to prose, by way of exposition. All that our author says may be found by implication in the verse; but it lies beneath the covert of a splendid metaphor. There is no necessity for supposing an allusion to the final judgment, though we think there is one. But even admitting that, as Mr. Bush supposes, the reference is merely to providential judgments, he has done the verse injustice. It is easy to show how. Let us first read the verse with Mr. Bush's exposition as already quoted, according to which its original, immediate meaning is, that when God sends his judgments on the wicked, they will crouch. To us the words are full of gorgeous imagery. They bring before us not an abstract proposition, but a scene. The thrones are set, and the books are opened. The word for *judgment* means a *tribunal* or a *trial*; *wicked* and *sinner*s are forensic terms for criminals and convicts; *the righteous* means the *innocent*, or

rather the *acquitted culprits*. The sense of the whole is that *the guilty shall not stand at the judgment among those who are acquitted*. Whether this judgment be the universal, final one, or merely an ordinary providential judgment, matters not. The figure is the same, and needs the same elucidation. It is easy to perceive that this mode of exposition was in the author's mind, till he expounded it away. In the passage above quoted, the words which we have distinguished by italics, contain the real commentary. The rest is mere diluting paraphrase, and at the same time one of the very worst samples of verbosity in the book. We have made these free remarks, because the Book of Psalms contains a multitude of similar allusions, which are robbed of all their emphasis unless the idea of judicial process is distinctly kept in view. For example, in the first verse of the 143d, we are persuaded that the superficial reader loses much by not appreciating fully the forensic terms. "Enter not into judgment"—do not bring me to the bar, do not put me on my trial; "for in thy sight"—before thy judgment seat, before thee as a judge; "shall no man living be justified"—the technical term for *acquitted, declared innocent*. Nothing is gained and much is lost by diluting the metaphors of Scripture into paraphrastic common-place. How common is it in preaching on a figurative text to begin by throwing away the dress in which the Holy Spirit chose to clothe his revelations, and which is best adapted to the structure of our minds! When will men be wise above that which is written? We should like to see a commentary on the Book of Psalms, which should have for a primary object the elucidation and striking exhibition of its figurative passages. The fact is, that this Book needs comparatively little exposition of the ordinary kind. A vast proportion of it is extremely simple, and exhibits nothing which would puzzle even inexperienced students, or drive them to the critics for assistance. On passages of this kind it is labour lost to write extensive comments. They will not be read. Exegetical works, if they would answer their design, must be constructed on the principle that commentaries are necessary evils. We mean that they who write them must be thoroughly aware, that they are far more likely to be consulted than read. They must be written with specific and continual reference to the wants of those for whom they are intended. In this case the extreme of brevity is by far the safest. No mistake can be more fatal to a work of this

kind, at the present day, than that of supposing that something must be said on every passage, as a thing of course. Nobody reads, or will read, commentary, for its own sake. With respect to the Psalms especially the wisest course would be, to let alone the simple passages which need no exposition, and thus obtain an ample space for the elucidation of that which is obscure. We cannot but think that with regard to this point, Mr. Bush has erred. He has begun too much *secundum artem*, and as if he were determined to say something upon every word. The very next number, we are well persuaded, will exhibit an improvement as to this particular. Instead of exhorting him to change his plan in this respect, we would urge him to enlarge it. As we said before, there is not half so much necessity for mere verbal critics on the letter of the Psalms, as for men who to philology unite at least a measure of imagination, taste, and sensibility to grandeur. By a man so qualified, the study of this book might be rendered a delight to every cultivated mind. While the light of learned criticism might be richly shed on every dark and doubtful context in the Psalter, the mists of ignorant misapprehension might be swept for ever from the face of its surpassing beauties. Images which are now seen only like cloudy pillars in the distance, might thus become pillars of fire before the student of the Bible. The prophetic passages, especially, admit of being drawn from their obscurity, and placed in brilliant light and strong relief before our vision. We refer not to the illustration of predictions from their supposed fulfilment, but to lucid exhibition of the prophecies themselves. If darkness shroud the type, how shall the antitype be recognized? To the work which we have mentioned who is equal? Not the mere philologist, the plodding verbal critic, the laborious lexicographer, the diligent translator. Philological knowledge is of course essential; but without imagination and the love of sacred song, it could accomplish nothing. Mr. Bush has enough of all these gifts to make at least a fair experiment. His turn of mind, his peculiar tastes, and his literary habits, mark him out more distinctly than any other writer now before the public, as the proper person to attempt what may be called, in the German phrase, the *aesthetical* interpretation of the Hebrew poets. This term presupposes as large a degree of philological criticism as may be required for the complete development of the author's meaning. And beyond this, what is wanted?



We had marked several passages in Mr. Bush's commentary on the second Psalm, intending to advert to them. But the present notice is already disproportionate to Mr. Bush's pamphlet, and we could not animadvert upon his exposition of the second Psalm, without stirring a question of theology on which we are at variance, but into which we do not wish to enter now. We stop short, therefore, at the end of Psalm the first.

In conclusion, we sincerely recommend the work proposed and here begun, to the attention of our readers. We know Mr. Bush to be a scholar, and a student, and a devotee of learning. We know him to possess a cultivated taste and varied knowledge. We know that he is not a mere compiler, or translator from the German. We fully believe that the succeeding numbers will exhibit much improvement, and we confidently look for as complete a commentary, on the plan proposed, as any other scholar in America could furnish.

Since the above was written, we have examined a German work upon the Psalms, of later date than any named in Mr. Bush's catalogue. The author is Ludwig Klauss, a village pastor in the Dutchy of Anhalt. The book, which was published at Berlin in 1832, with a short recommendatory preface by the well known preacher Krummacher of Bremen, is a neat octavo of above five hundred pages. We recommend it to the notice of Mr. Bush, and of all such as make use of German helps in the study of the Psalms. De Wette's work upon the same part of Scripture has been greatly eulogised. His introduction has been given to the public in an English dress, and is pronounced by Mr. Bush to be "particularly excellent." Now De Wette, it is well known, is an infidel, and interprets the Psalms like an accomplished Deist. Klauss writes his book avowedly as a corrective and a supplement to those of Rosenmüller and De Wette. With the latter, it is particularly useful to compare him, as they go perhaps to opposite extremes. The one, to borrow Krummacher's comparison, interprets Scripture after the manner of him who cut the book with a penknife and cast it into the fire. The other labours to collect the fragments and re-unite them in a consistent whole. Klauss, in short, takes the ground of high, evangelical supernaturalism, in opposition to that of low, sceptical rationalism. His hostility to falsehood sometimes leads him to extremes, and he has certainly been guilty of a waste of

ingenuity in labouring to fortify untenable positions. But the very fact that his extreme opinions are in a direction opposite to those of De Wette, Gesenius, and the like, enhances the value of his book as a corrective and an antidote. His notes, so far as we have carried our inspection, are confined to matters of dispute and doubt. There is no pretension to the name or nature of a perpetual commentary. A large part of the volume is engrossed by an elaborate and ingenious introduction. As a specimen of the author's way of thinking we may mention, that he holds the old rabbinical opinion which refers all the Psalms to David as the *rédacteur* or author. This position he maintains with no small learning and acuteness, though of course without success. He conjectures that the first seventy-two Psalms formed an earlier collection made by David for his own private use, to which the rest were added by the same hand, for the purpose of forming a Book of Psalms and Prayers for public use. He vindicates the genuineness of the superscriptions to the Psalms, but denies that the preposition *Lamedh* ever denotes the author. He advances many singular opinions in relation to the titles of certain Psalms. These we cannot here detail, but must content ourselves with saying, that the phrase translated by most critics *To the Chief Musician*, he regards as an infinitive, and explains it as denoting that kind of musical composition, in which the same strophe recurs at stated intervals, as the *refrain* or burden of the song. His principles of interpretation are distinctly and perspicuously stated. While he admits that the grammatico-historical mode of exposition is the only rational and right one, he denies that it is incompatible with a prophetic and spiritual, or even allegorical and mystical interpretation. The characteristic feature of his system seems to be, that the larger, higher, and remoter meaning is, in all doubtful cases, to receive the preference. The *Messiaic* Psalms he distributes into two unequal classes, those which relate directly and exclusively to Christ, and those which have a double sense. The first embraces only Psalms 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 72, 110, and perhaps 109 and 118. The exegetical authority of the New Testament, the inspiration of the Old, and the claims of both to our faith and obedience, are very satisfactorily stated and asserted.

We have made these remarks, because the fashionable rage for German criticism seldom reaches further than De Wette, Gesenius, *et id genus omne*. Disingenuous infidelity

may be forgiven, but bigoted attachment to truth is an unpardonable crime. This critical injustice is a crying sin in Germany, and is creeping upon us. Let us shake the viper off. Let us learn to judge an author by the merit of his writings, and not by the obloquy or silence of his enemies. The infidels of Germany have been bedaubed with eulogy *usque ad nauseam*. When will the struggling pietists be noticed? Even admitting that they are inferior, (Tholuck and Heugstenberg may serve as an example,) does not the goodness of their cause entitle them at least to our compassion? For ourselves, we are determined not to echo the decisions of a party, and an anti-christian party too, in Germany, on these important subjects, but on suitable occasions to appeal from the inexorable judgment of neology to that of revelation and our readers' common sense.

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ART. V.—*New Ecclesiastical Law.*

*Samuel Miller*

IT has been lately announced that the Synod of Philadelphia, at its annual meeting in Gettysburg, in October last, adopted, and proceeded at once to enforce, a doctrine in reference to ecclesiastical proceedings, which appears to some altogether novel, and truly extraordinary. The doctrine is this,—“That no *complaint, appeal, or protest*, can be admitted by any judicatory, except in *judicial cases*.” In adopting this doctrine, the Synod seems to have intended a distinction between what they denominated *legislative* acts, and *judicial* decisions; meaning by the latter, cases of regular judicial process, in which there are parties, charges, and a judicial sentence; and by the former, all acts of ecclesiastical bodies in which they prescribe laws, express opinions, or perform any other legislative or executive functions. And, therefore, when the Synod, by a large majority, had passed a vote, adopting the “Act and Testimony,” a respectable minority was refused the privilege of entering their protest against the decision. The reason assigned for this refusal was, “that the Synod never rendered any *judgment*, in its proper sense, in relation to the “Act and Testimony;” that no judicial matter had been before it in relation

to that document; and that, therefore, no protest could be admitted in the case."

We had heard of this doctrine being broached and advanced with much confidence by an individual, a number of months before the meeting of the Synod. It never occurred to us, however, as possible, that it should receive countenance from gentlemen of experience and reflection. Few things have therefore surprised us more than to hear of its adoption by the venerable Synod of Philadelphia. How this fact is to be accounted for, we will not attempt to conjecture. It is of more practical importance to show that the doctrine here assumed, cannot in our opinion, stand the test of a moment's examination.

The question, whether the doctrine adopted and acted upon by the Synod, is correct or otherwise, can be ascertained only by appealing to two sources of proof, viz. *First*, how does *precedent* speak? What has been the *usage* of the Presbyterian church in reference to this matter? And, *secondly*, what are the dictates of reason and common sense on the subject?

I. In deciding *what is law* in an ecclesiastical body, if we can find out what has been its long and uniform *practice*, the question is answered. In Church, as well as in State, there is a *common* as well as a *statute* law. In the present case, it is believed no doubt can exist how the matter stands. Reference will first be had to the practice in *our own church*; and then to that of the church of *Scotland*, which, more than any other, perhaps, we own as our ecclesiastical mother.

In the Presbyterian Church in the United States, it is manifest that appeals, complaints and protests, have ever been allowed in all sorts of cases. Whenever a judicatory has decided any question which came before it by a vote, —whether the question were legislative, declarative, executive or strictly judicial—in any and every such case, both theory and practice allow of appeal, complaint and protest, at the pleasure of the party wishing to offer either. Accordingly, it is declared, in chapter VII. section 2d. of the Book of Discipline, as follows—"EVERY KIND OF DECISION WHICH IS FORMED IN ANY CHURCH JUDICATORY, except the highest, is subject to the review of a superior judicatory, and may be carried before it in one or the other of the *four following ways*. 1. *General Review and Control*. 2. *Reference*. 3. *Appeal*, and 4. *Complaint*." Words cannot be more express. "*Every kind of decision*"—(the most comprehensive lan-



guage possible) that can be formed by an ecclesiastical judicatory, may be regularly opposed by appeal, complaint, &c. And, lest it should be contended that the term *judicatory* is never applied to our ecclesiastical assemblies, excepting when they sit in a strictly judicial capacity—nothing is more certain from our whole form of government than that this plea, if made, would be altogether untenable. Whoever will look over the chapters, both on government and discipline—will find this term applied to all our ecclesiastical assemblies, however convened, or on whatever subject they may be employed in deliberating. We are told of the members of the judicatory; the time of meeting and mode of convening the judicatory; the moderator of the judicatory, &c. &c.; forms of expression which plainly imply that the title in question is applicable to the body in all the diversity of its circumstances, and deliberations.

Perhaps it will be said that the declaration just quoted from the VIIth chapter and second section of the Book of Discipline, was not adopted until the year 1821, and, of course, may be a novelty in our church. It is true, that chapter made no part of our public formularies until the year just mentioned. But then it is equally true, that more than thirty years before that time, when the General Assembly was first organized, the following article appears in the system of Rules adopted for the government of that body:—“Any member who may think himself aggrieved by a decision of the General Assembly, shall have his dissent or *protest*, with his reasons, entered on the records of the Assembly, or filed among their papers, if given in before the rising of the Assembly.” Here the same general language is used as before—“a decision of the Assembly”—any decision—no matter what its subject, or its form,—it may be made the object of a *dissent* or *protest*.

Such, then, is, and has long been, the *law* of the church in reference to this matter. Let us now see what has been her *practice*.

We have been in the constant habit of attending on the judicatories of the church, in all their grades, for more than forty years; and we never knew or heard of an individual who doubted the right of appeal, complaint, and protest, in all sorts of cases. Wherever there was a *vote* taken—a decision adopted, let the subject be what it might—not only was there liberty for all to vote in the negative

who chose to do so; but if they thought the decision a matter of sufficient importance, they were also at liberty to protest, and complain to a higher judicatory. Formerly, indeed, the distinct section on *complaints*, had no place in our book. The *thing*, however, was known and practised; though the *doctrine* of complaints had not been so distinctly defined and laid down, as that of appeals. And, accordingly, many a time, and on a great variety of occasions, we have participated in protests, &c. in all sorts of cases, without dreaming that any one ever thought of confining the privilege to cases of *process* only.

