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THE

*Rev. A. McLeod Sturdy*  
SOCIAL POSITION

*with best wishes of*  
OF *W. Somerville*

REFORMED

Presbyterians or Cameronians.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM SOMMERVILLE,  
NOVA SCOTIA.

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LONDONDERRY:

PRINTED BY JAMES MACPHERSON.

AT THE STANDARD STEAM BOOK PRINTING HOUSE, PUMP-ST.

1869.

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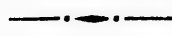
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# THE SOCIAL POSITION

OF

## REFORMED

### Presbyterians or Cameronians.



“WHAT! Another Essay on the Principles and standing of Cameronians! Are we never to have done with their high claims and assumption?” We want to have our principles known, examined, subjected to the most severe comparison with the living oracles of God. Our historical position is strong, but we attach more importance to our Scriptural position. For nearly two hundred years our distinctive principles have been before the public, yet very generally they are not understood. It is only yesterday that Dr. Begg, a talented and usually well-informed minister of the Free Church, represented Cameronians as holding that Magistracy is founded in *grace*; and the Rev. T. M’Kenzie Frazer, Professor of Theology in Australia, describes them as “Montanists of modern times—gloomy ascetics—ferocious fanatics—who represent a life of holiness as synonymous with a life of austerity and gloom, deter men from Christ, and frighten men from salvation, and make the already ‘strait gate’ still narrower than it is.” When such men discover so much ignorance, is it to be expected that the common people should be better informed?

The fact seems to be that our Presbyterian brethren of other denominations do not desire to know, or to have others to know, what our principles are, and give practical evidence that it is with reluctance they acknowledge our existence at all. Our views are not unworthy of a *fire-side* exposition; but public discussion is carefully avoided when possible. Dr. A. King, of Halifax, N.S., Professor of Theology for the Presbyterian Church

of the Lower Provinces of British North America, condescended to point out, at least on two occasions, to his students in the lecture-room, the unfounded claims of Reformed Presbyterians. Dr. Clarke, of Amherst, published a reply to his first attack, but the Professor is silent. What his motives were I know not. One thing I know, that, respecting our historical position, he would not have been able to explain away the hard facts brought forward by Dr. Clarke; and a protracted discussion might have excited the interest of the people, brought Reformed Presbyterian claims into more general notice, and led to a result very different from what the Professor contemplated. Dr. King is a strong assertor that the Free Church has put on the mantle which fell from the departed actors in the Second Reformation, and, I believe, claims for that Church to be the children of the Solemn League and Covenant. I would not be less rejoiced than Dr. King himself to know the claim to be in accordance with the facts. As an individual, he holds the Solemn League and Covenant to be still binding on Britain and all her dependencies. The existence of Dr. K., and of men of a kindred spirit in the Free Church is full of promise to that active and influential body.

Our presence is an offence to the ministers of other Presbyterian denominations. Only a few years have passed since the late Dr. J. Edgar, in the General Assembly of Ireland, said—"My Covenanting brethren have served their generation very well, and as to continuing the Covenanting Church any longer in Ireland, *in our presence*, it is not necessary." At the same time, he claims for the Assembly to be "bearing the same testimony for truth before the world as our Covenanting brethren." Professor Frazer, on the other side of the globe, is quite indignant that the Rev. A. M. Moore "must needs pitch his tabernacle in Geelong," where, in his judgment, there is "enough of Churches already." With the exception of the Rev. A. M. Stavely, located in St. John, New Brunswick, there is not a Reformed Presbyterian minister in Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, who pitched his tabernacle in any place where the Gospel was preached by a Presbyterian minister of any denomination. This is the simple fact, without conceding that any apology is needed for entering any locality where we find Covenanters, no matter who have been before us.

Cumberland, in Nova Scotia, had, I think, been twice entered and twice abandoned by the Presbyterians of that Province. Mr., now Dr., Clarke, with no better encouragement from one, who afterwards and always proved a constant friend, than that he might come and settle if he could live on marsh hay and potatoes—fare on which, I do not say, better *men*—for on that point different individuals will take the liberty of forming their own judgment; I do not say better *scholars*—for Cameronian

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ministers are as well educated as those of other denominations—but men who borrow without interest a large amount of—what shall I call it?—*consequence*, from the social prestige or numbers—the battle of relative claims was once fought over the word *status*—of the ecclesiastical body to which they belong, would not be contented to live, even for the sake of preaching the Gospel to those who are perishing for lack of knowledge. Dr. Clarke enters, gathers, in toil and privation, the scattered Presbyterians of Cumberland and of the adjoining county of Westmoreland, erects places of worship, organises congregations, introduces additional labourers; and, when there are better roads, more improved fields, finer houses, and more money, the Presbyterians of the Lower Provinces are practically saying, after Dr. Edgar, “Our brother, Dr. Clarke, has served his generation well, and as to his continuing the Covenanting minister any longer, in our presence, it is not necessary. We bear the same testimony for truth before the world as our Covenanting brethren.”

When I came to King’s County, the Presbyterian minister was superannuated in mind and body. He had been educated and licensed in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, but ordained in the United States, and never had any Presbyterian connection with the Established or any other Church. He was simply the minister of the Presbyterians of Cornwallis, who, as those of Horton, knew no more of one Presbyterian body than another. The Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia was not known in the county, and the Free Church had no existence. The Rev. Geo. Struthers, who succeeded the aged minister of Cornwallis, beginning his ministry in the Established Church, declared, after the disruption, in favour of the Free Church; and as he made no public intimation of the step he had taken, but continued to minister to the people, without asking whether they approved the change and were still disposed to retain him; from being, in opposition to Covenanters, ardent Establishment men, they became members of the Free Church by an almost imperceptible process; and, after the union of the Free Church and the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, members of the united body, with the same facility. In the meantime, I am labouring in Horton, West Cornwallis, and the county of Annapolis, and gathering the scattered and destitute Presbyterians. But the improved state of the country, increased population; and more general intercourse, brings places into notice, before only heard of; the great body of Presbyterians feel themselves competent to take charge of the whole field; and *we are in the way*. During thirty-five years, the Head of the Church has sustained me, and, in later times, my fellow-labourers. There is no ground of charge to bring against us; it will not be said we do not preach the gospel; there is no disposition openly



to impugn our distinctive position ; but *we are in the way*. I had to contradict a statement made in the public prints, which ignored the existence of my brother Stewart, and claimed for another minister, settled in Annapolis, the whole county. I heard a member of the Halifax Presbytery, in open court, assign, as a field of labour to one of their ministers, expressly the ground I occupy, and had occupied, before the body to which they belonged had an existence, and Horton, and, with strong emphasis, *Lower Horton*, where my son labours. The interpretation is easy—*we are in the way*—and must be exterminated or driven out.

This representation may be met by a denial, perhaps an indignant denial, and, in some cases, an *honest* denial. It is probable that, frequently, self-deception goes before the deception of others. If our Presbyterian brethren of other denominations, (I might say brethren of any denomination), desire to cherish Christian affection, Christian intercourse, and to secure Christian co-operation with Reformed Presbyterians, we are prepared to reciprocate their advances, or to make advances to them, so far as no compromise is involved. If they see no necessity for a divided Presbyterian Church, and desire the union of all its sections, we are as ardently devoted to union as they are, and are under Covenant bonds to promote it. Let them come and accept the Reformed testimony, and identify themselves with us. "What! Join the Cameronians! What an absurd proposal! Rather than be deprived of religious privileges, I would unite with Methodists, or Congregationalists, or Episcopalians, but with *Cameronians*, NEVER." Why not? It is precisely as far from Halifax to Liverpool, as from Liverpool to Halifax; and their sacrifice in joining us, to take the lowest view of it, would not be greater than ours in joining them. Union with us *is not* sought, but we are expected to lay down our convictions, our conscience, our profession, at the feet of the Free Church, the Irish Assembly, Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces of British North America, or &c.; and if we are not prepared to do this, mining processes must be adopted which are calculated, if not intended, to sap the foundations of the fortress, which cannot be taken by assault. By a hug or by a blow, Cameronianism must be crushed in Ireland, in Australia, in the British Provinces of North America.

Now, abstractly, I have no objection whatever to this attempt at extermination. Let our Presbyterian friends show that we are opposed to the doctrine of Christ, to the ordinances of Christ, to the laws of Christ, or, in general, that we occupy a ground inimical to the Kingdom of God; in these things there is a legitimate ground of action and of opposition; but the protest of the Lord is lodged against the Romish attempt at extermination, by art or arms, simply because we *do not follow with them*. That the Reformed Presbyterian Church has an impor-

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tant mission to fulfil, and that the state of religion of the Churches and of the nations, at the present moment, make it all the more important, I am fully convinced. Let those who would represent us as contemptible and base, and desire our removal to give place to better men, show *cause*. Let them not copy the example of those who, when asked, "Why, what evil hath he done?" had no answer to give, yet still reiterated the demand of crucifixion. Let those who desire to rejoice in simplicity and godly sincerity examine what we have to say in vindication of our "Social position," and the reason why we must still stand alone, and resist the current which is carrying the Churches on to organic union, with a rapidity that allows no time to think whether such union may not involve large sacrifices of faith and of a good conscience. We are not afraid of the result.

I do not say I would be glad that the exposition of our distinctive principles had fallen upon an abler advocate, because, common as such an introductory statement is, it is as commonly referred to "voluntary humility." I have assumed the responsibility, and I shall execute the task as well as I can. There shall be no trimming, no evasion, no concealment. I glory in Reformed Presbyterian principles, believing them to be "the word of the kingdom:" not less that, occasionally, some persons would turn my glory into shame.

The reader will have observed that, in stating the subject of this Essay, Reformed Presbyterians are identified with *Cameronians*. We are sometimes called by the latter name; in particular, when it is intended to utter a reproach, or to direct the finger of scorn. If there is anything reproachful or contemptible in Reformed Presbyterianism, it is certainly not in the name. It is no reproach to be called a Cameronian. Wherever Britain's superiority is felt, the name of Cameronian is had in honour. The British soldier would not understand the man who affected to make *Cameronian* a term of reproach. I have always understood that, in the military history of Britain, honourable mention is made of the 26th Regiment of Infantry—that, for courage and conduct, it has shared a full proportion of the honours of the field. The 26th is the *Cameronian Regiment*.

The origin of the Cameronian Regiment is curious; as romantic as it is curious; and interesting as it is romantic, to every man who is capable of appreciating lofty principle, resolute attachment to personal and political liberty, and victorious integrity.

