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ART. I.—*Select Notices of the present state of Religion and Religious Literature in some countries of Europe.*

H. Alexander

THE progress of religion on the continent of Europe will naturally maintain a high place in the view of American Christians, until the church shall cover the whole earth. Europe must long continue to be the great centre of moral influence upon the rest of the world, and if evangelical truth were once established in its chief countries, we might look for the speedy return of all mankind to God. But there is a large part of Europe which the Reformation never reached; and even in those kingdoms where Protestantism made its first great conquests, the churches which are nominally evangelical have yielded the truth of their fathers for various forms of Pelagian, Socinian and Deistical unbelief.

This has been remarkably the case in Germany. Not many years ago, heresy had become so prevalent that there was scarcely a professor's chair occupied by an evangelical man, and not a single journal which uttered a word in favour of orthodoxy. At present the case is very different, and the number of godly and zealous professors, preachers and editors is increasing. Among other journals we might mention those of Tholuck, Rheinwald, and Hengstenberg, all which,

shall be able to teach others also." Such men presbyteries are bound to license and ordain, and no others. The guilt of having incompetent men in the ministry, does not rest so much on the individuals themselves, as on the ecclesiastical bodies ordaining them. To the presbyteries it belongs to examine, license and ordain candidates for the holy ministry, and according as they prove faithful or unfaithful to their trust, the church will be blessed or cursed in her ministers.

J. A. Alexander

ART. VI.—*Thoughts on the Religious State of the Country; with Reasons for preferring Episcopacy.* By Rev. Calvin Colton. New York: Harper and Brothers. 12mo. 1836.

MR. CALVIN COLTON, with whom most of our readers are probably acquainted, as the writer of a popular and lively book on England, has become a convert to Episcopalianism; and with a due sense of the magnitude of that event, as forming a new chapter in the history of the church, he has made it the subject of a duodecimo. In the simplicity of our hearts, we should have thought that Mr. Calvin Colton might become even a Papist or a Pagan, without throwing the religious public into much commotion. But alas for our home-bred ignorance! we have never been to London. It is plain, from the work before us, that our presumptions were entirely delusive. The "change of religious connexions" (p. 21) is a thing so common, especially with persons of a certain class, that we have learned to regard it as a very slight affair, except when invested with an accidental importance by something extraordinary in the person changing. Shall we confess it, or will it be believed, that, till we saw this book, we had no idea of any thing in or about Mr. Calvin Colton, that should make him an exception to the general rule? We had ignorantly looked upon him as a well-meaning man, not destitute of talent, though rather scant of knowledge, somewhat ambitious of making a figure in print by means of a brisk and pointed style, not at all addicted to the vice of self-contempt, on good terms with all men, and especially himself; in short a literary *petit-maitre*, always harmless, though not always inoffensive, but even in his faults so free from malice, that the surliest critics could not find it in their hearts to touch a

hair of his head. Such being our impressions, what must we have felt when, on opening the volume now before us, we discovered our mistake; when we found that the author's "change of religious connexions" was a matter of public interest, and requiring explanation in a closely printed book. All this of course implied that we had erred in our estimate of Mr. Calvin Colton, and we awoke as from a dream. But we awoke too late. It is as true of great men, as of other personal and public blessings, that we never know their value till we lose them. The only reparation that we can now make, is by doing a sort of posthumous justice to the character of one, who might still have been ours had we praised him enough, but whose name and influence are lost to us forever, or at least till his "reasons for preferring Episcopacy" have been nullified by reasons for preferring something else. Our Presbyterian readers, most of whom no doubt have been as guilty as ourselves of injustice and mistake, will be glad to do penance for their error, by patiently following us through this book. And we need not beg that, whatever may have been their previous opinions, they would *pro hac vice* be content to look through Mr. Calvin Colton's microscope, and believe, if they can, that the transplantation of this hopeful scion into our neighbour's garden is as signal an occurrence as the conversion of Constantine or the apostacy of Julian. We hope that Dr. Hawks will not be allowed to overlook it.