But the experience and the recollection of an individual, may, perhaps, be distrusted. And although no minister of the Presbyterian Church has been met with, whose opinion and recollection were not precisely the same with that which has been expressed; yet many will not be satisfied even with this. The archives of the church are better than cursory assertions. *Litera scripta manet*. Let us, therefore, appeal to public records, which cannot lead us astray.

In the year 1826, the General Assembly, after much discussion respecting the location of the Western Theological Seminary, determined, by a vote, to postpone fixing the location for another year. Against this decision the Reverend *Joshua L. Wilson*, of Cincinnati, entered his solemn PROTEST, accompanied with five reasons, which still remain on permanent record.

In the very same General Assembly, (of 1826,) Mr. *Josiah Bissell*, of Rochester, presented a commission to the Assembly, as a ruling elder, and was, after much discussion, received; though it was proved and admitted that he had never sustained that office. Against this decision to receive Mr. B. *forty-two* members of the Assembly entered their solemn PROTEST, supported by three reasons. Surely there was no judicial process here, in the sense understood by the advocates of this new doctrine. Among the subscribers to this protest, appear the names of several gentlemen, who seem to have voted in favour of the *new doctrine* in the Synod of Philadelphia, viz. the Reverend *William L. McCalla*, *Samuel Martin*, *Henry R. Wilson*, *George Potts*, &c. &c. No one seems to have doubted that this protest was admissible; and the majority who received Mr. B. appointed a committee to answer the opposing protest, and their report appears on record.

In the General Assembly of 1828, that body resolved, by a vote, to re-organize the Board of Missions. In opposition to this act a solemn *protest* was presented and read, by a minority of the Assembly. Nor does the right of protesting on such an occasion seem to have been, for a moment, questioned.

Again, in the General Assembly of 1831, a *committee-man*, from one of the western Presbyteries, appeared with a commission for a seat in that body, as a ruling elder. After considerable discussion he was received, and enrolled as a member. Against this decision a formal *protest* was entered by *sixty-seven* of the minority. And it is worthy of notice, that among the subscribers to this *protest*, the following names are found, every one of which, it is believed, is now recorded, in the Synod of Philadelphia, in favour of the new doctrine, viz. the Reverend *Robert J. Breckinridge, William Latta, John Hutchinson, Alexander Boyd, Ashbel Green, Thomas McKeen, Samuel Martin, &c. &c.*

At the same General Assembly, (1831,) a resolution was adopted, expressing an opinion that, in future, *committeemen* ought not to be delegated to the General Assembly. Against this expression of opinion, a *protest* was offered, accepted, and recorded, signed by thirty members of the minority.

These cases are considered as decisive. Enlargement on them is unnecessary. And if we had been accustomed to print the records of our Presbyteries and Synods, no doubt, nothing would be more easy than to cite scores of similar cases from them.

Let us now turn to the Church of *Scotland*, from whose proceedings it is hardly necessary to say to any intelligent Presbyterian, by far the greater portion of our rules and habits are derived. And here, it is believed, testimony no less unequivocal against the new doctrine will be found.

Perhaps no source of information, with regard to the judicatories of Scotland, is more decisive, or carries with it greater authority, than the "View of the Constitution of the Church of Scotland," by the Reverend Principal *Hill*, published a little more than thirty years ago. In this work, (p. 222,) we find the following explicit statement—"EVERY ECCLESIASTICAL BUSINESS THAT IS TRANSACTED IN ANY CHURCH JUDICATORY is subject to the review of its ecclesiastical superiors, and may be brought before the court immediately above in *four* different ways:—1. by *Review*, 2. by *Refer-*

ence, 3. by *Appeal*, 4. by *Complaint*. Here we have a language somewhat different from that employed in our own book of discipline, in the corresponding part, as before quoted; but no less decided and comprehensive. “*Every ecclesiastical business that is transacted*” in such a body, may be brought before a higher court by *appeal* or *complaint*, and, of course, by a *protest*, which commonly accompanies a complaint. Language more comprehensive and unqualified could not have been used.

With regard to *precedents* in the Church of Scotland, we lament that we happen to have access to the minutes of the proceedings of the General Assembly of that church for one year only, viz. 1833. On opening these minutes, we find, at once, a case exactly in point. The Presbytery of Dumfries appointed a certain minister a commissioner to the General Assembly. A reverend member of that Presbytery thought that the appointment was not constitutionally made, and entered his *protest* against it, which was readily admitted, and sent to the Assembly, who received the protest—considered the case—and *unanimously* resolved that the commissioner was duly appointed. Here was no case of *judicial process*, as will be instantly seen. Yet we find no objection made to the right of *protest*, on the part of either the Presbytery or the General Assembly.

So much for the law of the Presbyterian Church in relation to this matter, as ascertained by established and unquestionable *precedent*. Let us now attend—

Secondly, to the dictates of *reason* on this subject. And on this branch of the inquiry, it is apprehended that many words will not be necessary.

The right of *complaint* and *protest* is a privilege granted to members of minorities in judicatories, by which they are enabled constitutionally to oppose what *they consider* as erroneously done. It is one of the great safeguards of our ecclesiastical system, which it is of the utmost importance to maintain without let or hinderance. If one of our inferior judicatories, in a moment of prejudice or passion, should adopt an unwise judgment, even by an overwhelming majority; still, if there be but *one member* of the body who takes a different view of the subject, and who considers it as of sufficient importance, he may enter his *protest*, and *complaint*, against the decision, and thus bring it, in spite of all resistance, before the next highest judicatory.



Now, it may be asked, can any good reason be assigned why this precious privilege of protest and complaint should be enjoyed in cases of judicial process, and refused in cases of great legislative, executive, or declarative enactment? Is it more reasonable in itself, or of more importance to the church,—that the members of a minority should have the privilege of protesting and complaining against a decision, by which a man charged with intemperance is suspended from communion, than that they should enjoy the same privilege, if a great declaratory act were passed, committing principle, and perhaps entailing permanent injury on the church? Suppose the Synod of Philadelphia, (for in trying general principles we must suppose the worst,) instead of passing an act adopting the “Act and Testimony,” (concerning which we do not, at present, say a word, as it is for general principles we are now pleading,) had passed a solemn declaratory act, pronouncing that, in their opinion, the doctrines taught by *Pelagius* were in no respect inconsistent with our confession of faith; would it have been reasonable to deny to a faithful minority the privilege of protesting and complaining? Yet, according to the doctrine of the Synod, such a privilege could not have been enjoyed. They might, indeed, have entered on the minutes their simple, naked *dissent*; but the moment they should have undertaken to *reason* and *remonstrate* on the subject, and, in short, to treat it as the magnitude and danger of its injurious character demanded, that moment they would have shut themselves out from the opportunity of acting at all! Can this be considered as just or reasonable? Can it be regarded as a proper use of the constitutional principle, which secures to every member of our respective judicatories the privilege of regular opposition to what he deems unwise or mischievous measures?

Let it not be said, in reply to these appeals, that in all decisions, members who are opposed to the measure carried by a vote of the majority, may enter their *dissent* on the minutes; and that these minutes will, of course, go up to be reviewed by the judicatory next above; when an opportunity will be given to correct any thing wrong in the proceedings. Why not say the same in regard to cases of *judicial process*? Surely they too will come up in the same manner, and undergo the same review. Why allow specific appeals, complaints, and protests, with regard to *them*? Certainly not on account of their greater importance; for,

in a multitude of cases, they are, to all human appearance, of unspeakably less importance than great declaratory acts, which may have an influence on the character of a whole church for ages to come.

But the minutes of presbyteries and synods are not always, in fact, punctually carried up, every year, to the next superior judicatory. Cases of failure often occur, even in the limited territory and dense population of the Church of Scotland; but much more frequently in the scattered and far-distant churches of the United States. Presbytery and synod books may fail of being produced by unavoidable accident, or by sinister design. Judicatories, conscious of having passed questionable acts, may intentionally keep back their records, fearing a vote of censure from a higher court. In short, in this manner they may be withheld from review for several years, until the time has passed in which the review could be of any avail.

Besides, when the records of the court below *are* examined by a superior judicatory, it is commonly done by a *small committee*, who may perform their duty in a hasty and superficial manner, and may unintentionally overlook important matters. How unsafe to leave erroneous decisions of great magnitude to this contingency! How much better to have the supposed error embodied in a *protest*, brought up by those who presented it, and explained and urged by those who understand its bearing, and take an interest in the issue! In this case, the records will be more likely to come up with regularity, and the whole subject to be examined with more care and justice.

It is perfectly evident, then, if the right of complaint and protest is to be of any real value to the members of our judicatories, that it must be allowed in legislative and declaratory acts, and is of just as much importance in regard to them, as in respect to judicial process, and often unspeakably more. The whole *reason* of the right applies as really to the former as to the latter. And if we once begin to muzzle dissenting members in this manner, who can tell where the prohibitory system is to end?

It is probable that the erroneous views taken by the synod on this subject—for such, with great deference, we are constrained to regard them—have been derived from an improper comparison of our judicatories with *civil courts*. Analogies of this kind must not be pressed too far; or they will inevitably lead to false conclusions. Much in-

struction, in ecclesiastical proceedings, may, no doubt, be derived from the enlightened study of the statute and common law of the land. But there is danger of being led astray by too much devotion to the principles and precedents of secular courts.

There is, perhaps, some reason for begging pardon of the readers of these remarks, for dwelling so long on a point so exceedingly plain. But respect for a venerable synod has led to an examination of the new doctrine, more extended and more careful than would have been thought proper, if it had been the speculation of an individual only.

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ART. VI.—*The Lord Jesus Christ the example of the Minister.* J. N. Alexander

FROM the first months of childhood much that we learn is from imitation. What we see others do is thenceforth easier to ourselves, and in accordance with this principle of human action, God addresses us as imitative beings. We are told to be “imitators of God as dear children;” but lest the splendour and incomprehensibility of the divine model should confound us, “God manifest in the flesh” is made our example. The words of Christ have a wider application than to the eleven, “I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” And all secondary or intermediate patterns, (though Paul himself sit for the picture,) are to be compared with the lovely original. It is true of believers in general, that they ought to imitate the example of Christ and all coincident examples. It is true in a higher sense of ministers. To them Paul says, as to the Corinthians, “be ye imitators of me,” or rather of Christ in me. For observe, the holy apostle represents himself as only the reflector of Christ’s radiance; and therefore we are justified in leaving the mirror, and directing our views to the Sun.

The Lord Jesus Christ is in some way, nay in most respects inimitable. The two natures must be distinguished. In his divine nature Immanuel has no ministerial work;

and we can imitate him only in that looser sense in which we imitate Jehovah. In his sacerdotal character Christ cannot be imitated, for "there is one mediator only between God and man." But in his human nature, and more particularly as a teacher and preacher, he is imitable; he was imitated by Paul, and he must be imitated by us. Do we deny or forget that Christ is very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father? God forbid. To deny this, is to take out the corner-stone of our faith; to forget it, or withhold it, or mask it, or undervalue it, in our ministry, is to betray the truth of God. But, at the same time, we maintain that the exalted person who is very God, is also very man, and that his human nature united to the divine, was sanctified and anointed with the Holy Spirit above measure; and that we may safely and reverently copy his example, in the whole course of our ministry. The commission has in it something awful: "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." "He that receiveth you receiveth me." Ministers "are ambassadors for Christ," and it is becoming that they should resemble him whom they represent. They are ministers, or servants, and he has said, "If any man serve me, let him follow me." They are pastors, or shepherds, and he is "the chief Shepherd," "the good Shepherd."

We trust that to none of our readers will it seem needless or inappropriate, to exhibit to pastors the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, with respect to its subject, manner, and spirit. The subject of Christ's preaching may be dismissed with a few words, for it is the subject of all ministerial labours; and his manner is partly unknown to us, and partly evinced by the spirit of his work; so that we shall pass lightly over the first two points, in order to contemplate the third. But that these may not seem to be slighted, let something be remarked: First, of the *matter* of our Lord's instructions. It was truth; as he was primeval, uncreated truth. It was accordingly divine truth, from God, concerning God, leading to God. It was revealed truth, the same which had streamed in rills or rivers from the prophetic fountains of the Old Testament. And as it was meant for the faith of men, that they might be saved, it was the sole subject of our Lord's communications. It will appear in the sequel, that his wisdom always dispensed it fitly, where and when it was needed. It may be here said, that while Christ was authorised to originate revelations, and while every



thing he said was vouched by miracle, he still honoured all prior revelation, and that his preaching had reference to the record; it was *scriptural*. The scriptures were commended to the search of his hearers: "I have given them thy word:" and when hearers were misled, Jesus thus explained it, "ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures." He expounded the law in its severe extent and penetrating spirituality; he held up the divine testimony as the standard; and he died to fulfil its predictions. Our Saviour preached those truths which are *most valuable*. We find in his recorded discourses, no refinements, no ingenious impertinencies, no temporal trifles. They contain no disquisitions on natural science, though by him all nature was created; no entertainments for mere taste, though his sermons are unparalleled in exquisite beauty; no metaphysical subtleties, though "all the churches know that Jesus is he who searcheth the reins and hearts." When he began to preach, he cried Repent. He taught that the law had now introduced the Gospel, and the grand truth was his death. His discourses were searching, faithful, often tremendous in their denunciation. And if we do not find within the four gospels the same fulness and precision of statement and definition, which occur in the apostolical epistles, we are to remember that Jesus gave the seed rather than the fruit of many doctrines; that he purposely retained some things, enjoining silence on his disciples; and that a great number of his sayings were absolutely unintelligible to his intimate followers, until his death and resurrection made them plain. We may imitate our Saviour, in not giving strong meat to babes, and in not pressing truth prematurely; but we shall greatly err, and sin against the church, if we confine our mature hearers to the milk of elementary principles, or do not, on suitable occasions, bring forward the whole counsel of God, as now revealed in the completed canon of the Scriptures. We are, however, to follow Christ, even as Paul followed him, in the subject of our teaching.

II. A few words will suffice, concerning the *manner* of Christ's preaching and ministry. So far as this is separable from the spirit of our divine Master, we may observe that it was attractive and lovely, but at the same time, simple, clear, unaffected and solemn. Admiration and awe filled the multitude of his hearers. While the rich and great derided or questioned, "the common people heard him gladly." Where he meant to be understood on the spot, the manner

of his teaching was eminently and inimitably perspicuous. His language, yea his very idiom, was that of the mass of the people: and what he had said obscurely, he explained with patience. Yet the plainness of his words was not that inelegant rudeness which discards ornament. Lovelier ornament than that of the parables, we challenge all human literature to produce. Our Saviour dealt much in illustrations from every-day life, and scenes then under his eye. These were not for embellishment but elucidation; and the result was not so much pleasure, as force. For he was mighty, and there is a pregnancy in his concise observations, which has astonished even the infidel critic. The minister of the gospel will learn more by reading the four gospels, with the simple purpose of asking *how Christ preached*, than by all the volumes of critics, and all the schools of rhetoric.