The Church of Scotland had been organized and established on the basis of the Solemn League and Covenant—an instrument which had been approved by the General Assembly, and ratified by the Parliament of Scotland, sworn and subscribed by the members of the Westminster Assembly, and of the Parliament of England, sworn and subscribed by Charles II., on his eleva-

tion to the throne of Scotland. Charles was destitute of integrity and truth, and oaths cannot hold men bound who are destitute of principle. He had no sooner been seated on the throne of England, without conditions, than he commenced to overthrow the ecclesiastical constitution which he had sworn to support; and he found, in the land of his fathers, instruments willing, at the cost of the like perjury, to second his projects. An Act was passed in 1661, for "securing what was termed the *Royal prerogative*—in other words, for making the King supreme judge in all matters civil and ecclesiastical. To this was afterwards added the Oath of Allegiance, which bound the subject to acknowledge the supreme power of the King in all matters civil and religious, and made it high treason to deny it." These and other laws are framed which make it criminal to have more of Presbyterianism than the name. Banishment, imprisonment, torture, and death are the portion of ministers and people, who have regard to their solemn convictions and their oaths. But the Devil and his children have often found that force fails to accomplish its object against conscience, and allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ. The apple of discord is thrown among the ministers in the form of indulgences. They are permitted to exercise their ministry under conditions, but such as no Presbyterian, even less high-toned than sworn adherents of the Solemn League could consistently and cheerfully accept. This led to division among Presbyterian ministers, which culminated, upon the part of Cargill, Cameron, and their followers, in wide separation and estrangement from their less consistent and resolute brethren. Convinced that the course pursued by Charles and his supporters tended to, if it did not, involve the subversion of all liberty, and must ultimately place the nation under the feet of the despot, they boldly refused to own him as sovereign, and proclaimed war against him. They did right. To that daring step we are indebted for the Revolution of 1688, and the advantages growing out of it. The men who could tamely, or even restively, submit their consciences to human dictation, and accept of an indulgence which implied the right of the ruler to say upon what terms they are to preach, and where, and the out-spoken advocates of passive obedience, could afford no hope of an effective opposition to the encroachments of power, still less of the subversion of the government of the oppressor. The attitude assumed by the Cameronians anticipated the Revolution, and constituted the only intelligible index that a change must come, and soon. They could not have occupied their place for a year had they not been sustained by a wide-spread, though latent, and perhaps, in some cases, unconscious sympathy. I am not alone in this judgment. I quote the words of Dr. Charters, as they are reported in a review of the "*Tales of my Landlord*," *Christian Instructor*, 1817. They

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have been often quoted, but they are so eloquent, so expressive of genuine sympathy with the oppressed, and of a generous appreciation of patriotic and Christian self-devotion, they deserve to be repeated. "Their standard on the mountains of Scotland indicated to the vigilant eye of William that the nation was ripening for a change. They expressed what others thought, uttering the indignation and the groans of a spirited and oppressed people. They investigated and taught under the guidance of feeling the reciprocal obligations of kings and subjects, the duty of self-defence and of resisting tyrants, the generous principle of assisting the oppressed, or in their language, *helping the Lord against the mighty*. These subjects, which had been investigated by philosophers in the closet, and adorned with eloquence in the senate, were then illustrated by men of feeling in the field. Whilo Russel and Sydney, and other enlightened patriots in England, were plotting against Charles, from a conviction that his right was forfeited, the Cameronians, in Scotland, under the same conviction, had the courage to declare war against him. Both the plotters and the warriors fell; but their blood watered the plant of renown, and succeeding ages have eaten the pleasant fruit." Hetherington, the Free Church historian, says—"When we read these papers, (Queensferry paper and Sanguhar Declaration), and compare them with the great national declarations which form the basis of the Revolution, we cannot resist the conviction that, in the former, we perceive the small germ out of which arose British Liberty, that plant of renown, under the world-wide branches of which all tribes and kindreds of mankind rejoice. Almost the only real difference between the Declaration of the Cameronians, or rather the true Presbyterians, and that of the Convention of Estates at the Revolution, consisted in the former being the act of a small band of enlightened and determined patriots, the latter that of the nation. While, therefore, none who approve the latter can consistently condemn the former, every generous heart will bestow the meed of warmest approbation upon those who, in the midst of reproach, danger, and death, laid the foundation-stone and began the structure, cemented with their blood of civil and religious liberty, which men of less heroic mould were permitted in calmer and brighter days to rear." The Cameronians were no ignorant fanatics; they were no savage monsters of the mountain and the moor, (though often obliged there to find a hiding-place from the ruthless hunter), whom no argument could convince, no discipline tame, and no kindness mollify. They were no enemies of government. When the Revolution dawned on Britain, the convention of Estates had no confidence of protection, during their deliberations, from the soldiers who, at the bidding of godless, drunken, and selfish minions of despotism, (some of whom were in the Convention), hunted the Camero-

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nians like partridges on the hills, shot them down without trial or even accusation, tortured children to compel them to discover their parents, and exerted their bravery in enforcing a law, which made it criminal in a father to give shelter and bread to his son, to perform the like offices of humanity to his father. The Cameronians offered their services (some say they were applied to), to guard the Convention, and they were accepted. Scotland's legislators were not afraid of the men who had learned to endure hardness, even under their own hard regimen, who had kept a good conscience towards God, in the day of cruel suffering, and who could not but be faithful to the interests of truth, of liberty, of man. Claverhouse "pretended that he was in daily danger of his life, and insisted on the Cameronians being dismissed," but found no sympathy in the Convention, who had a reasonable share of worldly wisdom and knew their men. When afterwards, his mercenary sword having been laid at the feet of William and refused, he raised the standard of James and threatened to obstruct the Revolution then in progress, the Cameronians "raised a regiment of eight hundred (800) men, without beat of drum or expense of levy, under the command of the Earl of Angus, a nobleman hardly twenty years of age, and only son of the Marquis of Douglass. Such was the origin of the *Cameronian Regiment*," in the beginning "composed of those holding the extreme views of the Covenanters, who had disowned the tyrannical government of James, and who were almost alike inimical to the Prelatical and the Indulged clergy. Every man in the rank was a religious enthusiast, in the best sense of that term, fired with zeal, based on stern and uncompromising principle, and aiming not merely to free his country from civil thralldom, but mainly to restore the reign of Presbytery and the Covenant, and put down all opposers."

The existence of the Cameronian regiment is associated with an unanswerable refutation of the representations of ignorance and prejudice, that the Cameronians of the times of Charles and of James were ignorant, fanatical, unsocial, enemies of all order and good government, and that their principles were anarchical and mischievous. No man who is acquainted with the history of Cameronianism is ashamed of the name. It is the history of political and moral health. I am not ashamed of it. *I am a Cameronian.*

But a victory obtained by the Cameronian regiment, single-handed, and which "may be said to have secured the success of the Revolution in Scotland," may not be unnoticed. It is represented by Chambers as "one of the most unexceptionably brilliant exploits which occurred throughout the whole of this war" of the Revolution; and when *W. Chambers* testifies in favour of a *Cameronian*, the testimony may be safely accepted. After the victory of Claverhouse over M'Kay, at Killierankie, which was

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neutralised by the death of the victorious commander, the Cameronians, to the number of seven or eight hundred (700 or 800) were left in the heart of the Highlands, we cannot tell how, but they were left; they were denied succours, when apprehending an attack, we cannot tell by whom, but they were denied; they were furnished with a barrel of figs instead of powder, we cannot tell how, but the mistake was made; a troop was withdrawn when the attack was made on them: we know no more to whom or to what this untoward combination of circumstances is to be attributed than to whom to refer the massacre of Glencoe. But while the gray hairs of the old and confiding M'Donald were dipped in the blood of his sons, a happier issue awaited the Cameronians at Dunkeld. The seven or eight hundred boldly took up, in favour of William and Mary, the gauntlet thrown down by four or five thousand Highlanders, animated by the recollection of their victory over superior numbers at Killicranke. They husbanded their small stock of powder. When bullets were exhausted, they melted the lead of Dunkeld house and converted it into slugs to meet the lack of balls. They successfully resisted the repeated assaults of the enemy, with small loss to themselves, but with so much slaughter in the ranks of the enemy, that neither the taunts of the Cameronians nor the solicitations of their own officers could prevail upon the Highlanders to persevere, as they said "they were willing to fight with men, but not with Devils:" and after a struggle, which was protracted from 7 o'clock, a.m., till 11 p.m., "the conquerors sung Psalms, and offered thankgivings to the Almighty, to whom alone they ascribed their deliverance."

The Cameronians, at the Revolution, in addressing William, profess themselves as *willing* to be his *subjects* as they were *unwilling* to be the *slaves* of James; and, in their petition to the Estates, ask simply the redintegration of the constitution, political and ecclesiastical, which had been ratified by Charles, and afterwards disowned and violated. They offered also to raise two or three other regiments to be placed at the service of the King. The offer was declined. It neither consisted with the principles, the policy, nor the circumstances of William, to restore the Constitution based on the National Covenant and the Solemn League; and one possessing less discernment than he would clearly see that, with three or four regiments of such "Devils" as had fought at Dunkeld, he was far more likely to accept than to dictate terms. The Cameronians could not obtain a recognition of their beloved covenanted constitution. The temple which Charles had overturned was not to be restored. A motley combination of men who had fled or been banished, and returned when the battle had been fought and won—of men who, in violation of their solemn vows, had accepted the Indul-

gences of Charles and of James, and now crept forth from the limits within which they had been placed; of young ministers, who had been educated under Prelacy, and would have acquiesced in an Episcopal regimen, to whom were afterwards added hundreds of Episcopal curates, who had occupied the places of Scotland's outed ministers, and were willing to be Presbyterians, upon Royal terms, for a morsel of bread—quietly stepped in to occupy the fields which Cameronians had cultivated in privation and reproach—an example which their successors are very willing to copy. Men who had not piety enough to confess in what they had ever sinned, acted as if they were ashamed to think, or to have it known, that they had ever owned, or would own, the Covenants; and when the only remaining *three*, who had never directly violated solemn engagements, sought admission into the new organization, their declaration of principles could not be read in the Assembly. It was calculated to revive unpleasant and unwelcome memories. Shields, the only one who had much to lose, succumbs to the pressure of the time, and enters the charmed circle. The author of the "Hind Let Loose" is not likely to be a silent member of Assembly, nor likely to forget the vows and labours of other days. He is honoured with a chaplaincy on board a man of war. *One honest dupe is disposed of.*

It is an interesting inquiry, and of no small importance, how the heterogeneous materials which constituted the General Assembly, after the Revolution, were brought together and organized. Pending the discussions which issued in the Disruption of 1843, the ecclesiastical constitution of the Revolution was pretty fully canvassed. The friends of the Church's independence, unwilling to admit that it was not secured in the Revolution Settlement, exhibit the Church, during the gloomy times of the Royal Brothers, as still having an organic existence, pressed into the dust under the iron heel of the oppressor, and, when the tyrannical and unconstitutional enactments of Charles and James were repealed, rising in her might, walking forth in her own domain, and discharging her proper functions. To find this to be the case would delight every Reformed Presbyterian. But, unhappily, it is a mere fancy sketch. The Presbyterian Church of Scotland, at the Revolution, was in ruins. Order and organization had passed away. The knees of her sorrowful sons were feeble, and their hands hanging down. Rising in might! *They were not able to rise.* Of the sixty, or, according to some, ninety ministers who survived the twenty-eight years of grinding oppression, there were a very few, so few as not to be felt, who had not given the hand to the Egyptians to be satisfied with bread, and delivered their glory into the power of the enemy. According to Wodrow—"This liberty (James' toleration) was

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fallen in with by almost all the Presbyterian ministers in the kingdom. And most part of the Presbyterian ministers, who had retired to other countries, or were banished, in a little time returned to Scotland. I know of no Presbyterians declined the benefit of this liberty, save Renwick and his followers."