The design of the book may be described as threefold:

1. By explanation, to vindicate the author from the charge of inconsistency.
2. By argument, to make proselytes.
3. By condescension and caresses, to mitigate the violence of the shock which Independency and Presbytery have been made to feel.

This specification is of course derived from our own examination of the work, and not from any avowal on the author's part. He makes no secret of the first and second items, but he is too polite not to disguise the third as neatly as he can. Even when his heart is breaking with sympathy for those whom he has ruined, his tact, address, and knowledge of etiquette, will not suffer him to soothe their grief except by indirection. He feels no doubt like a delicate woman who has just turned off a suitor, and, while she remains fixed in her determination, is longing in some way to assuage her lover's feelings. We appreciate

Mr. Calvin Colton's tenderness and skill, and shall do what we can, not only to strengthen the effect of his consolatory arts upon our readers, but to pay him in kind, by showing that his sympathy is really excessive, and that the Presbyterian church may even yet survive her irreparable loss. This will no doubt remove a burden from his heart. We now return to our threefold division of the topics of the book, and shall advert to each in order.

First comes Consistency, the personal consistency of Mr. Calvin Colton. We remember to have read of David Garrick somewhere, that in order to alleviate his morbid dread of ridicule, he frequently lampooned himself, when his conduct had by any chance afforded food for sarcasm; thereby forestalling his enemies, and making his own follies a source of fresh applause. This was an ingenious application of a medical expedient to a literary case; he chose to inoculate himself with ridicule rather than take it in a natural way. Its chief effect however was to show how sensitive he was to satire. We are afraid that an inference somewhat similar must be drawn from Mr. Calvin Colton's self-accusations on the score of inconsistency. He seems to have imagined that mankind were ready, like a pack of hounds, to open at once on this offensive scent, and so determined was he to defeat their malice, that he could not wait a page, no, not a paragraph, but in the very first sentence of his introduction, arraigns himself as a prisoner at the bar, with all the solemnity, and somewhat in the style, of a regular indictment. "Inasmuch as it has been supposed by some that the author of these pages has made certain demonstrations," &c. &c. From the solemn grandeur of the "inasmuch," a reader might suppose that the whole was to be wound up with a strong denial. Not at all. The plea is "guilty," and the culprit declares this book to be, as it were, his confession under the gallows. "Admitting that he has manifested such an inclination, it can only be said that he has changed his opinion, which is in part the design of this book to set forth, with the reasons thereof," (p. 11). We should feel for our friend, if he had not thought fit to convict and hang himself. His method of descending from this self-erected gibbet is by advancing such original and startling views as these, that "while he remained a Presbyterian he was an honest one;" "he may now be an equally honest Episcopalian, and charity would not require him to assert it." How uncharitable then is Mr. C. C. to himself! But not content with these general propositions, he proceeds

to startle the reader by informing him that Episcopalianism is the established sect in England and not in America, and that therefore the same person may consistently abuse the Church of England and admire her unestablished daughter. Having sufficiently elucidated this dark point, he drags out another of his own sins to light, and commences a wanton attack upon himself for having been at one time a furious *new-measure-man*, and at another time an enemy of what he elegantly calls "special effort." Hereupon he actually ventures to aver that a man may change his mind upon the subject of revivals! This paradox we tremblingly admit, though it seems to involve the startling proposition that writers of a certain sort are apt to advance opinions without examining their grounds; to maintain them with rash petulance and contempt of others; and then, when their eyes are partly opened, to rush into the opposite extreme, and make a virtue of exchanging the blindest reliance upon self for the blindest submission to authority. But where are we wandering? What has all this to do with Mr. Colton? Some strange association of ideas has misled us. What we meant to say next was, that the whole of the author's exculpatory paragraphs about his own consistency, amount to this, and nothing more, that he has changed his mind, and that he had a right to do it. Now even Mr. Calvin Colton never could believe that these two propositions wanted proof; his demonstration therefore only shows that his mind is not at ease, or, to use a coarser phrase, that he is sore. He has been scared by some phantom of the imagination, which palmed itself upon him as his own consistency, and complained of being murdered, though it never had any life to lose. We can lay the ghost; and Mr. Calvin Colton is so kind to other people,* that we perform with pleasure the work of an exorcist. This we shall do by showing that his agony of mind arises from three errors as to fact—three false assumptions.