III. But we gladly pass to our third and principal topic, which is the *Spirit* of Christ's ministry. Thousands have been successful preachers by following *Paul*; he was the professed model of Chrysostom, Augustin, and Luther. But all that was good in these, is in its source in *Jesus*.

The spirit of Christ's ministry is to be made the special directory of the preacher's spirit. Could we walk among men as he walked; could our lives breathe as his life breathed, the gentle hallowed influence of heaven, the church which we serve would be in spirit as it is in doctrine and order, a primitive church. When we contemplate the radiance of this character, we are dazzled; and we must needs sit down and take successive glimpses, inadequate indeed but delightful, of a glory which cannot be comprehended at one view. Cast your eyes towards the Son of God in his ministerial work, passing through the throng of a polluted world, as a purer being, from a higher sphere. Catch the traits of soul embodied in his walks of painful beneficence; and you shall see among them, love, candour, prudence, courage, tenderness, zeal, lowly meekness, toil, devotion, and self-denial.

1. *Love*. To give the proofs of Christ's love, would be to repeat the whole evangelical history. It shines in his eternal purpose, it irradiates every path of his life, it melts at his cross. In that part of the Redeemer's course which his ministers may imitate, there is a most affecting manifestation of benevolence, compassion, grace, mercy; in a word, all the kindly and charitable outgoings of the soul. The bodies and the souls of men were both his care. With equal sin-

cerity of heart he spake long and often to the multitude, or aided in the handicraft of his disciples, or hung over the bier of the departed. Are any of his wondrous works, miracles of vengeance—is there one of them which was not a miracle of mercy? Is there one sufferer whom he thrusts away? When crowds hemmed him in, some to perplex, some to deride, and some to murder, did he ever decline to teach the inquiring? Who among us can number up the list of his benefactions? What book could contain the history of his cures? While he healed he preached; yea, while he gave truth, he gave health, life, salvation. He seemed to repulse a Syrophenician woman. He seemed to reject her as a heathen—to cast her out among the very dogs; but it was only to enhance the weight of love in that closing word, “O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” It was the spontaneous compassion of Jesus, and not the cry of the multitude, which twice led to the feeding of the thousands. And their need of spiritual food also reached his bursting heart; for “when he saw the multitudes he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.” How prompt was his beneficence! My son dieth, said a certain nobleman. Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way, thy son liveth. He was a son of woman, and how much of tender manhood, of social, *human* affection breaks into view in all his intercourse with the family at Bethany—his sadness at the tidings about Lazarus, his condolence, his tears—for *Jesus wept*. As love was his great—his new—his last injunction to the disciples, so it was the reigning grace in his treatment of them: the very inspiration of his farewell discourse, and the crowning characteristic of his conversations after he had risen. Love embraced the infant; actuated his itinerancy, on foot, over the rough hills and torrid plains of Palestine; and flowed out to the poor and the dying in streams of relief; and breathed invitations wide as human woe; and uttered that lamenting cry: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not; behold, your house is left unto you desolate!” It was love that wept over the same city, in view of the very Golgotha where he was to die. It was love that was personified and held up to the view of angels and of God on that “place of skulls,” and that cursed cross. And we may take any discourse, any sentence,

any word of Jesus Christ, and find in it the signatures of the same affection. In public and in private, the minister of Christ may walk in these steps, moistened by the toils and the agonies of his loving Saviour. And we might hold your minds for hours upon this single point; but must proceed to name secondly, his

2. *Candour*. In the Son of man are manifested, openness, ingenuous frankness, transparent sincerity, freeness from guile, craft, finesse, concealment. Is it not superfluous to say so? It might be, if ecclesiastics, in some ages, pretending to follow Christ, had not made church-policy another name for insidious worldly statesmanship. Our blessed Lord has left an example for his ministers, that they should not endeavour to smooth the ruggedness, variegate the sameness, or expand the straitness of that thorny, direct, narrow way which leads to heaven. No converts need to be sought by false pretences. Christ makes no promises of ease, no offers of exemption from the cross; he refrains from no pungency of rebuke in order to gain favour; he wafts no flatteries to the great or the rich. Some would have followed him, whom he dismissed by simply showing that he was more homeless than the birds and foxes, or by explaining that all must be abandoned. "Think not I am come to send peace on earth—I came not to send peace, but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household. I am come to send fire on the earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled!"—There went great multitudes with him, and he turned and said, "If any man come to me and hate not his family, yea his own life, he cannot be my disciple." "It is impossible but that offences will come." Christ denounced woes against every class of popular leaders, sects, rulers, and cities: and to the wealthy scrupled not an instant to say, "A rich man shall hardly enter the kingdom." And in proportion as we try to make the way easier than the Master has made it, we alter it, to the corruption of the church, and the ruin of souls.

3. But in all this, there was no austerity or pride; none of the distant reserve and haughty rigour of the contemporary philosophers; for we discern as a third aspect of Christ's ministerial spirit, his *condescension*. As a man, and as a divine instructor, Jesus has taught us to "condescend to men of low estate." It was a token of his mission that



he preached to the poor; and a taunt of his foes that he received sinners. Where good was to be done, there Christ was found, whether in the fishing-boat of Tiberias, the supper of the publican, or the tumult of the lower people. "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" asked the Pharisee. "Because, (answered the Master for himself,) the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." So far was he from the affected pomp of monkish virtue, and ascetic moroseness, that men pointed at his company, and falsely cried, "Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" This gentle condescension took the part of children when his followers would have sent them away, for he folded them in his arms, he laid his hands on their little heads, and said, of such is the kingdom of heaven!

4. In this, as in all the deportment of our Lord, there was as much wisdom as grace, as much knowledge of human nature as philanthropy. For we do not derogate from his spirit, when we attribute to it, in the fourth place, heavenly *prudence*. In all our vocabulary, there is scarcely a word more wronged than this. While the wiser heathen enrolled it among the cardinal virtues, the men of our day seem ready to tear it out as synonymous with timid cunning, which is the wisdom of weakness, or politic craft, which is the artifice of the wicked. It is no such thing, for in the words of Chief Justice Hale, prudence is used "principally in reference to actions to be done, and due manner, means, order, season, and method of doing them." Prudence is wisdom applied to practice. It is of God: "I wisdom dwell with prudence." It is predicated of God, who "hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." The minister of the gospel is as a sheep among wolves, he therefore needs to be wise as a serpent, while he is harmless as a dove. The great Exemplar should be his daily object of contemplation. The whole ministerial activity of Christ was governed by a wise reference to time, place, and circumstances. We do not find him using the same instrument for every work, or meeting all emergencies with an unalterable method. This is the way of the empiric. His discourses were adapted first to the hearers, then to the occasion. As Paul in following Christ, did not quote the rabbins to the Athenians on Mars' Hill, or Aratus and Epimenides to the Hebrews, so the Master himself was wise in observing time and opportunity. He taught, not to cast pearls before swine,

nor to put new wine into old skins. Remember the instruction of Nicodemus, the melancholy conference with the young man, the frequent disputations with lawyers, and the memorable dialogue at Jacob's well. Mark the fitness to the occasion of his lessons on humility when "he took a child and set it by him" and made it the text of a sermon: or on the bread of life, when the multitude followed him for loaves and fishes.—Jesus came into the world to die, but he did not expose himself to untimely peril. "No man taketh my life," said he. His unbelieving brethren would have constrained him to go to a feast of tabernacles; but he said, "My time is not yet come; the world hateth me; I go not yet up to this feast." And at the passover following, though his soul knew not fear, he departed and did hide himself from them. The Pharisees would fain have entangled him in politics, and made him out a leader of sedition. "Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites," said our Lord, and with a simple coin baffled their malice, so that "they marvelled, and left him, and went their way." The Sadducees would gladly have caught him in the meshes of their Antinomian sophistry, but the scribe who asked him concerning the law, received in the sum of the decalogue a conclusive confutation. It would be endless to trace this quality in all its manifestations; if our eyes are open we shall descry it every day in the history of the Evangelists. And if we are wise, we shall use the lesson, to prevent our needlessly raising opposition, laying offences in men's path, bringing gratuitous contempt on the truth, or outraging the useful decorum of life, or precedent of the church. True, in many cases, the proximate effect will be the imputation of pride, lukewarmness, or cowardice; but in the end, and when a man's ways please the LORD, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him.

5. But there are extremes in religion, and the extreme of timorous caution is scarcely less to be deprecated than that of reckless fanaticism. When we turn our eyes to our divine example, we behold the golden mean. While our Lord was wise, he was undaunted. *Courage* is the fifth particular in which he is imitable. Not to dwell on the thought, that the whole mediatorial work of our incarnate God was a fearless assault upon the powers of evil, we may observe that holy boldness shone in his ministry. It is no sufficient reason for withholding truth, that it is disagreeable to ungodly men; and our Saviour sometimes so spake that not

only were his *adversaries* filled with rage, but “many of his *disciples* went back, and walked no more with him.” Under his piercing discriminations, and his claims to a divine character, the Jews were indignant and even frantic, so that, not content with reviling, they sought to kill him on the spot, and failing of this, obtained their hellish wish by a more circuitous method. Nevertheless he went right onward; boldly, yet full of love. If we observe the connexion, we shall see, that his tears over Jerusalem immediately preceded his fearless expulsion of the traders from the temple: so nearly allied were his courage and his love. Again and again, before large assemblies of the most learned, noble, and arrogant leaders, did he inveigh against them as hypocrites, deceivers, and doomed to unutterable woe. *His* teaching was the reverse of theirs: the people were astonished at his manner of preaching, “for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” This authority, so far as it pertained to Christ’s mediatorial character, the preacher may not assume, but he may, under his commission, “speak and exhort, and rebuke, with all authority,” letting no man despise him; and rebuking them that sin, before all, that others also may fear. There are times, even now, when hearkening to God more than unto men, he may be bold in our God: for if we seek to please men we are not the servants of Christ.

6. Alas! how easily such tempers, in the earthen vessels become mingled with human passions, so that the gentleness of Christ is scarcely recognised among the turbulence of wrathful, proud, and untender feelings. The spirit of our Master’s ministry, was eminently that of *tenderness*. It is the sixth in this constellation of graces. Where shall we begin, where all is the very ideal of gentle, sympathizing affection? It was predicted, “a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.” It is impossible to imagine that such sentiments as his were ever uttered with the frown of menace, or the rudeness of oburgation. When his ministry was for the time without effect on some, he gently alludes to a game of Israelitish children, and says, “we have piped unto you and ye have not danced, we have mourned unto you and ye have not wept.” When a rich young noble turns away, Jesus does not pursue him with a fulmination, but is very sorrowful. The mother of the sons of Zebedee makes a request, so startling, that “the ten were moved with indignation against the two brethren,”

but Christ simply, and tenderly, uses the incident to repress ambition. And the spirit of his preaching is well expressed in the kind invitation "come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

7. In order to show, however, that the tenderness of Christ was not incompatible with fervour, let us further adduce his *zeal*. Zeal is not good in itself, being simply, passionate ardour, which may be for good or evil. Much that passes under the name is strange fire. Such was that of the beloved disciple when he forbade a certain person to cast out devils in Christ's name; or of the same apostle and his brother, when they seemed ready to call fire from heaven to consume the inhospitable Samaritans. But our Redeemer "turned and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what spirit ye are of." The ardour of Jesus was a serener glow, yet it was not inefficient. Under its impulse, he overturned the tables of the money-changers, and scourged them from the temple; but even here it would seem to be only another aspect of love, for it is instantly added, "and the blind and the lame came to him in the temple and he healed them." His disciples remembered that it was written: "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Even when suffering for food, he declared that it was his meat and drink to do the will of the Father. And in this spirit he lived and died. Could we, brethren in the ministry, catch the holy ardour which bore forward our Master through cares and anguish—could we, like him, forget our selfish interests in the great work of rescuing souls and glorifying God—could we even, like an humbler model, stand immoveable amidst danger and flattery, so that we might finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the Lord Jesus, we might justly hope to number a hundred converts where we sadly welcome one, and expect to shine as stars in the firmament of glory.

8. Passing now to other characteristics, let me observe, that *Humility* and *Meekness* are nearly allied, and that they both adorned the ministry of Christ. It was his oft-repeated maxim, "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased." And he taught that even little ones were not to be despised. How touching was his exemplification of this lowliness. "The Son of man (such was the language of his conduct) came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He humbled himself, and made himself of no reputation: he took upon him the form of a servant; and we are exhorted by



Paul to let the same mind be in us. "Whether is greater,"—he once affectingly asked—"he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth!" And when he bowed down to the menial service of washing his disciples' feet, just when he was about to die for them, he said: "Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am: If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." Under injuries, our Lord was exemplary in meekness: "who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. He was derided, he was maligned, he was pursued, he was encompassed with insults. "Reproach," said he in prophecy, "hath broken my heart." He was accused of sedition, taunted as a madman, a Samaritan, a demoniac, a blasphemer, yet he resented not. See him in his last sufferings, "he was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." Let this move us to pardon affronts from whomsoever received, forbearing one another and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: "*even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*"

9. A ninth particular, is the *laborious and painful assiduity* of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this he was followed by the Apostle of the Gentiles. In this he must be followed by us, if we would stand clear of the blood of souls. A minister must not only not be slothful; he must be above the suspicion of sloth. Paul's language to Timothy conveys the idea of rapid and pressing activity: "preach the word—be instant—in season—out of season." Be wholly in these things. That is, be in nothing else. The minister of Christ is not called to be a scientific inquirer, a politician, an agriculturist, a literary devotee—though the parsimony of the churches or the desire of avoiding offence, have sometimes forced holy men into secular pursuits; still less is he called to be a convivial companion, a fashionable flutterer, or a habitual idler; but to give himself *continually to prayer and the ministry of the word.* To such a life he

has the sacred incitement of example. *He* went about doing good. On the mount, on the lake, on the strand, in the field, in the highway, in the house, by night, by day, in Galilee, in Samaria, in Judea, in the synagogue, and in the temple, Jesus was labouring. When the plot was maturing, when life was ebbing, when the last passover was almost begun, he spent his nights on Olivet, and his days teaching in the temple. We read that he began "early in the morning." "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." Wearied with the greatness of his way, he nevertheless taught the Samaritan woman, as he leaned upon the well. And even when apprehended, he turned aside from his own woes, both in Gethsemane and on his way out of the city, to drop gracious words on his followers. In the forty days previous to his ascension, he still taught, and the language of his whole example to each of us is, "Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God."