A more abject and sad spectacle could not be presented to the Christian observer than the Presbyterian ministers, on their knees in the dust, thanking James for "the gracious and surprising favour of liberty of the public and peaceable exercise of their ministerial function *without hazard,*" ~~and declaring~~ "that their loyalty is not to be questioned upon account of their being *Presbyterians,*" making the Confession of Faith responsible for the doctrine and life which shall consist with James' notion of "entire loyalty;" promising "so to demean themselves as his Majesty (a resolute Papist) may find cause rather to enlarge than diminish his favours toward them;" and "humbly beseeching that those who promote any disloyal principles and practices (as we do disown them), may be looked upon as none of ours, whatsoever name they may assume to themselves." The indignation which rises from contemplating the cool and heartless manner in which, in the last statement, Renwick and his adherents are abandoned to the tender mercies of James, is mitigated by the acknowledgment—for which every Cameronian ought to be grateful—"they are none of ours." A thousand thanks to you, who constituted the bone and muscle, the head and heart, of the General Assembly of the Revolution, for this confession! Renwick and his followers did not belong to you. They belonged to a very different class; and it is a fond imagination of Wodrow, that, if Renwick had survived, "he would have come in with Shiels, Linning, and Boyd, to join the establishment of the Church, and might have been a very useful instrument in it." His contemporaries knew him better. "*He is none of ours.*" How often do men speak more truth than they intend!

Let it be remembered that "the gracious and surprising favour" for which they are so ardently thankful was granted *expressly* in the exercise of "sovereign authority, prerogative royal, and absolute power," with an explicit charge to take "care that nothing be preached or taught among them which may in any ways tend to alienate the hearts of our people from us or our government," and that they keep within doors. In their address of thanks they implicitly engage not to offer any objection to James's "sovereign authority, prerogative royal, and absolute power;" not to preach against Popery; and expressly not to have anything to do with Renwick and his followers. Folly itself could hardly hope that these men should "revive the stones out of the rubbish" of the temple of the second Reformation. The iron had entered into their souls. They did, indeed,



subsequently, when danger was past, like Samson after he had been shorn of his locks, shake themselves as at other times, but they did not know that God had departed from them. Their shaking did not save them out of the hands of the Philistines, and error, infidelity, and clerical profligacy, set in upon Scotland like an irresistible tide, and occupied the whole land for nearly a century, with the exception of a few mountain summits, of which Cameronians and Seceders had obtained possession. Towards the end of the eighteenth century Samson's hair began to grow, and in the Free Church we see him coming out of the grinding-house, still in fetters however, and allowed to lay his hands on the two pillars of Prelacy and the Ecclesiastical supremacy; but as yet no attempt has been made to pull them down, and there is reason to fear the friends of the second Reformation may have to give themselves a sacrifice to secure their overthrow.

But if the Presbyterian ministers, who lived to see the Revolution, were so utterly prostrate, and helpless, and heartless, how did they succeed in taking a position as the Established Church of Scotland? William and the Parliament of Scotland lifted them up, and set them in their places—not the places which Scotland's worthy sons had occupied from 1638 to 1649 and onwards—her Hendersons, her Rutherfords, her Guthries, her Cargils, and her Renwicks. The Revolution Church of Scotland is as truly, though not so absolutely, a creature of the State as the Church of England.

The instrument by which the ministers at the Revolution were taken up and located is a curiosity. It is the Act of June 7th, 1690. The Parliament had a difficult task to perform, and in a masterly manner did they execute it. They must not come into collision with William; the Episcopalians must not be pressed too hardly; Polwart and the club, or the more rigid Presbyterians, must be conciliated; and care must be taken lest, by striking too sharply, a spark of manhood might be excited in the Indulged. The Act opens with the acknowledgment of the "bound duty, after the great deliverance that God hath lately wrought for this Church (what Church?—of 1638-1649?—the Church crippled by Cromwell?—the Church established by Charles after the Restoration?) and kingdom, to settle and secure therein the true Protestant religion, according to the truth of God's Word." This will satisfy the more decided Presbyterians, would have satisfied Renwick and his followers, and ought to satisfy all to whom the Word of God is precious. But the hopes which such a preamble is calculated to excite are doomed to an early disappointment, and the legislators descend to a lower platform. "Church Government *shall be* established in the hands of, and exercised by, these Presbyterian ministers who were outed since the first of January, 1661, for noncon-

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formity to Prelacy, or not complying with the courses of the time, and are now restored by the late Act of Parliament, and such ministers and elders only as they have admitted, or received, or shall hereafter admit or receive." They may have learned by the hard experience of a quarter of a century to dislike all establishments; but, without being consulted, they are established. They may have acted very inconsistently, immorally, corruptly; they have "disowned" the Cameronians; there are none others likely to call them to account, and William has restored them, but they "*accept the situation.*" By letter from time to time to the Assembly, or its Commission, William gives instructions respecting the terms on which the curates are to be admitted; in particular, that they "should not only retain their Churches, but also be admitted to sit and act in Church judicatories, and that the Commission of Assembly should be composed of one-half Presbyterians, and the other half of these admitted Prelatists." The Assembly resist. But the hook is in their nose, and for a little they are allowed line. "Another Act was passed on 12th of June, 1693, 'for settling the quiet and peace of the Church,' the object of which was to promote the admission of the Prelatic clergy to the full enjoyment of all the privileges of the Presbyterian Church," on terms prescribed by the Act. The Church is not consulted, but they "*accept the situation;*" and when, says Hetherington, "The Assembly met, in the full enjoyment of its spiritual independence, on the 29th of March, 1694, grateful for the victory which God had granted to their *firm adherence to their principles*, they passed an act respecting the instructions to be given to the Commission for receiving the ministers who had conformed to Prelacy into ministerial communion, granting very nearly *all that the king had required* for giving facility to the admission of these ministers;" and they are able, in 1712, to report in their address to Queen Anne, "that, since the Revolution, there had been taken in, and continued, hundreds of the Episcopal curates *on the easiest terms.*"

The Act (1690) also settles the "government of Christ's Church within this nation agreeable to the Word of God." This form of expression ignores the Divine right of Presbytery, and will be accepted by all Erastians. The United Secession Synod, in 1840, laid aside the usual question in their formula, respecting Church government, and adopted the following:—"Do you believe the Presbyterian form of government, &c., to be agreeable to and founded on the Word of God?" to meet the scruples of "good men who approved of Presbyterianism, but were now disposed or prepared to pass a judgment on other forms of government. The Assembly "*accepted the situation.*" The present Established Church of Scotland, and the Free Church, which

recognises her constitution, are not pledged to the Divine right of Presbytery. Had that been definitely stated, the King, who had recognized the Episcopal Church of England, would not have stultified himself by ratifying the Act. Besides, the King and his ecclesiastical counsellor, Carstares, were both, in principle, Erastians. Thus Episcopacy is repudiated, not because it is contrary to the Word of God, but because it "is and has been a great and insupportable grievance to the nation; and Presbytery is accepted, not because it is the doctrine of the Word, but because it is agreeable to the inclinations of the generality of the people." The door stands open to all Erastians, and every facility is afforded for future union or co-operation with Christians under another regimen. Incorporation with the Church of England would involve no violation of her constitution, upon the part of either the Established or the Free Church. The change involved would be one of *order*, not *principle*.

When the Established and Free Churches, respectively, plead for the scriptural character of their Constitution, their able and excellent sons are entitled to a grave and deferential attention; but it is a subject of surprise that they should claim to be the successors of the Church of the Second Reformation. Had the Parliament of 1690 simply repealed the Act Rescissory by which "all that had been done for religion and the reformation of the Church during the Second Reformation, was completely annulled," the Presbyterian Church had stood forth, established according to the platform of that period, as the Acts in favour of Reformation, down to 1649, would have been revived. But that repeal would have brought back the spiritual independence of the Church, the divine right of Presbytery, the National Covenant, and the Solemn League, and it was no part of the policy of the statesmen at the Revolution to restore the status of the Church in 1649. It was the *deliberate purpose* of the leaders to shelve the Covenants which constituted the ground-work of Scotland's most mature reform. The whole is left under the ban of the Act Rescissory, still unrepealed, and they recur to the Act of 1592, as the foundation on which to build, when the independence of the Church had not been fully secured, and the Solemn League and the several parts of the Covenanted Reformation had no existence. Nevertheless the Church *accepted the situation*.

The silence of the Assembly is a *full acquiescence* in the deed of the Parliament in leaving the Covenants under the sentence of condemnation, as unlawful oaths, pronounced by the Act Rescissory. The Covenants are not documents which the Church is competent either to enact or repeal. They are not *ecclesiastical* documents, as a Creed or Confession, but *National*, which she might approve and recommend or condemn merely; and the

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Church is held bound by the action of the State in enacting or repealing them, except it is met by a solemn declaration of dissent. The Covenants may serve to enrich the museum of the Established or Free Church, but they belong to a Church she has repudiated. It may serve the purpose of a rhetorical flourish, and to amuse or delude the populace, to declaim about the Covenants and our Covenant-fathers. Introduce the Covenants into the General Assembly of the Established, the Free, or the Irish Church, into the Synods of affiliated Churches in the Colonies, and put to the vote the question of the permanent obligation of those Covenants: the advocates of their permanent obligation would find themselves with a minority so small as to make them blush, if in such a case they did not rejoice, to be counted worthy to suffer shame. They might hardly escape jeers instead of suffrages.

The mastery of the politician appears most prominently in the enactment of the Confession of Faith. Where did they get it? Not from the Church of 1647, for they had blotted out nearly a century of the Church's history, and are living among the men of 1592. As a *parliament* they could not recognise the acts, ecclesiastical or parliamentary, which had been swept away by the Act Rescissory. If it had been stolen or borrowed from one of the Cameronians who guarded the Convention, they would have found it sustained in all its parts by an appeal to the Scripture, approved by the Church, and accepted and ratified by the parliament, as a principal part of the Covenanted uniformity contemplated in the Solemn League and Covenant. This could not be received; neither could it be refused. They had predetermined to say nothing about the Covenants, and the long afflicted people of Scotland must not know that they cannot have the Confession of Faith which had been violently wrested out of their hands. They must *have* and *not have* the Westminster Confession of Faith. A mutilated copy, not approved by any Assembly, not ratified by any Parliament, which may have been picked up by Carstares, out of the rubbish of Scotland's Covenanted Church, is introduced and "ratified and established," in terms more ingenious than honest. It is set forth as "the public and avowed confession of this Church;" but whether it is to be understood as "the public and avowed Confession," because it had been "voted and approven" by that Parliament, or "voted and approven," because it is "the public and avowed Confession of the Church," is left to exercise the critical powers of such as have faith in all politicians. Those of the Established and Free Churches, who would be considered the successors of the Covenanters, will, of course, *adopt* the latter view; those who have Erastian leanings, will *be content* with the former; and those

who deny the legitimacy of the claims of the Established and Free Churches, will *plead* for the former. I do not pretend to say which interpretation is right; as I do not think it was intended to be more definite than to allow all parties to believe the Parliament on their side. At all events, the Confession of the Ecclesiastical Establishment of Scotland, not professing to found on the divine word, not approved by any previous Assembly of the Church, nor accepted as a part of the Covenanted uniformity, is not the Confession approved and accepted by the Assembly of 1647, but the Confession of the Parliament of 1690, given to a Church, which it had founded, for which it enacted Laws, and the Church *accepts the situation*.

The Revolution Church of Scotland is a new erection, owes its hold upon the affections of Scotland's people, and has its highest recommendations in the large proportion of materials, recovered from the ruins of the dilapidated Church of the Covenants, which enter into its structure.

The Cameronians, deserted by Shields, Linning and Boyd, were left without a minister, for sixteen weary years of faith and patience, till the Revolution Church sealed their hostility to the principles of the Second Reformation, fidelity to which their successors fondly claim for them by expelling M'Millan from among them. He has been represented as cast out because of following *divisive courses*. This may be a *just charge*, but only on the assumption that the Church was a different organization from that of the Second Reformation; for his only crime was presenting to his Presbytery "a paper of grievances—craving, among other things, that some effectual measures should be taken for reviving the remembrance of the National Covenant of Scotland and the Solemn League and Covenant of the three Kingdoms; explicitly asserting the divine right of Presbytery—openly avowing the sole headship of Christ over His Church, together with her intrinsic liberties—and for impartially stating and mourning over the many sins of the land." The reflections of Hetherington, with respect to the treatment of M'Millan, and some others who discovered a partiality to the Covenanters are suggestive, and not without interest and point at the present time. "The records of the proceedings which led to his deposition reflect little credit on the Church of Scotland either with regard to principle or prudence. \* \* \* \* It is painful to have to record, that the Church of Scotland had exhibited a more intolerant spirit in its treatment of its own better children, the remnant of the Covenanters, and those who were disposed to favour them, than it did towards the persecuting and rebellious Prelatists. It suggests too strongly the idea of *severity against the weak, and a mean and timid compromise with the strong.*"

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The advocates of the integrity of the Revolution settlement of the Church of Scotland sometimes boast that all the ministers were with them; as if history was good-naturedly forgetful that, except those whom God had mercifully removed by a natural death, the uncompromising adherents of the "old paths" had died in the field, or in the prison, or under the hand of the executioner. The rest—we have looked at them through their address of thanks to James, for his "gracious and surprising favour." Wodrow would have us believe that, in signing that address, every one acted on his own responsibility; and, good innocent man! he thinks "that it is not worth while to dip into the dust raised against these addresses, (he refers to the address of the inhabitants of Edinburgh also,) by Renwick and his party." He tells us that the ministers signed their address in their own names, and of the rest of the brethren of the same persuasion, *at their desire*. To the admirers of the ecclesiastical settlement of the Revolution, without reluctance or envy, we say—"you may have them."

The Cameronians are not without high and honorable testimonies from men who are not of them. Far away from Britain, in Australia, in the British North American Colonies, among a people, who have not made the ecclesiastical history of the times referred to a subject of particular attention, self-appointed directors of public sentiment, whom religious bodies will not accept and cannot afford to repudiate, think they can safely treat with contempt the claims of Reformed Presbyterians, and are more liberal of sneers than of arguments. However, "a man is accepted according to that he hath, not according to that he hath not." Hetherington, in a citation already made, testifies that the Cameronians, at the time of the Revolution, were "*the true Presbyterians*." This is not the only testimony from the same respectable source. "The Cameronian Covenanters alone disdained to stoop to compromise or concealment, boldly avowed their principles, and loudly censured the Church for want of faithfulness and zeal, especially, because in the Revolution Settlement no direct recognition had been made of the National Covenants, and of the Reformation which these solemn bonds had been instrumental in effecting: but while they deserve the praise due to courage and consistency, it may be doubted whether their own conduct did not tend to injure the very cause they wished to promote. Had they joined the Church in a body, without any compromise, recording their protests against these omissions of which they complained, they might have contributed powerfully to counteract the pernicious influence of those men of lax principles and prelatial tendencies who were but too willing to enter." Again, referring to the renovation of the Covenants in 1712, he says, "There could be no impropriety in this act, viewed in itself; indeed it was one in which it would have been well if the

whole body of Scottish Presbyterians had joined."

The former statement is strange but suggestive. The historian tells us that the Cameronians "deserve the praise due to courage and consistency," but at the same time expresses the opinion that their conduct tended "to injure the very cause which they wished to promote;" that is, it would have been better for the cause of Presbyterianism if they had been less consistent. There have been many in every age, who have given practical evidence that they consider consistency a small virtue, and that a little seasonable compromise is sometimes very useful. "Joined the Church in a body, without any compromise!" They knew their men, and that they would not have been accepted without, at least practically, endorsing the shameful tergiversation of their brethren "Recording their protests against those omissions of which they complained!" Their protests would not have been heard, much less recorded, as the treatment of Shields and his fellows amply proves. Indeed the prudent ministers of the Reformation establishment have been particularly careful to keep the Covenants out of sight. "Although, in some acts for fasting, the Assembly (1690) acknowledged that our sins are aggravated by breach of solemn vows; yet notwithstanding the indignities which had been done to our National Covenants, they never expressly asserted their obligation: nor does *the name of the Solemn League so much as appear in any of their acts since the Revolution.*" The words in inverted commas were written in 1827.

The great glory or the crime of Cameronians has been their *consistency*. Aikman, the historian, says—"True to their Covenants, while all else was sullen discontent, and heartless impatience, the Cameronians, or Society-men, alone refused to do homage to the wasting scourge that desolated the land." Burns, the Editor of Wodrow, in a Note—"We cannot but admire the *consistent* heroism of these men, however we may lament their occasional excesses." Cooke, cited by Burns in the same note—"The Cameronians who had renounced their allegiance to a tyrannical sovereign, acted *consistently*, when the Indulgence was offered to them, and they boldly refused to take advantage of what had flowed from so polluted a source."

The vindication of the position which the Cameronians assumed before and at the Revolution is triumphant: the apology set up in favour of their "less heroic" brethren is plausible.

At a later period, the present century, Dr. Ely, of Philadelphia, would have cherished a hope of inducing the Reformed Presbyterians of the United States to coalesce with the General Assembly, if they were once emancipated from "Covenants, Testimonies, and the *pride of consistency.*" Within the last forty years, some of our brethren have been brought to a state of wonderful humility. In 1833, a large number in the United States, weary of consistency, separated themselves. In 1840, a

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whole Presbytery in Ireland, weary of consistency, left the Church. In Scotland, in 1863, after having staved off discussion, from year to year, till a new race of ministers, who received their theological education, *not* under Dr. Andrew Symington, of Paisley, arose, the Reformed Presbyterian Synod abandoned the ancient landmarks, leaving only as many as lifted up the Secession testimony in 1733; as constituted the seed of the original Seceders in 1806; nearly as many as were repudiated by the Free Church in 1860, for adhering to *her own Testimony* in Australia, (the number was five) in opposition to the *mania* for union, not knowing that a Testimony for the independence of the Church, and the obligation of Rulers to recognize and give civil effect to the institutions of their Master, is of no use any where but in Scotland: and their deliverance from the "*pride of consistency*" has afforded to our Presbyterian brethren outside so much "comfort" that they condescend to own them, and have lavished on them as much praise, as they have indulged in vituperation, because of the rising "*pride of consistency*," displayed in casting out George H. Stewart, for his defiant violation of his vow to God.

There is still a remnant who have not been yet delivered from the "*pride of consistency*;" and, in a few particulars, I shall endeavour to exhibit their "*Social Position*." Some readers may be disappointed, as they may be expecting to find something so strange, so extravagant, so *outré*, as only to excite surprise or laughter.

In the statement or defence of our principles, we have a moral advantage over all who differ from us. We are pleading against *our own social elevation, our own popularity, and our own temporal interests*. We cannot, consistently with our profession, hold any office under the Crown, have a place among the Nobles of the Empire, a seat in the Senate or the Commons, on the Bench, or at the Bar, or among the Magistrates of the land, or record our vote for the Representatives of the people. Serious reflection must lead any one to the conclusion that we are thoroughly in earnest, and must have what appear to us commanding reasons, for holding a position in society which involves so much self denial. We claim—we think we have a right to claim—a large measure of confidence from the members of the community, and from those who rule over us. No person is admitted into our fellowship, who is known still to belong to any *Secret Association*. We have among us neither Freemasons nor Ku Klux, Orangeman or Fenian, Odd Fellow or Templar. We stand before Him, whose Church is a city set upon a hill, whose followers are lights set on a candlestick, and are commanded to let their light shine before men, and who could defiantly proclaim in the presence of his accusers:—"I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the

Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing."