10. To sustain a gospel minister in such labours, something is necessary beyond habitual diligence, or mere professional zeal. There may be great stir and bustle, and activity, and yet no gospel efficiency. What we need is a spring of holy influence always within us, gushing out like a river-head of living waters. What shall secure this? Answer, the grace of God in the heart, working *holiness and devotion*—the tenth trait in our Lord's ministerial character. Oh that every pastor could say to the people whom he serves, or has served, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe." Paul could say so, for he followed Christ; and Christ was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." After a certain tour of preaching and healing, we are told, "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, and he taught in the synagogues, being glorified of all." The indwelling Spirit was in the head, as in the members, a spirit of grace and supplication, and frequent are the incidental but pathetic notices of our Lord's retreats for private devotion. By these Olivet and Gethsemane were signalized, long before his final agony. Here he "rejoiced in spirit," here he doubtless groaned and wept, here he cried, "even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." How often did he, after days of weariness, spend the nights in solitary watching and prayer! While the storm was on the lake, Jesus, having dismissed an immense audience was gone "up

into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone." When the fame of him increased, "he withdrew himself into the wilderness and prayed." The seventeenth chapter of John is a blessed fragment of his intercessions. In the garden he prayed in agony: he was sorrowful, sore amazed, very heavy, yet he prayed "with strong crying and tears." And in that very hour of darkness he exhorts us, "watch and pray." On this point we need say no more.

11. Finally. Let us detain the reader only to hint at our Redeemer's *self-denial*. Christ died upon the cross, but his whole foregoing life was a life of cross-bearing. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." We are not called to expiatory sufferings, and we are forbidden to attempt neglecting of the body in the sense of meritorious penance. But hear the declaration to all believers, and preeminently to ministers: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." When tempted to indolent self-pleasing—the bane of ministerial fidelity—let them remember that "even Christ pleased not himself." If the unpleasantness, the shame, the toil, the pain, the danger of any duty, is sufficient to keep them from its performance, they are therein practically renouncing the yoke of Him, who has said, "he that loveth his life shall lose it." It is, or ought to be understood, that every step of ministerial life is against the course of this world. Is it not enough for preachers to be as their master? "If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?" And every minister has reason to suspect himself, when any day occurs in which no tide of opposition, mental or external, is opposed: for he who floats with the current, floats away from God.

May God, of his infinite mercy, make our ministers in the matter, manner, and spirit of their ministry, the followers of all who follow Christ, and especially of himself, whom they call Master and Lord, and who was loving, sincere, wise, undaunted, tender, ardent, lowly, laborious, devout, and self-denying. Whether successful or unsuccessful, they shall then be pleasing to God: for they are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one they are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

*Charles Hodge*ART. VII.—*Act and Testimony.* No. II.

SOON after the publication of the last number of the *Repertory*, we received a letter from the author of the first draft of the *Act and Testimony*, inquiring whether we would admit a defence of that document. We promptly answered that letter in the affirmative. After the defence was prepared, it appeared to its author desirable to have it presented to the public, at an earlier period than the regular time for the publication of this work. This, and perhaps some other considerations, decided him to have it printed in the columns of the *Presbyterian*. We have hesitated a long time whether it was expedient for us to take any formal notice of this paper, and have at last concluded not to allow it to pass entirely unnoticed. It is true this defence does not purport to be an answer to the article on the *Act and Testimony*, in our last number, and perhaps was not designed to be considered exactly in that light. Still every one of the objections stated in our article are taken up, and, if not answered, are commented upon, and declared to be of no account. This and other more formal refutations have been pronounced triumphant; the *Act and Testimony* is said now to stand forth fully vindicated; or, to use the figure employed, to lift itself up as the enduring rock in the ocean defying all assault. If this is so, it becomes us and all other dissentients to acknowledge the fact, to withdraw all opposition to the measure, and to join in cheering on the great movement in contemplation. We should either do this, or show cause, if any we have, why we remain unconvinced. We view this as a very serious matter; as the most ominous occurrence within our church for a long series of years. It is either nobly right, or ruinously wrong. And it becomes every man to know which; and to be fully conscious of the grounds of his opinion. This being the case, it may be excused in the conductors of a work devoted to the promotion of truth and order, according to the standards of our church, if they depart in some measure from a rule which they have endeavoured generally to observe; that is, not to discuss in their pages questions of policy which may be agitating the church. This however is not an ordinary occasion, nor is this a party question. A measure is proposed and urged which contemplates great results; which all the friends of truth and order are required to aid, or to forfeit the confi-



dence of the churches; with regard to which no man is allowed to be neutral; which its friends pronounce the last hope of the church, and its opposers as obviously ruinous. Surely, then, those who take one or the other side on such a question, should be allowed to say why they take the one and not the other. And especially those who are all but excommunicated for their dissent, may be permitted to show that it is not groundless; that it is no want of zeal or courage, but strong conviction of duty which influences their conduct. The principles involved in this question are of permanent interest and importance, and therefore raise it very far above the ordinary questions of passing strife. This being the case, we regret very much any thing adapted to give the discussion of this subject a personal cast. On this account we were very sorry to see the author of the paper called the *Act and Testimony*, undertaking its vindication in his own name, as though the authorship of the document had any thing to do with its wisdom or propriety. This course seems to us entirely uncalled for. We are not aware that the measure has been either recommended or decried on account of the author.\* And even if it had, such a ground of recommendation or censure, could have no influence with any sensible man, and should therefore have been disregarded. The writer says, "He sees not how he can be silent, whether reference be had to his own character, to the mighty interests involved, or to the great respectability of some of those who have made the origin of this paper a fact of some importance in determining their action in regard to it. He believes he has a right to complain, of the indelicacy of some of those with whom he usually acted, and of a still worse feeling on the part of many openly opposed to him and to the truth, who have, in numberless ways, implicated him in discussions which should have proceeded on grounds unspeakably more elevated and enduring." All this is new to us. We did not know that there was any person of great or little respectability, weak enough to make the origin of the paper a fact of some importance in determining their action in regard to it. It is obviously as much a matter of indifference who wrote the *Act and Testimony*, as who wrote the *Minutes of the Assembly*. The document, from the nature of the

\* The only thing of this kind that we have seen, is the coarse assault on the writer, quoted with just reprehension in the *Presbyterian* from the *Philadelphian*, which of course needed no answer:

case, derives no part of its importance from its author. His signature gives it his sanction, and this is given by the signature of all others who have adopted it. The responsibility of the drafter is not a whit greater than that of any other signer. It is in fact so perfectly absurd, that a man should give or withhold his name from such a document, because penned by one person rather than another, that we can hardly persuade ourselves that the gentleman is not entirely mistaken on this point. At any rate, it is so insignificant, it should have been disregarded; and certainly created no adequate call for the personal appearance of the drafter. How "his character," more than that of any of his associates, is implicated in this business, we are at a loss to conceive. There is a sentence connected with this subject, which we are not sure we understand. After complaining of not being allowed to occupy his humble position in the ranks of those who had, by adopting it, made the Act and Testimony their own, he says, "Henceforth no one had a right to call it his, or to brand it with a doubtful or unworthy paternity: least of all had any friend the right to follow its reputed author to his privacy, (and there 'condemn with faint praise' both his work and himself,) after the manner that the possessed girl at Philippi followed the apostles of the Lord." What the point of comparison is, in this illustration, is not very clear. But who is this friend, who followed the author to his privacy, and there condemned both him and his work with faint praise? Can it be ourselves? Friends of the author we surely are, and gladly recognise the relation—but can he think himself authorized to complain of our "indelicacy" for any thing said in our last number? Is it faint praise to say, "It is impossible for any man to read this document, without being deeply impressed with respect for its authors. It is pervaded by a tone of solemn earnestness, which carries to every heart the conviction of their sincerity, and of their sense of the importance as well as the truth of the sentiments which they advance. The fear of God, reverence for his truth, and love for his church, seem clearly to have presided over the composition of this important document." We know no higher praise than this. Again, "We have already said, and said sincerely, that it is impossible to read this Testimony without being deeply impressed by the seriousness of its tone, the weight and truth of the great part of its sentiments, and the decided ability and skill with which it is

drawn up. It evinces in every line the hand of a man accustomed to legal precision and accuracy of phrase." This is the only passage in which, to the best of our recollection, the author is referred to as an individual, we constantly used the plural form, "its authors," when referring to its origin, and always respectfully. The expression "legal precision" is the only one which contains the slightest personal allusion; an allusion so slight and in a context so commendatory, that we fear we are doing the writer great injustice in supposing that these passages could be the foundation of a charge of "indelicacy," and the complaint of faint praise. However this may be, we regret very much the appearance of the writer in his own name, as though this was in any form or degree a personal concern. Names ought not to be mixed up with matters which can be properly decided only by reference to great important principles. On this account we were very sorry to see, according to the report of his remarks in the public papers, that this gentleman, who seems to dislike so much any allusion to himself, referred in debate on the floor of a large ecclesiastical body, by name, to one individual, as the author of a remark in private conversation, relative to the prevalence of heresy in the church—and which, by the way, that individual never made; to another, as the author of a certain presbyterial document; and to a third, as the writer of an anonymous paper in a periodical Review. All this is wrong. It destroys the confidence of social intercourse, it destroys the peculiar character of a document emanating from a public body or private association of men, and it introduces feelings and considerations entirely foreign to the point to be decided.

A second feature in this Defence, which we think worthy of animadversion, is the tone of confidence and superiority by which it is pervaded. It is very well for every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind; but there is no necessity, and sometimes no propriety, in placing himself and associates so far above all others. We cannot, in the present instance, perceive any good reason for the writer speaking of himself and fellow-signers of the Act and Testimony, as though they alone were men of real courage—"the most faithful followers" of God,—called to act amidst "the scorn of opposers and trembling of friends;" while those who dissent from their measures are represented as cowards, as the *vis inertix* of the church, &c. &c. This spirit runs through the whole defence, and cannot be ade-

quately presented by the quotation of detached phrases. The exercise of this feeling may be very pleasant, but its exhibition is very unbecoming, and not very agreeable to those who do not happen to belong to the most faithful few. The dissentients are not to be cast into one body—nor are they, indeed, by the writer—but even the class which he designates as trembling friends—as the *vis inertię*—the “brothers of charity”!—are not disposed to admit that they are so very timid. Wait until they refuse to act up to their own principles, or violate their own sense of duty for the sake of any unworthy end, before you denounce them. We cannot see the propriety of condemning one set of men for timidity, in not acting upon the principles of another—when the wisdom of those principles is the very point in debate. We think the whole strain of the Defence in the particular just referred to, unfortunate. There is no occasion for assuming that the original authors of the Act and Testimony were actuated by the spirit of heroes and martyrs, because the occasion did not call for it. “While the same sense of inability,” says the author, “which would have shrunk from the preparation of this important paper, makes the present duty of defending it oppressive; yet the same confidence in God, and the same readiness to lose all things rather than his favour, which sustained our fainting hearts in the dark hour of trial, which preceded and attended the issuing of the Act and Testimony, amid the scorn of our opposers and the trembling of our friends, will not now forsake us, when he whose best occasion to aid us is in the greatest extremity of our affairs, has led us gloriously forth in the face of his enemies, setting our feet in large places, and giving us favour in the eyes of his most faithful followers.” This language appears too strong. We can perceive nothing so very trying in the circumstances of the case. We are rather disposed to applaud those, whom the writer would designate as trembling friends, for not allowing themselves to be carried away by the impulse of zeal and heroism, which animated those around them, and which of all things is the most catching. The feeling which gave rise to the sentence just quoted, runs through the defence—and leads the author to present himself and associates as a noble heroic band, determined to reform the church or to perish in the attempt, and of consequence to regard all others as either enemies or unfaithful friends; unfaithful to the cause of truth and God. This they feel to be unjust.



They claim to be tried by some other standard than adhesion to the Act and Testimony. They profess to be as sincerely, and, it may be, as boldly attached to the church to which they belong, and to its doctrines and discipline, as the foremost of those who decry all who stand aloof from their present proceedings. It should be remarked, that all the questioning of motives, all the assumption of excellence, all the imputation of cowardice, trimming, and unfaithfulness, are upon one side, in this discussion. We, at least, so far from either questioning or condemning the motives of the authors and signers of the Act and Testimony, have from the first, and openly, given them full credit for purity of purpose and elevation of object. We have acknowledged their worth, and fidelity. We question nothing but the wisdom of their present movement, and their right to denounce those who differ from them, as abettors of heresy, as unfaithful and cowardly, as "brothers of charity" who love ease more than truth or duty. We question the propriety of such denunciations, and the good taste of those who pick up any cant phrases, or nick-names, which may be voided in debate by some unfortunate dyspeptic, and endeavour to affix it to a large and respectable class of their fellow Christians and brother ministers. What good feeling such a course can gratify, or what good object it can attain, we are at a loss to conceive.

Thirdly. We are constrained to say that, after all that is said in this defence, and in more formal refutations, our objections to the Act and Testimony remain precisely where they were before. We cannot honestly say that they appear to us to be even obscured. There they are, worth little or much, unanswered, and unclouded. With regard to some points, every thing is admitted; with regard to others, this writer and others, content themselves with a simple and easy denial—and in respect to others, they seem to have escaped notice, or to have been passed over as not deserving it. We must endeavour in a few words to make good what we have now said.

The objections urged against the Act and Testimony, not merely in this Review, but from various portions of the church, are resolvable into these three. First, That it is not what it professes to be, a Testimony, but a test, designed to ascertain the number and strength of the friends of certain views and measures, and to organize them into a body capable of separate and combined actions. Secondly, That,

admitting the necessity of the extreme remedy thus proposed, this document was unfit to be adopted as such a test, because it contained statements of facts and recommendation of measures, which it was not to be expected all those who agreed in every essential point of doctrine and discipline, could sign. And consequently a paper which was designed to unite all, by failing of this object, must necessarily, if pressed to its result, divide the body which it proposed to unite. Thirdly, That the *modus operandi* of this wonderful document has never been explained. It is asserted that it "will reform the church," but how it is to effect this desirable object has never been made to appear. It is like mustering an army for a night attack. No one knows whither he is going, although there is abundance of noise and martial array. We humbly ask, have these objections been ever plausibly answered? They are objections which it requires no great ingenuity to detect, or clearness to prevent, but which demand more strength or labour than has yet been expended on them, to remove out of the way.