I. We accept the Scriptures as the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and morals, and a perfect rule: not the Old Testament to the exclusion of the New; not the New Testament to the exclusion of the Old. No man, who refuses the Old Testament, as an authoritative exposition of the mind of God, believes the New Testament, in which we are commanded to be mindful of the words spoken by the holy prophets. Nor do we claim a right to treat any part of the Divine testimony as useless or unimportant. The arm or the leg of the human body may be amputated without destroying life, yet no man would, therefore, think or say the member was of no importance, or that the functions of the body might be as fully and perfectly performed without it as with it. The salvation of that man is secured who builds on Christ—*that sure foundation*—but it is no matter of indifference whether he build wood, hay, and stubble, or gold, silver, and precious stones, as the fire shall try every man's work. There is an essential difference between ignorance or error and the neglect or abandonment of what is known to be a part of the truth of God. We may accept with all confidence one of very limited information and of a very defective judgment, but not one who, knowing the mind of the Lord in a particular case, is prepared to class it with unimportant things and neglect it. The following words of Robert Haldane, written with reference to a special case, are replete with just ideas of the place the Divine Word should occupy in the Christian heart. "Every thing ought to have its proper place in our esteem. But is it reverential to God to suppose that He has enjoined some things which have a tendency to lead us away from heaven, or that every thing He has revealed is not in itself directly subservient to His glory and our salvation? Are the things spoken of not a part of revelation? Then let them not be called *small things* and *non-essentials*. Let them be called *nothing*, and then we ought decidedly to oppose them, as forming no part of our duty. But, if they are a part of it, then it is surely both irreverent and unwise to set them aside *under any name whatever*. This is changing times and laws. It is taking too much upon us."

II. We accept the Westminster Confession of Faith as a correct exponent of the doctrines of the Divine Word, with no other limitation than is found in the Act of Assembly approving it.

Credo and confessions are becoming more than usually unpopular. They are sometimes subscribed without being believed. They are, in some cases, accepted standards for ministers and not for the Church. They are often represented as implying a deficiency in the Divine Word, which they are intended to supplement, as a procrustean bed calculated to repress expansion of mind, and better fitted to make hypocrites than to promote or conserve truth. The place they occupy is misunderstood and

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misrepresented. It is very plausible to reason thus—"If the Scriptures are a perfect rule, what need of a Confession or a Creed?" The Scriptures and Confessions occupy entirely distinct departments. If I am asked, "What is the standard of revealed truth?" I answer, "the Bible—the whole Bible—nothing but the Bible." To no Confession or Creed can an appeal be made, in answer to the question, "What is truth, the truth in Jesus?" If I am asked, "By what standard am I to ascertain what the denomination to which you belong accepts as the doctrine of the Word—the truth in Jesus?" I answer, "By the creed, confession, or testimony which the Church recognises." A Confession invades not the province of the Scriptures at all, nor can the Scriptures supply its place. But what is the "Westminster Confession of Faith?" I fear, though it is easy of access, there are many ignorant of it; and some take no interest in it, because they view it as something exclusively *Presbyterian* and *Scottish*.

It is not a Scottish document. It is *British*. The Assembly which met in the chapel of Henry VII., Westminster, was called by an English Parliament, and its members were almost all Englishmen. There were four ministers and three laymen from Scotland, and, I think, only one from Ireland. The whole number would be over a hundred. The Confession was perfected in England before it came officially before either the Assembly or Parliament of Scotland, and it is approved and published as a principal part of the contemplated uniformity of religion. Englishmen are not entitled to look down on the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The Westminster Confession is not even a *Presbyterian* document, in the strictly technical sense of the term *Presbyterian*. There is nothing in it that an Episcopalian, or an Independent, may not accept, without any compromise of his distinctive principles. For lucid, full, and accurate statement of Scriptural truth, I know of no doctrinal articles which make any approach to the Westminster Confession; and I would be heartily delighted that all would thoroughly examine it, if only to detect its errors and blemishes.

Of course, I am not expected, in this essay, to expound its doctrines. It is strictly Calvinistic. It has been charged with inculcating persecuting principles; and it is to be regretted that some of our Presbyterian brethren have agreed to receive certain parts of it with such explanations as would seem to admit that there are grounds for the charge. In the hands of those who ferret out persecution in the Westminster Confession, Paul, who says, "I would they were cut off who trouble you," and John, who says, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed," would hardly escape severe animadversion.

The doctrine of the Confession and of Reformed Presbyterians



is that the religion of Jesus is not, and cannot be, propagated by force. "Unto the catholic visible Church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting the saints in this life to the end of the world, and doth by His own presence and Spirit, according to His promise, make them effectual thereto." You can no more convert or reform a man by sword, or fire, or instruments of torture, or other pains and penalties, than you can take his life by a syllogism. The attempt is absurd as it is unscriptural and unholy. Earnestly as we desire to see the British Empire reformed in all its departments, according to Reformed Presbyterian principles, in the name of every Reformed Presbyterian minister in the universe, in the name of every intelligent member of the Church, if any party should spring up in Britain or its dependencies, if an invading army should enter British territory and say, "Come, Cameronians, and help us. We will settle the constitution on your principles, we will provide for the erection of Churches upon the Presbyterian platform," we would reply, "No, we cannot be established by force. The foundation is evil, and the structure must be evil, and the topstone evil." Sin is sin, no matter how prosperous it is, how old it is. The building of mercy cannot stand on a sinful basis.

The whole nation of Israel was brought under God's Covenant, before entering the promised land; but they had been brought together, every one of them, under the seal of the Abrahamic covenant. Christ came to reform, and at once threw Himself among the masses. And every healthy and stable government must *take form* from the well defined wishes of the people. When the Kings of the earth see the glory of the Lord, all the nations shall fear His name. When Kings are nursing-fathers to Zion, and their Queens nursing-mothers, her children shall say, "The place is too strait for me, give place to me that I may dwell." The constitution of Israel recognized not coercion as a means of reform. It is in perfect harmony with the New Testament, which represents rulers as a *terror* to evil doers, and a *praise* to them that do well. A stranger might live undisturbed as long as he pleased in Israel. He is not compelled to be circumcised, to offer gifts and sacrifices, to support the priesthood. The Judges and Kings of Israel had no legal power, under penalties, to oblige their *own* people to pay tithes, to attend the festivals, to offer sacrifice. God, *Lord of Conscience*," according to the Confession, took upon Himself to punish delinquents: but, as *Lord of Conscience*, He enjoined upon the Ruler not to allow the introduction of a false god, to set up an image, to blaspheme the Name of God, or to treat the Sabbath with contempt. Is it wrong for a magistrate to do as the *Lord of Conscience* commands? To find fault is to deny that *God is Lord*. The fact appears to be, that the modern doctrine of Liberty of Conscience, when analysed,

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is that God has no more right to give law to conscience than man has. To vindicate the maligned constitution of Israel, I may add that, beyond the limits of Israel, the conquered nations might worship as many gods as they pleased, and paid no tithes. Israel affords no support to the tithe system of England and Ireland. Israel asked tithes only of such as worshipped at the altar. They enjoyed as much liberty of conscience in Israel, as any nation, calling itself Christian, has any right to ask. Strangers had more liberty in Israel than Dissenters have in Britain.

The preceding remarks may help to cast light on the 20th Chapter of the Confession, which has been considered the weak point of our lines, and has been the object of many a furious assault. Who will say, that "to oppose any *lawful* power, or the *lawful exercise* of it, upon pretence of Christian liberty," or any other pretence, is not to "resist the ordinance of God?" Who will say that, if a man has adopted the opinion that the Lord's day is of no moral obligation, and opens his store or his workshop, or enters into his husbandry on that day, the magistrate has not a perfect right to compel the closing of the store or the shop, and to order the farmer out of his fields? Who will say that the magistrate must defer to the conscience of a company of Mormons, who might choose to establish a colony of debauchery and murder, in the environs of London or Belfast? Who will say that, if the Romanists of Halifax should march through the streets, preceded by the host, and one of my zealous and conscientious countrymen would knock off my hat or otherwise abuse me, because I would not bow to the idol, I have no right to appeal to the magistrate to protect me, and to punish the offender? Who will say that the authorities of New York should not interfere to secure to the Churches liberty to meet and worship in peace on the Lord's day, against thousands parading the streets with drums, and fifes and shouts, and revelry? Look at the 20th Chapter, in the light of these questions. There is no time, in the present connexion, for more extended discussion. No Presbyterian, no Christian ought to be, no Cameronian is, ashamed of it. There is no persecution in it. The opposition to it has its origin in the assumption that the Scriptures are *unintelligible*, or that they mean *nothing*, or that they mean *just what any one chooses* to believe or practise. Latent or conscious infidelity is mixed up with our religious difficulties very generally. Rascals don't like gaols, nor murderers, gibbets. The 20th chapter simply assumes that, as the Lord Jesus Christ is, by the Father's designation, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords," it is the imperative duty of Rulers, supreme and subordinate, to guarantee the integrity of Christ's institutions, to protect the Christian people in the enjoyment of the privileges which Christ has conferred on them, and to make

the law of Christ the rule of their administration. Popery claims for the Man of Sin the right to absolve subjects from Allegiance to a temporal prince: and voluntaryism takes a bolder step, and would absolve rulers from their Allegiance to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of the Kings of the earth.

The Westminster Confession also teaches that "There is no other Head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ." The distinction between a Head in Heaven and a temporal Head is futile, as His place claims homage equally of things in heaven and things in earth, and by Him things, alike visible and invisible, consist. This doctrine has a large, though not exclusive, influence in fixing the position of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. The Pope of Rome, in claiming to be *in any sense* the Church's Head, is pronounced to be "that Antichrist, that man of sin, that exalteth himself in the church against Christ." When Henry 8th wrested from the Pope the ecclesiastical supremacy, he placed the Crown upon his own head; and claimed for himself a power as ample as any Pope could desire, a power, in all its plenitude, still claimed, as an "inherent prerogative of the Crown" according to statute; more leniently exercised than by that self-willed and capricious sovereign, but unmodified by any subsequent legislation, by the Head of the British Empire, to the present hour. If the Pope be *Antichrist*, the Ecclesiastical Supremacy of the British Crown must be *Antichristian*. When the Reformation took place in England, that was acted which Nebuchadnezzar saw in a dream. The tree was hewn down, the branches were lopped off, and the fruit was scattered; but, in the ecclesiastical supremacy, the stump of the roots was left in the earth, with a band of iron and brass, and is now sending out its shoots with uncommon vigour. To this unhappy supremacy may be traced the growth and spread of Infidelity and Romanism in the Church of England, which her own excellent sons can neither prevent nor correct. To this, that the Kirk of Scotland has ceased to be the Church of the people and different forms of Dissent pervade every part of the land.