With regard to the first, it is not denied. It is even exultingly admitted and tauntingly affirmed. "Brethren were not alike," the writer says; "and therefore to quiet a distrust nearly universal, we devised a plan which put an end to distrust, by revealing the precise naked truth; a plan, which as it regards himself merely, no man of integrity ought to object to for one moment. It may be very painful to submit to a general search; but he who refuses to do it, must be utterly above suspicion, or he thereby greatly confirms it; and he who, while he refuses, acknowledges that he had been often suspected before, establishes at once guilt and folly. Hence, all that is said about our having established an odious test can excite nothing beyond a smile in men of reflexion.(!) The truth is, every bond of union, of whatever kind, is necessarily a test at first, and just in proportion as it answers the ends of a thorough test (call it odious, if it so please you,) will it fulfil the design of a perfect bond of union." We are glad to have this undisguised avowal of this feature of the plan from one who has so much right to speak with authority on the subject. It will be received with surprise, no doubt, by a large number of the Act and Testimony. We know that many of these brethren considered themselves as joining their testimony with that of others, against certain errors and disorders prevalent in the church. They never supposed they were instituting "a

general search, or adopting a plan which would force them to denounce (calumniate) as heretical, all who, for any reason should think fit to decline submission to the operation. It has commonly been supposed that the application of such tests should be made by competent authorities alone; that it was neither expedient nor proper for any individual, or set of individuals, of their own accord, to commence a general search and prescribe exactly what should, and should not be allowed to pass. It is too clear to need illustration, that the proceeding is essentially different from the mere declaration on the part of any number of men of their own opinions in the form of a Testimony for or against particular doctrines or measures. This latter course may be taken without offence or injury by any man or body of men on any subject or occasion; but the former no man or body of men has a right to take, except in those extreme cases which set all ordinary rules at defiance, and which justify a recurrence to measures in their nature revolutionary. We said in our last number, that no one could have felt any disposition to object to the publication of the Act and Testimony, had it not been for the requisition of a general signing, which necessarily changed its whole character, and converted it from a testimony into a test. To this it has been answered, and called a refutation, that "if it was right for ten, twenty, or a hundred to sign and issue this document, it must be right for any other number—How can the mere number of the signers alter the case?" It is admitted that an individual has a right to address others on subjects affecting the interests of the church, and that he has a right to solicit the concurrence of others. "The precise point," says the Presbyterian, "at which this admitted and unquestionable right is transformed into an unauthorized assumption, we cannot perceive, except it may be, at the moment when these individuals assert their right under their own signatures. The sum of the argument appears to be this,—that which is right when exercised by unknown persons, becomes an assumption when exercised by persons well known. As the writer intimates, if the framers of the document had signed it by their chairman and secretary, it might have been 'useful, or at least harmless,' but the moment they reject the proxy and give their own signatures, the document 'becomes fraught with injustice, discord and division.' All this sounds to us surpassingly strange."\* No wonder. It must

\* PRESBYTERIAN for Oct. 23, 1834.

sound strange to any one to hear such a statement attributed to any sane man as an argument. We must stand exceedingly low in the estimation of the writer of the above sentence, if he really supposes us to have reasoned in the manner stated; if the sum of our argument is, that if the framers of the Act and Testimony had signed it by their chairman and secretary all would have been right, but putting their own names to it makes it very dreadful. Happily for us, however, he had just before quoted our language, so that the reader may have his own opinion as to the correctness of his apprehension of our meaning. We had said, it was calling for a general "signing of this document as a test of orthodoxy, which at once altered its whole nature and design."

Cannot the writer see the difference? It is evident that his desire to have a fling at the supposed timidity of "trembling friends," who would be satisfied beneath the concealment of a proxy, but dared not venture into open view, has betrayed him into a statement of our argument, which makes it so weak as to be ridiculous. For the sake of proving us cowards, he will even make us idiots. We should not think this worthy of a single remark, if we did not know that there are some men, and they too high in character and office, who never having read the article in the *Repertory*, and deriving all their knowledge of its arguments from this refutation, pronounce with great decision on its character. Our only wonder is, that the editor of the *Presbyterian* should have thought such arguments as he makes ours to be, worthy of a square in the last column of the last page of his valuable paper. They might safely have been left to die of inward weakness.

For the sake of those who may need it, we will endeavour to make a plain case still plainer. No one, we presume, has ever questioned Dr. Miller's right to address his letters to Presbyterians. These letters contain an exhibition of his views on a variety of interesting subjects: voluntary associations, ecclesiastical organizations, revivals of religion, and new measures, errors in doctrine, and disorders in discipline. They abound in counsels to his brethren and children in the ministry, and earnest recommendations as to the course, which, in his opinion, they ought to pursue. There is nothing in all this which the humblest member of our church might not, without arrogance or evil, have performed; and which, coming from one so ex-



perienced, so universally known, could not be otherwise received than with the kindest feelings. But suppose Dr. Miller had drawn up and issued a paper containing his views on all the subjects just mentioned, and his advice on all the points of duty contemplated, and called upon every friend of the church, every man who had the courage to avow his sentiments, or who was not a secret heretic or revolutionist, to sanction his views and adopt his recommendations, by affixing to them their names, what would have been thought of it? Would this course be identical with the one which he actually pursued? Would not, on the contrary, the public mind have been revolted from the presumptuous arrogance of the proceeding, and pronounced it at once adapted to divide, rather than to unite; to produce discord instead of harmony? The arrogance of such a measure is diminished, indeed, in proportion to the age and general claims to respect of the individual from whom it proceeds, or the number and weight of those who may set it in motion; but to say there is no difference between issuing a declaration, and calling for the general adoption of a long paper abounding with statements of facts, opinions, and recommendations, needs no contradiction. We do not hesitate, therefore, to repeat that it was an unwarrantable and arrogant assumption on the part of the original framers of the Act and Testimony, to put it forth as demanding the concurrence of all the "real followers of Christ" in our church; an assumption which is not palliated or excused by the pressure of the necessity, nor by the unexceptionable character of the document itself. On both these grounds it is utterly indefensible. There is no necessity or call for these extra-constitutional and revolutionary measures of reform. The church is pronounced "substantially sound," by the highest authority on this point.\* Then where is the danger of leaving it to the natural and healthful action of our system? Is Presbyterianism a failure? Are all the constitutional methods of redress and reform of our much vaunted platform of doctrine and discipline proved to be worthless? Must recourse be had to measures which the constitution never contemplated, and can never sanction? Are these brethren aware that they are making our church government a reproach throughout the land? And justly too, if their inca-

\* PRESBYTERIAN for December 18, 1834.

tures are either wise or necessary. Is it not the language of their whole course, that a difficulty has arisen which the constitution cannot master—which no presbyterial, synodical, or General Assembly action can reach; but which demands the combination, under a new standard and test, of all sound men, and their convocation in a separate body? All this in a church “substantially sound”! What then is Presbyterianism worth? No enemies are so much to be dreaded as over-zealous friends. We do not doubt that the men who consider themselves as the exclusively faithful few, and who cast off all others, are doing more than they can well estimate, to weaken our form of government in the confidence and affection of our own members, and in the respect of the Christian community.

We repeat with increasing confidence, that this document is not what it purports to be. It is not an Act and Testimony. It is not a declaration of opinion as to certain errors and abuses, and recommendation for their correction. Such were Dr. Miller’s letters, such were the pastoral letters and public declarations of the Presbyteries of Albany, New York, New Brunswick, and others, and of the Synods of Pittsburg and Kentucky. Against these and similar declarations, who has raised, or feels disposed to raise the slightest whisper of complaint? But had either of these bodies called on all others to adopt their paper, or be spurned at as unsound or unfaithful, the complaint would have been loud and just. It is admitted then by its advocates, that this document is a test. “So far as the Act and Testimony will *try* the state of opinion in the church, we have no objection that it should be called a test act,” says the Presbyterian. “But the test should be alarming only to errorists. That it may become offensive to others, arises from the anomalous fact, that there is a party in the church, which professing orthodoxy, opposes orthodox measures. And while it denounces error, casts its protecting shield over errorists. That it should place this party in a dilemma, is unjustly placed to its account, as a fault.” There you have it, in plain English. The Act and Testimony is offensive to errorists and the abettors of errorists alone. Here are the three parties in the church, according to the modest statement of these brethren. Themselves the only faithful ones—the heretics, and those who defend and protect them. If this classification be adapted to promote harmony and confidence, if this, the appropriate working of the misnamed Act

and Testimony, be not adapted to alienate and offend, we are ignorant of the human heart. This assertion is made in face of the fact, that not one-sixth of the ministers in a church admitted to be substantially sound, have signed the document in question, and so far as is yet known, only one solitary synod out of the whole two-and-twenty, has lent it its sanction!

As there is no exigency to call for, or to justify, the extraordinary measure under consideration, so, did such exigency actually exist, this document is not adapted for the purpose designed. This was the second general objection to the Act and Testimony; and how has it been answered? It will scarcely be denied, that where men are called upon to affix their signature to a document containing statements of facts, declarations of opinion, and urgent recommendations, they must have good evidence that these facts are true, these opinions correct, and these recommendations wise. The obligation to be satisfied on these points is great in proportion to the importance of the declarations which they are called upon to sanction. In this view we stated that the Act and Testimony was not adapted for general signature as a test of orthodoxy. It contained assertions implicating the character not of individuals only, but of the highest judicatory of the church, which no conscientious man could sign without believing to be true, or believe to be true, but on the exhibition of the most satisfactory evidence. In reference to this point the writer of the defence pursues a most extraordinary course. He, in the first place, in a great measure confounds two very different things, the existence of errors in the church, and the charge that the General Assembly, after having long connived at these alarming errors, has at length countenanced and sustained them. The former of these positions may be true, and the other not so. Evidence therefore in favour of the one, is not evidence in favour of the other. In the second place he assumes the strange position, that personal knowledge of the fact asserted is not necessary to justify an individual in making it. After saying that the Jewish law required two witnesses to establish a fact, that Christ chose only twelve apostles to bear witness to what he said and did, he says that there are now about fifteen hundred men, who having signed the Act and Testimony, bear testimony to the truth of its allegations in the very form in which they are made, which are thereby proven beyond dispute.

This is very extraordinary reasoning. The objection is that we have not evidence to justify us in testifying to a specific fact. The answer is, that fifteen hundred men have testified to it, and therefore others may. Others do. And then the number of witnesses is so much the greater. Thus it may go on, and two thousand or two hundred thousand witnesses might all sign upon the original personal faith of the first two individuals; and yet the whole be brought forward as a great cloud of witnesses. What is it to my conscience when called upon to testify to a fact, that another man believes it to be true? Unless I have personal knowledge of the fact what is my testimony worth? Or how can it be honestly given? If we understand the writer, he would have us believe all the allegations of the *Act and Testimony*, because the signers assert them to be true; and not only believe them, but on the ground of the testimony of these signers, affix our own names to the list. We surely think that a man ought to know for himself that what he testifies is correct, and not be contented thus to go shares in the faith of others.

There is another obvious fallacy in this statement. The assertions complained of are founded on opinion. They consist in the ascription of motives, and from the nature of the case, are not susceptible of proof by testimony. We would readily believe the assertion of any two, or any one of the signers of the *Act and Testimony* as to a plain matter of fact within his knowledge; and yet we do not believe the whole fifteen hundred when making the assertions contained in the *Act and Testimony*. That is, we do not agree with them in opinion. They put construction on certain acts which we think they will not bear; and ascribe motives to men, which we do not believe influenced their conduct. There being fifteen hundred, or fifteen thousand men, who think differently, cannot alter the case, or present the slightest rational foundation for the change of our opinion, much less for joining in their assertion. To present these numerous signers, therefore, as witnesses to the facts, thus involving matters of opinion, and founded on particular construction of certain acts, asserted in the *Act and Testimony*, is a mere fallacy, "which can excite nothing beyond a smile in men of reflexion." The number and character of the signers of this document, therefore, afford no relief to the difficulty. When I am called upon to testify to all the world the solemn fact, that the highest judicatory of the church has be-



come corrupt, that it has deliberately countenanced and sustained alarming errors; errors which are pronounced to be radical, affecting the very foundations of religion, I must have some better evidence of the truth of the charge than that such is the construction put upon certain of their acts by a number of good and respectable men. Some of the most offensive of these acts were proposed, or carried through, by men who have ever stood, and do now stand, high in the respect of the churches, for some of whom, at least, the writer of the Defence professes almost unabated confidence, and who have frequently, and of late, denounced these very errors, which the signers of the Act and Testimony are made solemnly to affirm before God and the world that they countenance and sustain. This charge was designed beyond doubt to impute the sin of deliberate and intentional countenancing of the evils in question; for this is the only construction the language will bear, and the only thing that could be the ground of complaint. Accordingly, the writer of the Defence says, that the doings of the Assembly for four years “had strongly set in such a way as to make heresy respectable, to make it secure, to make it praiseworthy, to organize it, to protect it,—and finally, to engraft it in a permanent establishment as a part of our organization.” On the other hand, these doings tended to bring the truth into disrepute, &c. &c. “And these truths,” he adds, “the very doctrines of grace, and these errors, the very errors condemned in the Act and Testimony.” In another paragraph, he says, “that the urgent motive for the exertion of the new Presbytery of Philadelphia, was the protection of these errors on doctrine and discipline.” That Presbytery is declared to be in a great measure unsound, and the Assembly, it is said, “is believed to have taken it into special favour for that very reason.” The principal acts thus complained of as evidence of the corruption of the Assembly, and which are said to have arisen from the desire to protect the errors condemned in the Act and Testimony, were sustained and advocated by men who abhor those errors, who have openly and solemnly testified against them, and who have some right to have their solemn affirmations with regard to their motives and designs believed. Yet these, and other men, the signers of the Act and Testimony, are made, blind the matter as you please, to declare and certify over their own signatures, deliberately countenanced and sustained them. We venture with all deference

to repeat that such a paper is not exactly the one which ought to be submitted to the churches for universal signature as a test of orthodoxy and bond of union. We do not believe that one-fourth of the Assembly was actuated by any deliberate purpose to countenance the errors condemned by the Act and Testimony, and we are very glad the responsibility does not rest on our conscience of having affirmed the contrary.