It is generally known that Reformed Presbyterians cannot, consistently with their profession, swear the oath of Allegiance, and, therefore, cannot hold offices under the Crown, nor vote for Representatives, as we cannot depute others to act for us, when, in entering on their official duties, they must do what we cannot do in our own persons.

I am now prepared to assign a leading reason. It is not because we do not take a deep and affectionate interest in the land of our nativity or of our adoption; it is not because we are opposed to Monarchy, for, although our brethren in the United States have their Republican predilections, I believe Reformed Presbyterians in the British Dominions would generally prefer Monarchy; it is not because we consider any of the Governments

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of the surrounding nations preferable to ours, for we are fully persuaded there is no country where life and liberty, human rights and property are more secure, or where just laws are more righteously administered; it is not from disrespect to the Sovereign, for I do not think there is a Reformed Presbyterian who has not the personal character of our accomplished and excellent Queen in profound veneration; but because the Oath of Allegiance involves a recognition of the Ecclesiastical Headship, as full, as absolute, as of the Political Sovereignty. I speak not of any declarations that may be made to satisfy scruples, nor of the intentions of those who take that Oath, but of a matter of fact: and I repeat that it is *impossible*, politically and morally, to take the Oath of Allegiance, and not swear to support the Sovereign's Headship over the Church.

We are not asked to pledge our allegiance to Alexandrina Victoria, daughter of the Duke of Kent, but to her "Majesty Victoria, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith, and of the United Church of England and Ireland, on earth the *Supreme Head*;" it is to a *political person the impersonation of the Constitution*.

Again, it is only in being invested with the sovereignty that her Majesty can be Head of the Church; and, invested with the sovereignty, she cannot but be Head of the Church. The two things, as the law stands, are inseparable. The Ecclesiastical Headship is an "inherent prerogative of the Crown;" and a man, in taking the Oath of Allegiance, might just as well say, he did not mean to acknowledge the *Political* Head as the *Ecclesiastical* Head.

An argument, that might be very forcibly urged in support of our position upon such as recognise the continued obligation of our National Covenants, shall be passed over, to present one adapted to all classes of Christians, founded on a lucid and comprehensive Scripture statement—the words of Him "in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." The Jews, in the time of our Saviour's humiliation, could make convenient distinctions as well as we can. They thought they could swear by the altar, without swearing by the gift upon it. They thought they could swear by the temple, without swearing by the gold by which it was adorned and enriched. Ambition, covetousness, and sensuality, make men, whether of old or modern times, very ingenious. Hear how our Lord discourses with them. "Woe unto blind guides, which say, whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Fools and blind, for whether is greater the gold or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifieth

the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that sweareth by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon."

Here is a broad principle established, that whatever object an oath contemplates must be accepted with all its accessories. Whether you swear by or to a person or thing, the oath must be understood to contemplate all that the person or thing comprehends. The Lord calls them "*fools*," "*blind guides*," who think they can swear by the altar, and not at the *same time* and in *that act*, swear by the gift on it—who think they can swear by the temple, and leave out of consideration the gold of the temple. What would He say to those who think they can swear fealty to the *Crown* without swearing like fealty to an *inherent prerogative* of the Crown? I leave my Presbyterian brethren to settle the question with the Lord Jesus. They are certainly as inconsistent as I would be in taking the oath of allegiance, for they entertain no better ideas of the Ecclesiastical Headship than I do, although they are not so guilty before God as I would be.

The blasphemous claims of Rome have brought great guilt, and will yet bring heavy judgments upon Europe: and as I desire that Britain may not share in Rome's plagues, my earnest prayer is, that the Lord would, by his Spirit, illuminate the Sovereign, the Nobles, and the Commons of Britain, that, convinced of the great sin of assuming the titles and province of the Saviour, her Majesty would, as Gideon said to the Israelites, "I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you," say to the Churches of Britain, "I will not be your Head. The Lord Jesus Christ shall be both your Head and mine."

III. Reformed Presbyterians hold the permanent obligation of the Solemn League and Covenant on the British Crown and Empire.

Now, as I have not once or twice heard, I can fancy I hear now some readers exclaim—"What have we to do with that old Covenant?—we never consented to it—such nonsense is too egregious to be listened to—the absurdity of holding that Solemn League still binding is too great to be entitled to an examination." All this looks very wise and very lofty. There are men, whose intellects are vigorous and apt, who acquire knowledge so much by intuition—I mean Theological knowledge, for in other departments they are not always so expert—that they can afford to treat lightly of subjects, that appear to smaller minds important and abstruse. It is, however, to be kept in mind that Reformed Presbyterians are not the only advocates of the continued obligation of the Solemn League. The primitive Seceders were all advocates of the doctrine. Dr. M'Orie, the historian of John Knox, was an advocate of the doctrine, as are the

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Original Seceders. There is a very respectable minority in the Free Church who adhere to it; and there exists an "Association in connection with the Free Church for promoting the principles of the Covenanted Reformation." There are ministers of the General Assembly in Ireland who hold the doctrine, and of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces of British North America who adhere to it as firmly as I do. It is a singular but suggestive circumstance that there is not in Britain, known to me, a Presbyterian body which does not claim to be the legitimate sons of the men who entered into the Solemn League, and intended it to be a perpetual bond among the Presbyterians of Britain and Ireland. The united Presbyterians claim, I think, as it becomes modern children, to be far ahead of their parents, and are fairly out of sight of the position occupied by them. We are so familiar with progress in science and art that we are hardly prepared to acknowledge the Bible to be a fixed fact.

I have a question or two to put to those who think they are entitled to sneer at the old and musty Solemn League and Covenant. What do you think of the "Act of Succession" which fixes the title of her Majesty to the British throne? You never gave your consent to it. It is 168 years old. What think you of the Revolution Settlement? It is 180 years old. What think you of *Magna Charta*, out of which have grown progressive securities for British liberty? It is 650 years old, nearly three times as old as the Solemn League; very reluctantly granted by John, as reluctantly as the latter was subscribed by the "Merrie Monarch;" and very reluctantly confirmed by subsequent Sovereigns. O, you will say, these are different matters. Why, yes, there is a difference. In the one case we speak of the claims of *Christ*, in the other of the claims of *temporal rulers*. When we treat of the claims of Christ we are allowed to talk nonsense that would not be tolerated five minutes if uttered with reference to earthly rulers.

But perhaps it is not the *age*, but the *matter*, of the Covenant to which an objection is raised. We are quite willing to have it subjected to the touchstone of the Divine Word, and loudly object to have it shelved by those who know nothing of it but by rumour. Let it be thoroughly canvassed. There cannot be an objection to the Sovereign being under any covenant, for this would be to plead for Absolutism. Our present Queen is a *Covenanted Sovereign*. She must be a Protestant, and swear to maintain Episcopacy in England, Presbytery in Scotland, and, in general, to govern the several parts of the empire according to their peculiar laws and customs. The question is whether the Covenant under which the Sovereign reigns, or the Solemn League and Covenant is more Scriptural. Revolutionary changes are going on both in the Old World and the New, and greater are anticipated or apprehended, for which the nations are pre-

paring. A heavy pressure is being brought to bear upon rulers, and Reformed Presbyterians have a strong opinion that the Solemn League will yet rise to the surface, and exercise an influence in stilling the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people. We would not discharge a gun or draw a sword to secure the result. We look not to might or power, but to the Spirit of the Lord.

In the meantime, I submit one great principle involved in the doctrine of the permanent obligation of national deeds, and advert to two popular objections to the Solemn League.

The *principle* is this—That a nation is a person, morally and politically; that successive generations are as the successive years of the life of an individual, and the obligations incurred and the crimes committed are no more cancelled by the lapse of time than the individual is absolved from the responsibilities of his youth by becoming an old man; that the identity is complete, and that the ruler is no more one thing and the several departments of the State are other things, than the head, hands, and other members of the body are independent agents who have separate and independent functions and liabilities. Without being formally stated, the principle is universally assumed in the perpetuity of national treaties, in the liability of nations for debts contracted in ages long past, and in the constant appeal to the governments of nations against the irregularity or injustice of subjects of the State, as if the governments were the guilty parties. But our present object is to show that this principle is fully recognised in the Divine Word.

The Covenant which God entered into with Israel in the land of Moab, on the eve of their entering into the land of Canaan, was prospective, and held bound that people, individually and collectively, from the ruler to the lowest menial. "I make this Covenant and this oath with Him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God, and also with Him that is *not here* with us this day, lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God." The breach of this Covenant in after ages was the aggravated crime for which the judgments of God fell upon them. Jeremiah addresses his contemporaries as the identical people who came out of Egypt. "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness."

Joshua and the elders of Israel, influenced by false representations, confirmed by an oath a Covenant with the Gibeonites. They had been deceived, the people were very much displeased, but the oath may not be violated; and God held the whole nation, through all generations, bound by that oath. Saul, hundreds of years after, in his zeal for Israel and Judah, slew of these Gibeonites. The matter seems to have attracted so little

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attention that not a passing allusion is made to it in the records of Saul's reign. But God is not unobservant or forgetful. Saul has died. A revolution, which set aside his family and placed David, of another tribe, on the throne, does not cancel the guilt of that massacre. In God's estimation the guilt rests upon the nation, is avenged by a famine, in the days of David, for three successive years, and is removed by the act of the Sovereign in ordering meet satisfaction.

David numbered the people. It was his own act, against the remonstrance of Joab. God is displeased, and He sends a pestilence which carries off seventy thousand (70,000) of the people. It does not appear that David or any member of his family was personally a sufferer in that calamity. Why God was angry with Israel, that He should leave David to fall by temptation and number the people, we know not; but from the whole transaction we learn that it is full of peril before God for rulers to connive at the sins of the people, and for people to connive at the sins of the rulers. Neither the one nor the other can lay the flattering unction to their souls that they have not to answer to God in such cases.