A second consideration urged as a reason why the Act and Testimony is not adapted to be received as a test, was, that it recommends that the existence and acts of certain Presbyteries be considered as unconstitutional and void. The grounds of objection to this recommendation were, 1st. That it is inconsistent with the obedience promised and due to the General Assembly. 2. That it must necessarily produce the greatest confusion in the church, by organizing two sets of ministers, judicatories, and churches not recognizing each others ecclesiastical existence or acts. We have heard it gravely said by a member of the First Presbytery of Philadelphia, that he did not consider the pastor of the Walnut street congregation as a Presbyterian minister—or as the pastor of that church, or any of his acts as such ecclesiastically valid. 3d. That this measure is on the face of it extra-constitutional and revolutionary, and that its direct tendency, if not its design, is to divide the church. It was argued that a document containing recommendations of such serious consequences, and of such doubtful wisdom is not fit to be a test act, and a bond of union among the orthodox. It was supposed that some very good and very sound men, might have scruples about recommending such measures as these, who should not, on that account, have their names cast out as evil.

The only answer we can find to these objections, appears to us to amount to an admission of their validity, but a denial of their importance. The Presbyterian says, in reference to this point, "We answer, that no conscientious man has pledged a blind and unintelligent obedience; the pledge is given to the constitution; and obedience may be righteously withheld where there is a manifest infringement of the letter and spirit of the instrument, &c." He afterwards says, That every man living under the constitution has a right to judge whether it is rightly interpreted or not, and in case of infringement, it is his right and duty to resist. The Defender takes the same ground. He argues, that be-

cause the Assembly is a delegated body of limited powers, created by the Presbyteries which are composed of elders and pastors elected by the people, all power is ultimately vested in the people. And therefore to the people it is right to appeal. "So that God's people are the ultimate tribunal upon earth," is his conclusion, "and there we have lodged our appeal. And let him who fears to meet us there, know assuredly that his cause is rotten." It requires but little reflection on the part of the reader to perceive, that there is nothing in all this inconsistent with any thing he had said. It was readily and clearly admitted that the Assembly, being a body acting under a constitution, was bound to obey it, and when in any case the constitution was infringed, the question was of course presented whether resistance was not a duty. That there were cases, on the one hand, of such minor importance, that for every individual who might doubt or disbelieve the constitutionality of the acts in question, to refuse acquiescence, would be both unwise and wicked; and on the other, there were cases in which the unconstitutionality was so apparent, and the importance so manifest, that resistance becomes a duty as obvious as it is imperative. If illustration of so plain a point be necessary, let it be supposed that congress should enact a law requiring every man in the country, under severe penalties, to attend mass once a week. There is not an individual in the land who would not laugh such a law to scorn. But does it follow from hence, that any man who chooses may openly refuse obedience himself, endeavour to combine others in resisting a law creating a bank, imposing a tariff, or directing an internal improvement? These gentlemen are abundant in proving what no one denies, but are profoundly silent as to the only point in debate. No one pretends that the Assembly is omnipotent, nor that its acts may not be such as to make resistance the most obvious of duties—but the question is, are the acts creating the Second Presbytery of Philadelphia, and the Synod of Delaware, such acts? Are they so obviously unconstitutional, and so vitally important, as to call for a resistance which renders, and is designed to render, the division of the church, or the annulling of those acts inevitable? This is the question—and on this point we have not a slip of argument, nothing beyond declamatory assertion. Let it be borne in mind that this question is to be decided from the nature of the acts in question—apart from the motives which lead to their adoption. These motives

cannot be ascertained, they were very various, different in different individuals, some good and others bad. The motives, therefore, cannot properly be the ground of resistance. One man may vote for a tariff in congress for the sake of the revenue, another to promote a particular home manufacture, another to advance the interests of a political favourite, another to secure his own re-election—how then, is the constitutionality of the act to be determined by the motives of the legislators unless these motives be avowed? It will not do, therefore, to say that the acts creating the bodies just mentioned were designed to protect heresy and heretics, and therefore ought to be resisted. This design is denied, and cannot be proved. The motives and objects of those who voted for these acts were doubtless very numerous and various. Some of them of purest and most elevated kind, and others of the very opposite character. In such a case, it is vain to make the motives the ground of resistance. It is the nature of the act. The creation of such bodies by the Assembly, and on the ground of elective affinity. It matters not as to the point in hand, whether the protection of truth, or the security of error, or the peace of the church, had most weight in producing the decision. Some doubtless were influenced by one, and some the others of these motives. The question, therefore, presented by the Act and Testimony to the churches is, whether the creation of ecclesiastical bodies without other than geographical limits, is a sufficient reason for the open and organized resistance to the Assembly designed to necessitate the retraction of the offensive acts, or the division of the church? Instead of saying this is the question which the Act and Testimony submits, we should rather say that this is the question which it decides in the affirmative. Every signer of that document is made to declare that this is a point of such importance as to call for open and organized rebellion—the disruption of all ecclesiastical bonds, and the separation of our beloved church. We say again that a document which takes this ground, and earnestly recommends this course, is not fit to be a test of orthodoxy, and a bond of union between the real followers of Christ in the Presbyterian church.

It should be noticed that the correctness of the representation made in the Repertory of the character of this recommendation is not denied. It is admitted to be a case of resistance to the regular authority in the church; it is de-



clared to be an appeal from the Assembly to the people; it is on the face of it extra-constitutional and revolutionary. The ground of defence is not that the course proposed is one of the regular and constitutional modes of redress, but the urgency and importance of the case. A case in which obedience is not due, but organized resistance, be the consequences what they may, a duty. Let then those who think the abstract constitutional principle involved in this question, one on which such interests depend as to call for the measure proposed, sign the recommendation, but let not those who think differently be on that account denounced and rejected.

We have more than once remarked that this recommendation was designed to necessitate either the annulling of the acts of the Assembly complained of, or the division of the church. It was designed to make a case from which there could be no escape; to assume such a position as would produce a state of confusion and difficulty perfectly intolerable, in order that the Assembly should be forced either to retract or submit to have the church divided. We are authorized in making this remark—1. Because such is obviously the tendency of the measure in question. 2. Because such is almost, in so many words, the avowal of the document itself.\* 3. Because such we have repeatedly understood from its friends and advocates was the purpose which they had in view. 4. And because the author declared upon the floor of Synod, that such was not only the design which its framers had in view, but which they stood solemnly pledged to see accomplished. “The Act and Testimony,” he said, “would restore the purity of the church. It was a covenant which would either exclude those from the church who were unsound, and restore peace, or restore its advocates. One party must be cut off. Either the old or the new school must be excluded; and until such a result is had, the friends of the Act and Testimony stand pledged to each other never to rest, but adhere firmly, manfully, and temperately to the stand taken, and the gates of hell would not prevail against them.”

There may be some inaccuracy in the language of this report, but the sentiments are so accordant with the spirit

\* “If the majority of our church are against us, they will, we suppose in the end, either see the infatuation of their course, and retrace their steps, or they will, at last, attempt to cut us off.”

and tendency of the document in question, that we cannot doubt its substantial correctness. Whether all the signers of the Act and Testimony have contemplated it in this light or not, we cannot presume to say; but they certainly have been led to put their hand to a recommendation which demands a concession which it is almost beyond the bounds of possibility should be granted as the only alternative to a division of the church.

The third specific objection to the Act and Testimony was founded on the recommendation of the convention at Pittsburg. The grounds on which this measure was considered inexpedient, are nearly the same as those presented in reference to the preceding point. There are many other weighty considerations which might be urged against the convocation of such an assembly under such circumstances, but this subject has already been referred to in a previous article. We have been informed that many highly respectable brethren of the west have, to use the language of the Presbytery of Ohio, *acquiesced* in the holding of this convention, on the principle that if it is to be held, it is desirable that as many moderate men, friends of order as well as orthodoxy, of union as well as purity, should attend. By so doing, however, they are sanctioning the principle of appeal, from the regular and authorized tribunals of the church, to the people in their primary assemblies—a principle which must lead to strife and division. We verily believe, if that convention were attended by those only who enter heartily into the spirit of those who suggested the measure, it would prove to be so small an affair, that the failure would administer a most salutary lesson. What that convention is to do, the author of the scheme seems himself at a loss to determine. The plan, as at first marked out and understood, was sufficiently intelligible. The Act and Testimony was to ascertain and to combine all the really sound members of the church. These were to meet by their delegates at Pittsburg, and propose to the Assembly the alternative of submission or division. This was a plain, obvious and sensible plan. Such, we gave the actors in this scheme the credit of supposing, they designed it to be. But it seems there is nothing now very definite for this convention to do. There are indeed two subjects suggested by the writer, which may profitably employ their time. The first is, “the formation of some new Act and Testimony, that all the followers of Jesus Christ in our church can cordially

adopt; and which yet, like the refiner's fire, separate the dross from the gold; a plan that will unite all the orthodox and separate all the heterodox." "The Act and Testimony was designed to be, itself, or to lead to the formation of such a thing." We have here a clear statement of the design of the Act and Testimony, which, as we understand it, was to unite all the orthodox, with a view to separation from all the heterodox, *i. e.* with a view to a division of the church, by other means than the regular exercise of discipline.—How far it will be possible to devise a new Act and Testimony, which shall be able to rally all the friends of truth, it is not for us to predict; but we venture to prophesy, that if it calls for a general adoption and signature as a test act, and contemplates extra-constitutional methods of reform and redress, it will be as much a failure as the one which it is designed to supersede. Do let a church "substantially sound," with a scriptural creed, and admirable form of government, alone, to work her own reform, and advance her own interests. What better or stricter test can the convention frame, than what we have already in our confession of faith and catechisms? If men will sign these with reservation or insincerity, what is to hinder their adoption of a new creed in the same manner? Are we to have this process over every few years? When through or over the newly constructed hedge, others than those intended shall have made their way, must the whole be again broken up; a new division, and a re-inclosure made? We doubt exceedingly whether so many brethren would have agreed to this convention, had they imagined this was to be the main object of the convocation.

The second topic suggested for the consideration of the meeting is, either the erection of a new theological seminary, or the selection of some one of those already existing, to be under the control of the orthodox synods. This we admit is a very important subject, but one on which we shall be silent. We have only to remark, that it is evidently an after-thought. This project had no part in the original designs of the framers of the Act and Testimony, nor in the call of the convention at Pittsburg. Whether wise or unwise, it cannot fairly be adduced as evidence of the expediency and wisdom of assembling that body.

The third of the general objections to the Act and Testimony mentioned above is, that the *modus operandi* of the measure has never been explained to the satisfaction of the

churches. It is asserted with the greatest confidence that it will reform the church; but how it is to produce this result has never been explained. As remarked above, there was one mode of its operation sufficiently intelligible and efficient. It is proposed to ascertain and combine all the friends of truth in one body, and when thus organized, to propose to the General Assembly the choice between acquiescence and the division of the church. But when this mode of its operation is denied or relinquished, what remains for it to accomplish? It cannot be that the mere testifying against certain errors and abuses, was expected to have these important results. Because, in the first place, the cause is altogether inadequate to the effect. The declaration, on the part of any number of individuals, that error exists in the church, is not sufficient for its extirpation. Did not the last obnoxious General Assembly itself, deliberately profess unabated attachment to our excellent standards? But what did this amount to in the estimation of the signers of the Act and Testimony? To nothing at all: yet it contained of course a denunciation of all the errors which they denounce. Secondly, because no testifying against error would satisfy the friends of that measure. When the Presbytery of New Brunswick, and subsequently the Synod of Pittsburg, instead of adopting the Act and Testimony, bore witness in their own way against the existing errors and abuses, although they went further (at least the former body did) and were more explicit than that document itself, it was far from giving satisfaction. There was a rebuke of the middle course of the Synod, put forth in no very measured terms, by the official paper of the movement party. It is not therefore by testifying, that the good was to be done. How then was it to be accomplished? This has always been to us a mystery, and is so to this moment. That is, since it was denied that the measure was merely preparatory to a division of the church. Viewed in any other light it appeared entirely inefficient, and therefore on that ground alone obviously inexpedient. When all the churches are solemnly appealed to and aroused; when they are called upon to sign a certain document, and to organize themselves in a new form, they naturally ask, for what? The answer is, to reform the church. How?—To this we find no reply. Unless therefore the signers are prepared to come out boldly and say what it is they desire, and how they design to accomplish their object, how can they com-



plain that the churches are not prepared to follow them perfectly blindfolded? If, on the other hand, the original purport (as it was generally apprehended) be adhered to; if, when the signers are organized, they mean to drive the wedge home; if they are determined to force the Assembly to retract or divide, then it becomes every man involved in the scheme to understand and avow its object and mode of operation, or to have no part or lot in the concern.

In concluding our remarks on this defence of the Act and Testimony, there are a few supplementary remarks, which we deem it expedient to make. In the first place there are many of the assertions of the writer which appear to us very inaccurate as to matters of fact; many of his assumptions altogether unauthorised. As to this point, we cannot do more than give an example. He asserts, for instance, that the Act and Testimony has been adopted by the three powerful Synods of Kentucky, Pittsburg, and Philadelphia. This is surely a mistake. This honour belongs to the Synod of Philadelphia alone. The course pursued by the other bodies is no more an adoption of the Act and Testimony, than that taken by the Presbytery of New Brunswick. This was so obviously the case, that, as remarked above, the Synod of Pittsburg was pointedly rebuked by the Presbyterian, for its half-way measure. The truth is, a large part of that Synod was decidedly opposed to the whole measure, another portion approved of it only as a general testimony against error; a third, and, as we are informed, very small portion, was disposed to embrace the whole. The moment, however, there was discussion on the subject, and a measure proposed which satisfied the consciences of those who desired to raise their voice against the prevalent errors and disorders in the church, all cordially embraced it, and it was passed with the full approbation of some of the most strenuous opposers of the Act and Testimony, within our bounds. These brethren will be surprised to be informed that they have adopted a document which they thought they were successfully opposing. The same remarks substantially might be made in reference to the Synod of Kentucky. The subtraction of those two important bodies makes a considerable alteration in the state of the case.

Again, it is assumed by this writer that the whole thirteen, or fifteen hundred signers of the Act and Testimony, sympathize with him and his immediate associates in their

feelings, and approve of their plans. We know this to be a great mistake. We know that many, very many, of the brethren who have put their names to that document, regarded it merely as a general declaration in behalf of truth and order, and never contemplated its being used for the purposes, nor with the spirit of the Defender and his friends. This we know from the declaration of many of these signers themselves, from the testimony of men of the highest respectability and extensive information from different parts of the church, and from the conclusive fact, that although most of the presbyteries constituting the Synod of Pittsburg had adopted the Act and Testimony, yet these very brethren, when met in Synod, virtually avowed that all their objects were attained by the general declaration issued by that body. We think this should satisfy the writer that he is greatly deceived as to the state of feeling in the church, and prepare him to find himself in a very lean minority if he is determined to abide by the stand which he has taken. It should also, we think, quiet his apprehensions. The Synod of Pittsburg has been always, and justly, regarded as the spine of our church, firm and trust-worthy as their own enduring mountains. If then this, the most homogeneous, orthodox, consistent and independent body within our bounds, pronounces in terms not to be mistaken, the Act and Testimony unnecessary, unwise, and injurious, it will demand but a slight measure of self-distrust in the earnest advocates of that measure, to doubt its policy, and to consent to have it deposited quietly in the tomb of the Capulets. A second remark is on the following sentence:—“Whether it has been wise in Princeton to stay us in our efforts to reform the church, and by consequence the Assembly, and thereby save and sustain Princeton itself, let those who have driven us to the wall, judge.” In reference to this sentence we wish to say, first, that Princeton has nothing, and wishes to have nothing to do with this or any similar matter. By Princeton, we mean the six or eight Presbyterian ministers dwelling in that place. We think we may say, without impropriety or mistake, that there is not an equal number of clergymen in the church, less disposed to meddle in affairs which do not belong to them, or more inclined to attend in quietness to their own peculiar and special duties. As members of ecclesiastical bodies they have of course their rights and duties, and have not been backward in performing their part in the transactions

of such bodies. And as connected, as is the case with several of them, in conducting a Quarterly Review, it is their privilege and duty to express their sentiments to their readers, on the subjects which appropriately fall under their notice. But we do not think it either delicate or proper, that Princeton, as such, should be brought forward as taking this or that course, or as mixing itself with every question which may be discussed in the Repertory. Let the papers inserted in that journal be received with just so much prepossession and favour as the Review has fairly earned for itself, and no more, and let their arguments and views be allowed to pass for just what they are worth, without being cried up or down, on account of their origin. Secondly, in reference to this sentence—Is it fair to say that Princeton has stayed these brethren in their efforts to reform the church? Has ever the Repertory done this? We have simply expostulated and argued against a measure which we believed threatened to ruin the church. As to being opposed to reform, nothing is farther from the fact. We wish reform, but let it come in a way consistent with fidelity to our engagements, with the integrity of the church, and the preservation of our form of discipline and government, and not at the expense of all these interests.

A third remark. The Act and Testimony is confessedly a failure. It is announced that its object was to unite all the orthodox. This it has not done. It has received the sanction of but one synod in the Presbyterian Church. It has not, even as a general declaration, been adopted by one-sixth of the ministers in our communion. It has, therefore, failed in its avowed object. More than this. By failing to unite, it must of necessity divide. If a certain portion only of the sound part of the church adhere to this document and its policy, of course the remaining portion is separated. Whose fault is this? The fault of those who proposed and urged the signing of a paper as a test of orthodoxy, which few, comparatively, can conscientiously sign. It is no longer a matter of conjecture or opinion, but a matter of fact, that the Act and Testimony has divided the ranks of the old school men. It has filled the hearts and mouths of their most open opponents with rejoicing. It is to them the certain presage of triumph; the most welcome of all services. What then is to be done? Is the wedge to be driven home? Is the only hope of the peace and purity of our church—the cordial union of all really sound and moderate

men—to be destroyed by the ultra zeal and anti-presbyterial measures of a comparatively small portion of the church?

We are not without hopes that this cloud will soon blow over; that God will bring good out of evil; that he will make the misguided zeal, as we think it, of his people, the occasion of arousing the careless, and of directing the attention of his church to real evils, and to the proper method of their correction. If the Act and Testimony is the means of letting its friends see, what others were so happy as to know before, that the church is “substantially sound,” and of leading even those who oppose it to declarations of opinion adapted to restore confidence, we shall not regret its having been issued. When a ship is tossed by a tempest upon the ocean, her safety, under God, depends upon every man doing his own duty. If, in over anxiety for her welfare, first one and then another rushes to the helm, and presses it now hard-a-port, and now hard-a-starboard, the peril is imminent. Yet even this alarm, by rousing all on board, and leading to the determination to see that, while volunteer helmsmen are kept quiet, the regular authorities are watchful and faithful, may be conducive to ultimate safety. We have so much respect for the constitution and discipline of our church, and so much hope in God, that we believe nothing is wanting beyond the regular action of our system, to make the Presbyterian body harmonious, pure, and efficient.

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*J. A. Alexander*

ART. VIII.—*Sketches of Society and Manners in Great Britain and Ireland.* By C. S. Stewart, M. A. of the U. S. Navy. Author of “*A Visit to the South Seas,*” &c. &c. Philadelphia. Carey, Lea & Blanchard. 2 vols. 12mo. 1834.

MR. STEWART'S opportunities of access to English society of elevated rank were greater, we believe, than those of any other tourist from America, whose observations have been given to the public. He did not merely catch a glimpse of aristocratic splendour upon certain great occasions, or come into casual contact with the “nobility and gentry” by a hap-hazard invitation to some festive board. He was the domesticated guest of many high-born families.



He was lodged beneath their roof, fed at their table, and partook of their amusements. Of course he saw what the mere transient traveller never sees. He may not have caught the character and temper in complete undress; but he had rare advantages for the observation of domestic arrangements and personal deportment. How far it is in general, consistent with good manners and good taste (we say nothing of good faith) to retail observations which could never have been made but for special opportunities afforded by the hospitable kindness of the characters described, we shall not pretend to say. The abstract question might admit of some debate; but the case before us seems to be removed from the operation of the general rule, whatever that may be, by two considerations. One is, that Mr. Stewart was admitted, after all, to the houses which he visited, as to a sort of spectacle. Every thing was no doubt, set in order for inspection, not by him particularly, but by guests in general.\* With this arrangement we are far from finding fault. It seems to be rendered necessary by the very practice of extensive hospitality, and so far as it enforces a perpetual attention to neatness and decorum, it must be highly beneficial. We allude to the fact now, simply as a proof that a traveller might experience all that Mr. S. experienced, without absolutely reaching the domestic *adytum*, or fathoming the secrets of society *au fond*. If this be so, his revelations must be wholly inoffensive, not to say agreeable. It is impossible, for instance, to imagine, that the minutest printed observations would, if ever heard of, give the least offence in a house where Mr. Stewart and Captain Bolton, were not only most courteously received "as strangers," by the lady of the mansion, but "were shown the entire establishment from the sleeping apartment and dressing room of Mrs. Nesbit herself, through a long succession of others for the accommodation of company, to the scullery, including the nursery, the butler's and the house-keeper's rooms, servant's hall, plate-room, kitchen, laundry, dairy

\* We are confirmed in this opinion by the following statement. "The manner in regard to precision of time, and punctuality of arrival, in which the arrangements of a visit by one family, or families, to another, are made here, differs in some respect, from the custom with us. Instead of the indefinite promise of being with a friend, some time in the coming week, month, or season, as is not unusual in America, the exact day on which you are invited or are expected, is fixed even for months, in some cases, in advance." Vol. II. p. 47.

and meat-house.”\* Such exhibitions are common enough in the absence of the family; but when strangers are admitted to the lady's private chambers, while the lady is at home, who can find fault with the report of observations in the dining-room and parlour? But there is still another exculpatory circumstance, if such it may be called, when there is perhaps, at all events, no fault to be excused. Even supposing that there were a sensibility to criticism, and that it were regarded as indelicate to print upon such subjects, it is pretty certain that the only case, in which the rigid application of the rule would be insisted on, is where the tone of censure and derision is predominant. In America, at least, we feel assured that no such breach of social confidence would incur much censure, if committed with panegyric design. The *laudum immensa cupido*, with which we are too justly upbraided, would forever shield the amiable culprit. If this interpretation of the social law obtains at all in England—and it no doubt does obtain in some degree, though far less than with us, Mr. Stewart is quite secure from all reproach. He has most successfully reversed the course of British travellers in America. While *nil admirari* seems to be their motto, and one which they depart from only in the extremest cases, and even then with obstinate reluctance, our accomplished countryman appears to have traversed England in a perpetual ecstasy. His own kindly disposition or some external influence, appears to have made “all beauty to his eye, all music to his ear.” Never did we read a book pervaded by a gush of eulogy so copious and unbroken.† Had the author written for the eye of his British entertainers rather than that of his American correspondents, he could not have provided more completely for the gratification of their feelings, or more sedulously guarded against every shock to their susceptibilities. The whole book, so far as we have read it, and so far as it relates to *high life* in Great Britain, is an uniform surface of delighted panegyric, as free from the slightest ripple of reproof or sarcasm, as the bulletin of a state-ball in the London Court Gazette. This is certainly a stern rebuke to the fastidious petulance of itinerant John Bulls. While they can scarcely bring themselves to praise our

\* Vol. II. p. 99.

† We ought perhaps, to make an exception in favour of the passage where the manners of refined society in America and England are compared—and somewhat to the advantage of the former.

lakes and rivers, lest they should pamper the conceit of brother Jonathan, and while the highest and the lowest of them deluge with contempt our social and domestic usages, we have in this volume the edifying spectacle of an American clergyman, a Presbyterian, a missionary, conforming with apparent pleasure to the unnatural refinements of aristocratical society, breakfasting in the afternoon, dining at night, and retiring after midnight; closing the day with "tales of witchcraft and hobgoblins," or the merrier excitement of "quadrilles and waltzes,"\* and all without the slightest exhibition of republican antipathies, or puritanical scruples! What a contrast this to the peevishness and hauteur of Basil Hall, or even Stuart and Hamilton! How easy is it, when the will is so disposed, to forget little distinctions, yea and great ones too, in an amiable spirit of accommodation!

We trust that these two facts are amply sufficient to exonerate our author from the charge of indecorum, or what is sometimes called a breach of hospitality, and at the same time to relieve us from all scruples with respect to the possibility of using information thus obtained, without being guilty of receiving stolen goods. As soon as we learned that an American minister of our own denomination, and one in whose judgment we reposed such confidence, had enjoyed unusual opportunities of intercourse with the higher ranks in England, we were filled with a desire to know what he had discovered with respect to the state of religion in that portion of society. The current religious information from Great Britain seldom touches lords and ladies. It relates, for the most part, to the more important class of human beings whom an artificial system sets beneath them. We seized with avidity this chance of information, and with

\* "The order of every day is the same." \* \* \* "About twelve, servants enter with a tray of refreshments, jellies, biscuit, wine, &c. which, with another containing the bed-room lamps, is placed upon a table. Some tale of witchcraft and hobgoblins, is not unfrequently introduced, at the same time, to prepare the imaginations of the superstitious for the distance and death-like stillness of their sleeping apartments; and in the full flow of social converse and pleasantry, the salutations of the night are interchanged." Vol. I. p. 250. This was at Newstead Abbey. Now for Barlborough Hall. "The performers were then introduced to the dining-hall, ranged along one side of the room, and after being served with a glass of wine, commenced a series of catches, glees, and ballads, which were continued till coffee was announced. They were then dismissed to the servants' hall till ten o'clock, when they again took a station near the entrance to the drawing-room, and dancing was commenced, and continued in quadrilles and waltzes, till twelve." Vol. II. p. 42.

no small curiosity turned over these two volumes in quest of such intelligence. The results of our inquiry, so far as they were new to us, we lay before the reader, just as they occur, without attempting to arrange them.

At Eaton Hall, in Cheshire, a splendid seat of the Marquess of Westminster, Mr. Stewart found a neat though simple room appropriated to the uses of a chapel. Here "the household, consisting of some thirty-five or forty domestics, daily attend worship; and on each Sabbath, listen to a discourse from an evangelical and spiritually-minded chaplain." With respect to the appointment of this chaplain, Mr. Stewart was told in Chester, that "the Marquess falling in conversation with one of his gardeners, a religious man, inquired of him whose preaching he attended. In giving the name of the present chaplain in answer, the gardener spoke in the highest terms of his character as a preacher, and of his piety and faithfulness as the pastor of his flock; intimating a wish that his lordship would take some occasion to hear him. This the Marquess did, and with so much gratification, and so full a persuasion of the merits and excellence of the clergyman, as immediately to appoint him to his present situation. An anecdote," adds Mr. Stewart, "which if true in the manner related to me, speaks equally the praise of his lordship, the chaplain, and the gardener."\*

While on a visit to Mr. Bird, a gentleman of Oxfordshire, once resident in America, Mr. Stewart was struck with something unusual in the aspect of the labouring people, which he could not but refer to "some moral and intellectual influence, brought to bear in its happy tendencies upon them." On inquiry he found that his surmise was correct. He learned from Mr. Bird, that the parish was highly favoured in the character of its most distinguished residents. "His neighbours, of the first respectability and rank, equally with himself and family, are engaged in every effort, to improve and elevate the minds and hearts of all around them. And thus far, with the most pleasing effect, upon the general character and affections of those over whom their influence extends. Mrs. Bird and her daughters are not only the patronesses, but also the teachers in schools for the poor—not only on the Sabbath, but on days of the week, at different places in their vicinity. A family of the Vansittarts—a brother of Lord Bexley—occupy an estate adjoining

\* Vol. I. p. 37.



them, the members of which are their active coadjutors in every work of philanthropy and piety. While learning these facts, in the course of conversations marked by the most meek and unostentatious spirit, I rejoiced in such uses of an aristocracy. And can readily believe, that if the gentry of every parish in England, would thus bring their rank and wealth to bear upon the moral and intellectual character of the humble and dependant, among whom they dwell, the latter-day prosperity of the nation would be more glorious, and more happy, than any it has yet known.”\*

The first volume closes with an account of the author's visit to Newstead Abbey, once the residence of Byron, and now occupied by Colonel Wildman, to whom our travellers were introduced by the present Lord Byron, who figures so conspicuously and advantageously in the earlier periods of Mr. Stewart's biography. Here they were hospitably entertained for near a week. We have already given, in a note, an extract from the description of this visit. To qualify the impression which that passage may have made upon the reader's mind, we subjoin another, which is more to our taste. “On the Sabbath, I took upon myself, at the request of the family and guests, the services of the chapel of the Abbey, the chaplain being at present absent. It is one of the most interesting sections of the pile—the original oratory of the monastery opening from the cloisters on the ground floor, with antique windows of painted glass, hung in clustering ivy, and shedding round a solemnizing light. The family and their guests occupy a gallery at the elevation of a few feet above the floor, and the tenantry and servants, constituting a congregation of eighty or a hundred individuals, are seated in the general space. After the worship of the Sabbath, the gardens and shrubbery are thrown open to the tenantry for the promenade of an hour, in which the colonel with his guests join—appearing among them as a kind patron and friend. The evenings of the Sabbath are spent in the library in place of the drawing-room.”†

While at Barlborough Hall, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Rodes, Mr. Stewart made a visit to the noble mansion of a Mrs. Pole, whom he describes as “a delightful specimen of the manners of the old school,” a most courteous and high-bred lady, and a “sincere and practical Chris-

\* Vol. I. p. 203.