As God dealt with Israel He deals with other nations. God commanded Saul—"Go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Why are they to be exterminated? Because they met Israel in the wilderness, as they journeyed from Egypt to Canaan, and smote the hindmost of them, all that were feeble—the faint and weary. There was not an individual living that had taken part in that transaction, nor had been for hundreds of years. What had the women done? What sin had the infants and sucklings committed against Israel? What the flocks and herds? The whole order recognised the unity and permanence of the nation, supplies a solemn lesson to Israel, and teaches that national vindication must be free from suspicion of rapacity or spoil.

Tyre was desolated, first by Nebuchadnezzar and afterwards by Alexander, to atone for injustice and cruelty to Israel, in violation of the Covenant of affection and commerce between Solomon, King of Israel, and Hiram, King of Tyre. "Is it for three transgressions of Tyre or for four? I will not revoke my purpose, because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant." That covenant was at least four hundred years old. Babylon is delivered into the hands of the Medes and Persians, to punish the proud king of the empire for cruelty to Israel. God had delivered His people, on account of their sins, into the power of the heathen. He "was a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction." But Nebuchadnezzar, the prime mover, had long since passed away.

There are two popular *objections* to the Solemn League and Covenant, to which we would now invite the reader's attention.

1. One is grounded on the second article:—"that we shall, without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, (that is, church-government by Archbishops, Bishops, their Chancellors and Commissaries, Deans, Deans and Chapters, Archdeacons, and all other Ecclesiastical officers depending on that Hierarchy), superstition, &c., &c.—found to be contrary to sound doctrine and the power of godliness." This has supplied material for an incalculable amount of learned, splendid, and indignant declamation; all, however, founded on gross ignorance and inattention to the statement. Papists and Prelatists have been so much in the habit of pursuing opponents by fire and sword, that imagination gets the mastery of judgment, and when Presbyterians talk of the vindication or advancement of their cause, they think they see a whole army of fierce crusaders or of scowling Cameronians ready to fall on them and cut off "man and woman, infant and suckling." They may dismiss their fears. There is not a Presbyterian, not of the Cameronian school even, who would shed the blood of one of them to see his cause established over all the earth. The word "*extirpate*" seems to frighten them. It simply means to *root out*; and our Saviour, with whom most people would hesitate to find fault, says—"Every plant, which my heavenly father hath not planted, shall be *rooted up*;" and this with special reference to the views of a class of persons who made lofty pretensions to religion, and despised others. The thing to be *extirpated* has been sadly misunderstood. It is not Archbishops, Bishops, &c., but *Church-government* by these; for the extirpation of which there is no means adapted but the Word of God: and the fiercest advocate of Prelacy will hesitate to say, that if the Word of God prove an instrument fitted to *root up* Prelacy, it ought to be rooted up. If the Bible is with him he is all safe in his position. But the Covenant does not bind to the extirpation of *Episcopacy*. There is no doubt the original perfecters of the Covenant believed that every form of Diocesan Episcopacy was unscriptural, but that instrument limits those who adopt it to the eradication of Episcopacy *putting on a particular form*. An Episcopalian who adopts the views of Archbishop Usher, who could unhesitatingly recognise Presbyterian ordination, and give his hand to a Presbyterian or any Independent minister as a brother in the Lord, might have little objection to accept this section of the Solemn League.

2. But the *fourth* section has been the occasion of the heavy charge of persecution against the Covenanters. Let us look at it. "We shall with all faithfulness, endeavour the discovery of all such as have been or shall be incendiaries, malignants, or evil instruments, by hindering the Reformation of religion,

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dividing the King from his people, or one of the kingdoms from another, or making any faction or parties among the people, contrary to this League and Covenant." That there is nothing alarming in all this will appear from a simple comparison. There used to be administered to the members of the House of Commons in England, three oaths. In, I think, 1858, Lord Russell obtained leave to bring in a bill to abrogate these oaths, and substitute a form of oath comprehending all three, a part of which reads thus:—"I do swear that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to her Majesty, Queen Victoria, and will defend her to the utmost of my power against all conspiracies and attempts whatever, which shall be made against her person, crown, or dignity; and I will do my utmost endeavour to *disclose* and make known to her Majesty, her heirs, and successors, all *treasons and traitorous conspiracies* which may be formed against her or them." There is nothing more stringent or inquisitorial in the Solemn League, to which we are pledged, if the Government were constituted and administered upon its principles, than that to which one is bound according to this oath. Who finds fault with the government for endeavouring to discover the haunts of Fenians, or of others who would overthrow or embarrass it? Who finds fault, because the promoters of insurrection and rebellion are brought to punishment! Is it not considered meritorious to assist in detecting conspiracies, and in bringing to justice those who are parties to them?

Why the difference? We are all alive to the duty of sustaining the Constitution and laws of Britain, say, but to plead for the integrity of the Solemn League is infamous. The Constitution of Britain secures subjection to Queen Victoria. The League and Covenant requires the subordination of the nation to the Son of God. If anything should disturb the Constitution of Britain, and interfere with the administration of its laws, the foundations are loosed, and disorder and desolation must follow: but men may pour contempt upon the Son of God, disregard His word, trample His laws under their feet, and propagate ungodliness, and society has nothing to fear. Put a rebel against her Majesty into office, it would be madness. Put into the highest offices of trust an infidel, a profligate, an enemy of God, and he is expected to be an excellent member of the State, and to strengthen the bands of society. Should a person appointed to the office of Lord Lieutenant in Ireland, or of Lieutenant-Governor in Nova Scotia, refuse, in entering on the administration of the Government, to swear the oath of Allegiance, he would be peremptorily set aside. Neither Sovereign nor people would own him. If it should be made the condition of holding the place of the first Magistrate in the land, to swear to rule in subordination to Christ, and to administer the government according to His laws, there would be a very general



shout of execration, while we are expected to vow subjection to him as the *minister of God*. I would be glad, when men denounce the Solemn League, they would introduce a modicum of common sense into their reasonings. I fear nothing for the Solemn League but that it should never be investigated.

IV. We are Presbyterians. We read of the Reformed Churches of Europe, as distinguished from the Lutheran; of the Reformed Dutch Church; without the title being otherwise marked, than as an indication of a claim to adhere to the doctrines of the Reformation. But with the courtesy that has usually characterised the treatment of Cameronians, the title, *Reformed Presbyterians*, by which we are known, has afforded some of those, who condescend to know that we exist, quite a fund of amusement. Be it so. The Master was sometimes laughed to scorn, because He laid claim to an honour which His enemies were not willing to accord, and to be made partakers with Him is quite a compliment.

In professing to be Presbyterians, we do not wish to be understood as merely holding, that Presbyterian Church Government is "agreeable to the Word of God," which some Episcopalians would admit, and which is all for which some Presbyterians contend; but that it is the *only* regimen which has the support of the Scriptures. Neither do we assert that the New Testament furnishes a systematic platform of Presbyterianism, more than the heavens exhibit a formal chart of the stellar system; but that there are certain well defined facts stated which any form of Church government that claims Divine authority must recognise. There may be considerable diversity in point of order, and the object to be secured is *that* order which most definitely and fully embraces the facts. There are, for instance, the perfect official parity of all ministers of the gospel—that not only are all Bishops, Presbyters, but all Presbyters are Bishops—the co-operation of elders who rule merely, with those who labour in word and doctrine—the principle of representation, implied in the distinction between rulers and ruled—and the subordination, to conserve the unity and purity of the Church, of its several sections to classical Assemblies. These things are, we think, demonstrable from the Word of God.

V. We claim to be more free from Sectarianism than any other Denomination of Christians. I am aware that this claim will surprise many, as we are usually held up as most bigoted and illiberal, or, in modern phrase, of narrow and contracted views. We are not so anxious to multiply and increase congregations as to promote the adoption of sound and definite doctrine. Our organization exists for that end. There is an indissoluble connexion between *sound speech* and the *power of godliness*. We are *born again*, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the *word of God*; not otherwise. *Faith* comes

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by hearing, and hearing by the *word of God*; not otherwise. Christ *sanctifies* His church by *the word*. The *word of God* is truth, and truth makes *free*. In one word God hath chosen men to *salvation* through sanctification of the Spirit and *belief of the truth*. Desiring the salvation of men, we can have no sympathy with those who "agree to differ," as we do not believe the word of God differs from itself. It is *charity* which rejoices in the *truth*. I can hardly call it *charitable* to make light of the difference between truth and error.

We are advocates, therefore, of close communion. Some will be ready to ask, "Is this the extent of your liberality? Does not this fix on you the charge of Sectarianism hopelessly?" Reader, a little patience. You may think differently before you and I part company, and think more favourably of close communion. I speak as unto wise men, whose privilege it is to judge; and who are capable of judging of what I say. The advocate of open fellowship takes you *as you are*, because he has no hope that you are ever to *learn anything more* or to *correct anything*; that you either want the *power* or want the *will*. In the face of the declaration that the Spirit teaches all things, yea, the deep things of God, he will go on to assert that, as we have differed, so we will differ till the last sun shall shine upon the earth. It would be hard to tell whether he treats the judgment of man or the power of the Spirit with less respect. All unconscious of a position, which long established habits of thought have made easy, he goes on reciting the old lesson.

How often have I heard, how often have I read, some such language as this:—"Who can forbid a child of God to come to his Father's table? Who *dare* stand between the child and the Father's table?" All this seems, I have no doubt, to those who utter it, very conclusive, and, often to others, very devout and very charitable; yet it is in reality very shallow and deceptive. It is, however, so often and so confidently uttered, and is withal so plausible, that good men and good minds are carried away. We do not always *think*; the sensibilities obtain the mastery, and in very simplicity we are deceived. The doctrine of open communion is popular, and if our sole object were to add to our numbers, we would of course adopt it.

To our *own table* we have a right to invite whom we please, but not to a *friend's*. In that case we do not consult our own feelings, but what may be agreeable to the host. When we invite to the table of the Lord we are to be regulated by what may be acceptable to Him. This is triumphantly met by—"We invite a *child of the Lord*."

1. Friend, how do you know this? The Lord alone searches the heart. Open communion, at the very outset, invades God's province. We may believe a man to be a Christian, but we do not *know* it, so as to make that knowledge the ground of action

in the Church. Hypocrisy is often more flashy and imposing than humble piety. Jehu is ostentatious of "zeal for the Lord," and Judas of care for the poor.

There is no Presbyterian, who knows his own principles, who ever thinks of making *regeneration* the condition of membership in the Church. He accepts him who witnesses a good confession, sustained by a corresponding practice, and treats him as a child of God, till by transgression he falls from his place.