† Ibid., p. 252.

tian." "She is the patroness and a regular teacher of the female Sabbath school of the village--both before the morning worship, and during the interval of an hour or two between the services." She walks with the children in procession to the church, and makes no secret of the interest which she feels in their spiritual welfare. Mr. Stewart thinks that he perceived indications of a refining and elevating influence on her poorer neighbours. We can readily imagine his emotions on perceiving that this lady's pew, "in place of the silk or worsted hangings seen in others, was furnished with curtains of *tapa*, or native cloth of the Sandwich Islands, a present, no doubt, from Lord Byron on his return from them, after his cruise in the Blonde frigate."\* Such an incident occurring amidst the festivities of Barlborough Hall, must have carried back the thoughts to scenes far different from the Reverend Mr. Rodes' quadrilles and waltzes.

In Scotland, Mr. Stewart appears to have been troubled by the rudeness and rusticity of the country congregations. He mentions the fact on several occasions, but seems to have been first struck with it in the kirk at Cumbernauld, which he attended with the family of the Honourable Admiral Fleming. We can easily account for this impression upon very simple principles, and we have a suspicion that the minister of Cumbernauld, though merely "an old bachelor, and by no means an interesting preacher,"† had quite as much theology, to say no more, as some of the mercurial divines who figure in the billiard-rooms and ball-rooms of South Britain. As we have always cherished the idea, that the religious culture of the Scottish people was better than that of any other, we did anticipate some interesting items of intelligence about them from the work before us. The amount of what we have been able most laboriously to glean, is, that the people carry Bibles, and are expert in using them; that the psalm-singing was any thing but harmonious, and that "in most cases, the whole mass of the common people, in their dress and rudeness, appeared like the beings of another generation, wearing what seemed in fashion to have been the coats and gowns, hats and bonnets, of their great grandfathers."‡ These honest Scots are as much to be pitied as the poor Tahitians, in their ill-assorted finery, when that witty navigator, Otto von Kotzebue, visited their

\* Vol. II. p. 50.

† Ibid. p. 121.

‡ Ibid. p. 203.

churches. The language of Burns might have been literally applied:

If there's a hole in a' your coats,  
I rede ye tent it,  
A chiel's amang you takin' notes,  
And faith he'll prent it.

But we are leaving the nobility to talk about the people, which is in defiance of all etiquette. Let us return to our inquiry after religion in high life. Mr. Stewart visited Gordon Castle, the proprietor of which, from his wealth and influence, is popularly called the *King of the North*. The duke and duchess were both absent, though the latter waited several days to receive our travellers, who, through some mistake delayed their visit until after her departure. The chapel of the castle is described *con amore*. Unlike the wretched kirks in which the common people worship, it is "neat and chastely ornamented" with imitation marble, Brussels carpets, blue cushions, &c. &c. What follows is worthy of quotation. "I regarded this part of the establishment with special interest, from the reasons which I have to believe that the God of our adoration is here worshipped 'in spirit and in truth,' as well as in form. I yesterday held a service in it with the household, and immediate dependants of the castle, and have offered with them the morning and evening sacrifice, to which they have been accustomed. At all times, when the duchess is at home, there are prayers at nine o'clock in the morning, and at four o'clock in the afternoon, previous to the preparations for dinner, when the household and guests can most conveniently be assembled in the greatest number. When the chaplain is not at the castle, the duchess herself reads the Scriptures, and leads the worship of the chapel. On the Sabbath, the family and servants attend the parish church in Fochabers in the morning, but there is preaching in the castle in the afternoon, and the duchess invariably reads a sermon aloud in the drawing-room on that evening, whatever may be the number or character of her guests."\* We are tempted to re-pine that Mr. Stewart merely caught a glimpse of such a household. For a week in the midst of scenes such as this description promises, he would no doubt, if he could, have cheerfully bartered all the ghosts of Newstead Abbey, and the jigs of Barlborough Hall.

\* Vol. II. p. 192.

Before he left Scotland, Mr. Stewart passed some time beneath the hospitable roof of the Marquess of Tweeddale, who served as a colonel in the last American war. "At that time," says Mr. Stewart, "he was full of conviviality and fond of the gaieties of life, and I was somewhat and most pleasingly surprised, to discover that in this respect, there has been a very decided change in his disposition and character. He is now a serious and professedly religious man, and is not only a member, but an elder of the Presbyterian Church of the parish. The whole economy of the household is that of a spiritually Christian family, with daily worship led by the Rev. Mr. Thompson, an intelligent and excellent young clergyman, the chaplain of the house."\* "Yesterday was the Sabbath. It is here, indeed, a day of piety and rest. The arrangements in reference to it are such, that all the servants of the household, notwithstanding the number of guests in the mansion, in addition to the members of the family, can attend church either in the morning or afternoon. When the weather is fine, no carriage or horses are ordered, though the distance to the parish church, in the town of Gifford, is more than a mile, and the interval between the morning and evening sermons scarce more than an hour. At eight o'clock in the evening, a sermon is read by the chaplain in the dining-room, which the whole household is assembled to hear. There was something so serious and devotional, something so becoming the Christian character and name, yet something so unusual in circles of the same rank, in the grouping of the family, the guests, and servants thus brought together, that my mind and feelings were deeply interested in the scene, and I was happy to accede to the request of Lord Tweeddale and Mr. Thompson, that I should make the evening prayer. This I did, and as the Marquess with a warm heart, gave me his hand at the close of it, I could not avoid expressing the happiness I felt in witnessing the example which himself and family were thus presenting to the circles around them, of the faith and trust placed by them in that portion which the world can neither give nor take away. And on returning to the drawing-room, I had a long and interesting conversation with himself and the marchioness, in reference to my missionary life, and the friends left behind me at the Sandwich Islands."† *O si sic omnia!*

\* Vol. II. p. 215.

† Ibid. p. 218.



We have followed Mr. Stewart to Ireland, but without obtaining any light upon the subject more immediately before us. The last visit which his book records, is one to the Bishop of Chester in his palace. This was in compliance with an urgent invitation given at Denham, and we are happy to find that Mr. Stewart's account of this distinguished prelate, confirms the favourable picture drawn by fame. We are pleased to learn that he is only a lord *ex officio*, not in spirit and deportment. His house is called a palace, but is "as simple in its furniture and ornaments within, as it is unpretending in its architecture without." "In the order and regularity, the gentleness, the quiet, and kind spirit of the household, there is a propriety and charm" says Mr. Stewart, "which I have never seen surpassed." His opinion of the bishop is summed up in these words:—"His whole character in mind and spirit, and the entire habit of life, in himself and in his family, are just such as those of a 'bishop of souls' should be, and such as have, since I first crossed the threshold of his doors, hourly won more and more of the high respect and warm affections of my heart."\*

We quote these sentences with pleasure, as a testimony to the bishop's merits, though we are aware that they do not relate directly to the topic of inquiry which we have selected, viz. religion in high life. The English prelates are, by virtue of their office, Peers of England; but they do not necessarily or commonly belong to the English aristocracy. In a great majority of cases, they arise from what are called the lower orders of society. The majority of their years are spent in academical study or parochial cares, until the royal favour raises them at once to a spiritual peerage. They are not to be regarded, therefore, as samples of aristocratical piety. We cannot help observing, by the way, that Mr. Stewart appears to have come in contact very seldom with the English clergy. In the case just mentioned and one other, and we think in these alone, does he appear to have had familiar intercourse with persons of that cloth. The other reverend gentleman with whom he was domesticated, belongs, it would seem, in his own right, to the aristocracy. He is not without his influence, however, on the lower orders, though our readers would be slow to guess the way in which he acts upon them. He had

\* Vol. II. p. 273.

kindly accompanied our travellers to Sheffield, where he introduced them to the Messrs. Rogers, the celebrated cutlers, appointing them a time to meet him at the Angel Inn, which accordingly they did. The rest must be given in our author's words.\* "We here discovered the reason why [the Reverend] Mr. R. had absented himself. He is deeply interested in the success of a gentleman who is at present canvassing in Sheffield as a candidate for parliament, and had been occupied in writing a handbill, and having it struck off at a printing press, advocating the claims of his friend, and inviting those of the towns-people disposed to support him, to the hotel, to hear an address from him, and to partake in a distribution of beer which he had ordered to be served in the street. While we were at table the handbills were brought in—their import soon communicated in the street, and a crowd as rapidly collected. [The Reverend] Mr. R. addressed them from a window of the room in which we were, on the second floor—streams of beer were at the same time gushing from barrels which had been tapped below, and men, women, and children were rushing from every direction, with all manner of utensils, in which to catch a portion of the beverage—while mingled cheers and hooting, and an uproar of rudeness and vulgarity, such as I have never before witnessed, were exhibited on every side to the ear and eye."†

We can sympathise with our author's feelings on being surprised, in such a situation, by a call from the humble, pious, excellent Montgomery; and we do not wonder that the serious and retiring poet, "after a few moments of conversation took his leave." This scene serves also to explain the strength of Mr. Stewart's emotions on being admitted to the privacy of Bishop Sumner. A stronger contrast could not be imagined between two ministers of Christ and their respective households, than that which Mr. Stewart has unintentionally drawn between Barlborough Hall and the Palace at Chester.

We have now exhausted, we believe, the information which the work before us furnishes on religious subjects.‡ We have confined our citations chiefly to this topic, because mere miscellaneous sketches hardly fall within the sphere of our critical jurisdiction. The journey of an ordinary

\* The words in brackets we supply.

† Vol. II. p. 45.

‡ Mr. S. enjoyed delightful intercourse with several pious families in and about London; but we gather nothing new from his account of them.

traveller in England we should have left unnoticed. But a new work by an author so extensively and favourably known to the religious public, seemed to claim attention. We have, therefore, given our readers almost the whole of that part of the book which could well find place in a theological review. On literary subjects there is, if we remember right, absolutely nothing. The account of Oxford is as free from pedantry as that of Birmingham or Sheffield. The Bodleian Library "gave rise to one general reflection only, that to the making of books there is no end! What a weariness and wasting of flesh and spirit has there not been for ages in the production of such ranges of worm-eaten and musty tomes!"\* It may have been so in the olden time, but modern ingenuity has certainly devised a way to manufacture books with very little expenditure of flesh, and none at all of intellect. We confess that we are somewhat out of humour with the slight thus put upon the universities. Immortal Cambridge was not visited at all, and glorious Oxford might as well have been omitted. Yet that one town, in its combination of natural scenery and architectural splendour of a certain kind, is without a rival; while in historical interest, moral influence, and intellectual dignity, it is worth all the abbeys, castles, halls and parks of England put together. And that not merely to the pedant or book-worm; but to the man of taste, the poet, and the Christian. In the English universities, and especially in Oxford, learning is exhibited, not as a handmaid but a queen, and notwithstanding the corruptions which infest her court, like those of other monarchs, there is no man of letters who can survey her regal pomp without a feeling of personal complacency. When the illiberal restrictions upon education shall have been removed, this feeling of interest in Oxford and her sister will be heightened. Their influence will again be felt through Christendom, and America herself may yet draw larger draughts of knowledge from Bodley's "worm-eaten and rusty tomes."

The remaining and larger portion of these volumes, relates to matter in which we are not sufficiently *au fait* to play the critic. From the familiar knowledge of his subject which our author manifests, we are perfectly content to acquiesce in his decisions, with respect to manners, costumes, and amusements.

\* Vol. I. p. 210.

Mr. Stewart's reputation as a popular writer, may be considered as established. We have the less hesitation, therefore, in expressing our opinion, that these sketches are as much inferior to his last work, as that was to his first. Their literary merit is extremely slender. The style is loose and incorrect, though apparently elaborate; the phraseology sometimes more American than English. The descriptions of scenery are unworthy of the pen which drew the landscape of Hawaii. The objects chiefly dwelt on are extremely trivial, and a large proportion of the book conceived in what we are constrained to call a frivolous spirit. In this we would fain believe that Mr. Stewart has done himself injustice; that the spirit of the book is not the spirit of the man. When serious subjects are permitted to present themselves, his tone and style are serious. But we cannot help lamenting that he should have been under the necessity of giving to the world two volumes which, according to his own representation in the preface, do not contain his most important observations. "It was my intention," he says himself, "before putting the work to press, to remodel the letters contained in it, and to embrace in them, sentiments and impressions *on many points coming under the title I have chosen*, as well as on the state of politics, *morals and religion* in the united kingdom, *which had been purposely omitted in my correspondence with America*, till the observations of the entire tour should give me full confidence in their truth and correctness. Orders from government, however, for immediate duty in the office I hold in the naval service rendered this impracticable; and good faith to the gentlemen who are my publishers, made it necessary to print from the manuscript in an unaltered form."\*

Mr. Stewart knows too much of the world, to be ignorant that such explanations seldom modify or influence the public judgment. The ground of that judgment is, and ought to be, the merit of the book, without regard to the time, place, and circumstances of its composition. The passage we have quoted shows, perhaps, that as he was situated, he could not have done otherwise. But it does not alter the quality of his work, or the impression which it must make on the reader's mind. The results of his tour it appears were twofold, passing observations and deliberate

\* Vol. I. p. 5.



conclusions. The first of course extended to the superficies only. They relate to natural scenery, architecture, the incidents of the journey, and the manners of the people with whom he came in contact. The others, on the contrary, had reference to "politics, morals, and religion," as well as to "many points coming under the title" of the book; by which we understand all that information with respect to the state of society, which lies any deeper than the ceremonial of a table or a drawing-room, a concert or a ball. Now all these elements judiciously combined must have formed a grateful and salubrious mixture. Those of the first kind, though trivial in themselves, would have served to give vivacity and flavour to the compound. They would have floated like an effervescent froth upon the surface of a generous and substantial liquor. But alas! when we come to enjoy the draught, we find that the liquor has, in the hurry of preparation, been omitted; a want for which no sparkling effervescence can atone. In plain prose, our author had not time to put into his book, the valuable matter which he had collected for it.

One unfortunate effect of this precipitate appearance, is the exclusion of almost every thing that could identify the author as a Christian minister. All that he has now said might have been said in substance without any such effect, had his intended observations on religion and morals been interwoven with it. But as want of time has unhappily ejected that feature of the plan, and left for the most part what might as well have proceeded from a Purser as a Chaplain, we are really not sorry that the title page contains no indication of the author's clerical character. With the exception of a few incidental allusions, most of which have been quoted in the present article, the official incognito is well sustained. *Stat nominis umbra.*