2. If we *know* a man to be a child of God, it does not follow that he is to be admitted to fellowship in the Church. Paul instructs the Thessalonians, "If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a *brother*." Here is one whom Paul will own as a brother, and will have the Church to own, and yet his present conduct, his refusal to submit to inspired counsels, excludes him from fellowship. The open communionist, to be consistent with himself, would stand up before Paul and demand, "*How dare you forbid God's child access to his Father's table!*"

Close communion, in excluding from the fellowship in the Church and in breaking of bread, does not deny a spiritual relationship to Christ; but open communion, in making regeneration the condition of fellowship, pronounces a very unwarrantable and uncharitable sentence on such as are excluded. God's strokes are safer than man's kisses.

3. If we have strong reason to doubt a man's piety, if we *know* him to be ungodly, and are not able to give definite evidence of breach of vows and insubordination to the law of Christ, we would not be justified in excluding him from the Lord's table. The Saviour knew from the beginning what Judas was, and yet, with the Saviour's full concurrence, he holds his place among the Apostles, till by transgression he fell. Caiaphas was high priest, according to a divine ordinance. He was a very bad man, and an enemy of Christ. Yet being in a divine office, from which there was no law to exclude him, God vouchsafes to him the gift of the *Spirit*. He utters a remarkable prophecy, and that utterance is expressly connected with the Priesthood. "He spake not of himself, but being *high priest* that year, he prophesied."

4. Exclusion from the Lord's table, then, does not imply a condemnation of a man's character, but of his *principles* or his *course*. "If any man obey not our word by this epistle." "Who concerning the *truth* have erred." "Having a *form* of godliness, but denying the *power* thereof."

5. Open communion discourages self-examination. The Churches have pronounced on our spiritual state. We are accepted as *regenerate*. Open communion is, in this aspect of it, better adapted to promote spiritual pride and carnal security

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than the "fear and trembling" of humble piety. In the supercilious contempt with which its advocates speak of those who differ from them, and in the assumption of more advanced spirituality and freedom, we discover the fruits maturing.

6. It discourages the study of the divine word. If I may enjoy the highest privileges of the Church, no matter what I believe within the range of Evangelicalism, or what I do within the limits of common morality, there is no very pressing necessity to apply myself to a close and searching examination of the word, that I may know the doctrines and laws of Christ. I am well enough as I am. Exhortations, prayers as little secret as possible, and singing of hymns as exciting as may be, are the elements of enjoyment.

7. Open communion leaves false impressions with regard to the importance of the truth of the gospel. By inviting Methodists and Baptists to the Lord's table, we teach them that we make little account of what we profess, and that it has little hold of the heart. We are teaching in the most effectual manner our own people, that it is no matter whether we believe that Christ's death secures the salvation of those for whom He died, or that many for whom He died suffer the vengeance of eternal fire; whether that God chooses men because He foresaw their faith, or that their faith is the result of God's election; that it is no matter whether our children are baptized or not.

8. While open communion professes a desire to promote union, it tends to perpetuate disunion to the end. There is the appearance of harmony, and there remains the same contrariety of judgment, which there is no attempt to correct. It is not because we are enemies of union that we advocate close communion, but because we love it. It is not because we are enemies of our brethren who differ from us, but because we love them.

We are looking forward to union in all the Churches of the Saints; we are praying for it, we labour for it—that all may be one as the Father and Son are one, with whom there is no compromise, no agreement to differ, no open question. We are confident of the issue. We are commanded to "speak the same thing," to "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." We have the promise that the watchmen of Zion shall see eye to eye and sing together. The Spirit, who is given to them that believe, who guides into all truth, is able to accomplish this, and to teach the members of Christ to speak the same thing.

We do not claim for ourselves to have anticipated the time when the Lord shall bind up the breach of his people, and "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days." We desire, we pray, we hope, that, if we be otherwise minded than

the Record teaches, God will shew it unto us; and, in the mean time, we recognise the obligation, whereto we have already attained, to walk by the same rule, to mind the same thing; while we are prepared to honour the servants of the Lord everywhere, though in some or many things we consider them in error, or in a false position. What man who loves Christ can banish from his affections the Grostetes, the Amours, the Wes-sels, and the Pascals, of the Church of Rome? We hold in distinguished honour the Ushers, the Romaines, the Newtons, the M'Neiles, and the Uniacks, of the Church of England. The names of the Bostons and Thomsons, the M'Cries and Chal-merses, the Cunninghams and Cookes, of the Established and Dissenting Churches of Scotland and Ireland, are not less revered and loved by Reformed Presbyterians than by their own eccle-siastical brethren. Some may say, "All these honeyed words only shew that Cameronianism itself cannot resist the influence of the expanding and liberalising tendencies of modern illumina-tion." On the contrary, this is its very spirit from the beginning—the spirit of true piety and love of *the truth*, in every place and in every age. We will find the most rigid exclusiveness and severest denunciations of apostacy, of error, and of immorality, bound up with the most ardent Christian affection, yearnings after the spiritual interests of those from whom a separation is maintained, and self-condemnation because of the want of more earnest efforts for their sanctification and salvation. Nor is there any inconsistency in all this. All will acknowledge that there was more of the Spirit of Christ in Paul's delivering the transgressor to Satan, than in the Corinthians' allowance of his presence in the Church. Paul's severity contemplated his re-formation and salvation, while the liberality and indulgence of the Corinthians tended to his eternal ruin. It is with no com-mon pleasure that I copy another statement from that well in-formed and accurate scholar, Dr. W. H. Goold. "The private sentiments of the men (the Society people,) too, amply show the real generosity which glowed within them. On an inspection of their proceedings and sentiments, so far as they can be now gathered, it is an infamous perversion of all truth to represent them as sour, bigoted, and intolerant. Many hearts would respond with deep sincerity to the noble saying of Renwick, 'O when shall those be agreed on earth that shall be agreed in heaven. Methinks if my blood were a means to procure that end, I could willingly offer it.' And it is, finally, an interesting illustration of the comprehensive views and brotherly kindness for which the men of these societies were remarkable, when we find them specifying among their causes of fasting, a sin, which, in this professedly liberal age, we fear is almost totally over-looked. 'And in a special manner,' to quote their own emphatic words, 'the little extent of our zeal, little minding the dark

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places of the land; little concernedness with the case of England or Ireland, though they be in the same covenant with ourselves; little sympathy with the sufferings of other Churches, as France, Hungary, and Piedmont, for which cause we are justly punished with the same extent of sympathy from all.' The men who could speak in this strain, when there was so much to draw and concentrate their undivided regards and attention upon their own case, cannot be called narrow-minded, unless you choose to violate all the proprieties of language. We might challenge the records of all Churches since the Revolution to produce sentiments of such fraternal affection to the Churches of the Reformation as are here strikingly indicated, when coldness, in this respect, is made a special cause of humiliation before God."

This is not all. We are prepared to go farther than to love in word and in tongue. There is not one who is called to advocate any article of revealed truth, who will not find a Reformed Presbyterian ready to stand by him and support him, though he may have been in keen controversy with him yesterday, and may be to-morrow. No denominational jealousy shall ever come over the spirit of a true Covenanter, to blind him to the pre-eminent claims of truth over all sectional interests. About forty years ago, there was a public, a protracted, and an ardent controversy, between the priests of Rome, and the ministers of the Irish Episcopal Church. In conversation with an Episcopal Clergyman, who complained of other Protestant bodies giving them the cold shoulder, I said, we are strongly attached to our own distinguishing profession, but I do not think any of our ministers are capable of looking, without interest, on your argument. He turned full before me and replied, "We never meet with a Covenanter but we meet with a friend." I would not own for a leal-hearted Cameronian one who, in like circumstances, could not extort a like testimony. I don't know which is more contemptible, the man who would turn away from even an enemy in difficulties, and the man who could forfeit his own good opinion for the sake of any man's friendship.

In conclusion, we have to say of Reformed Presbyterians that, in poverty and contempt, we have endeavoured to hold up a testimony for the Crown and Dignity of Immanuel, in times of old Moderatism and ungodliness, and in modern times of Infidelity and Latitudinarianism. This is no small honour, as it is an imperative duty. When the time has come—and come it soon shall—that God shall visit Zion in His glory, He will raise up, in the midst of apostacy and worldliness, another Luther or Henderson, whose feet shall be like hind's feet, who shall overleap a wall, and break bows of steel in pieces. Christ must reign till all enemies are under His feet. He is shaking both the Heavens and the Earth, for the removal of things that are unstable, that things which cannot be shaken may be discovered.

Darkness may cover the land and gross darkness the people, "but the Lord shall arise upon Zion, and His glory shall be seen upon her. And the Gentiles shall come to her light and kings to the brightness of her rising." If, in that day, Cameronianism be found a blunder and a fable.—AMEN. "*Let God be true, and every man a liar.*"

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## A D D E N D A .

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\* \* The following sentences were supplied by the Author, after the first sheet had gone through the press. The first is intended to follow the word *principle*, at the close of the first paragraph of page 14. The second portion is to be regarded as a foot-note after the word *Reformation*, first sentence of next paragraph, same page:—

Dr. Begg, therefore, is not so guilty of professional inconsistency, in defending Irish Prelacy, as some might suppose. He is too well acquainted with the constitution of the Free Church to be guilty of so great a blunder as to plead for a Prelatic establishment, in opposition to the principles of his own denomination.

It is no small gratification to be able to add the following corroborative statement of the Rev. Mr., now Dr. W. H. Gould, whose exact acquaintance with Ecclesiastical History, and, in particular, the history of the British Churches, few will question:—"The Covenant, so far from being adopted either in the letter or in the spirit by the State, was not even owned by the Church. The monarch took oaths in express contradiction to it. Presbyterianism, so far from being established 'in all his Majesty's (King William's) dominions,' was only established, and that under erastian conditions, in Scotland, while Prelacy reared its head, with lordly arrogance, in England and Ireland. The monarch became an Episcopalian, and by a bond so strict, too, that recently it has been deemed a monstrous inconsistency for royalty to enter a Presbyterian Church. Who but the Society People remonstrated against this torrent of public defection, and, by faithful protest, washed themselves free from national sin. We confess ourselves lost in amazement, that a single man conversant with the history of the period in the slightest degree, can hesitate for a moment in pronouncing their claims to be the true and only representatives of the Church of the Reformation, solid beyond the possibility of contradiction. What were the Covenanters without the Covenants, and what were the Covenant unless applied, and applied also to all the purposes for which it was designed?"