The first assumption is, that consistency of sentiment or conduct is expected and required of all men. We undertake to say, in the name of our fellow men, that this is a mistake. It is only some peculiar characters that we expect to be consistent; such as refuse to draw conclusions without premises,

* "Having cleared the ground in the light of Constitutional organization, there remains yet a phantom—a ghost of an objection to the same point; and with many minds, I suppose, it has operated, and still operates, to frighten, not unlike a ghost. But as I have reconnoitered the apparition, and found it such, perhaps I may assist in quieting the fears of others." P. 84.

or to act without good reasons. The rest are allowed to change as often as they please. No body cares what they are in the second place, because no body knows what they were in the first. Nay, there are some persons and things whose utility depends upon their exemption from the law of consistency. What would be the use of a consistent weather-cock, or of those who serve as social weather-cocks to show which way the winds of popularity and fashion blow, if they were not allowed to shift with the changes of that which is the breath of their nostrils?

The second assumption is, that Mr. Calvin Colton's former notions of church-government and revivals, and the stand which he took in their defence, are regarded by his former friends as things of vast importance, intimately connected with the welfare of the church, and not to be abandoned without serious injury to the cause of true religion. With such ideas it is not surprising that our friend should be distressed. But we hasten to relieve him by the cheering assurance; that his embassy to London* was by no means a subject of excessive complacency and superstitious confidence to his friends at home. To ease his mind, we frankly confess that we were heartily ashamed of his connexion with our church, when he undertook to be the American *par excellence* in England. No imaginable change in his opinions here at home could give us half the pain that we experienced in consequence of his hasty, shallow, and conceited labours in the cause of truth. Now that it is all over, why may we not confess that we were even angry at what we were disposed to call the vanity and imprudence of our representative, and nothing would have pleased our selfish feelings better than to have heard that he had emigrated to another church, trundled his spades and pruning-hooks into some other vineyard. In all this we know that we were not alone. All judicious Presbyterians, who knew any thing about the *American in London*, wished him safely home again, while some of the best men in the church enjoyed a blissful ignorance that such a man existed. May we not hope that this plain statement will occasion some relief?

In the last place our author plagues himself without necessity, by taking it for granted that his recent metamorphosis

* "At the very moment when these events were in the incipient stage of their career, or before their proper character had been developed, I was removed to a distant position—to London," (p. 22). A reader ignorant of the author's history might be pardoned for supposing that he was at least a *Chargé d'Affaires*.

has, in the eyes of Presbyterians, subtracted something from the weight of argument in favour of their doctrines. How shall we go about to disabuse him of this error? We know what to say full well; but how shall we express it? Mr. Calvin Colton is so gentle and considerate where others are concerned, that we can hardly bring ourselves to tell him the plain truth. The error of imagining one's self to be an oracle, or of fearing that others will be crushed by one's own superior weight, is so harmlessly amusing and so often accompanied by amiable qualities, that it would be cruel to do more than repeat the poet's wish:

O that some power the gift would gie us,
To see ourselves as others see us!

Having set the question of consistency at rest, and thereby administered an opiate to our patient, we proceed to investigate his other symptoms. The second object of his work, we apprehend, is to make converts to Episcopalianism. The arguments employed with this laudable design, are both offensive and defensive. The objections urged against Presbyterianism may be reduced to these five heads:

1. The business of church-courts is unedifying, uncomfortable—and none more so than that of the General Assembly, p. 29.

2. Nothing can be a greater abuse of creeds, and of Christian associations under their forms than the guarding of the creed to all the nicety of its minute, grammatical, and verbal distinctions, p. 30.

3. An excess of law—a uniform, received, and established code, formed into a book of statutes—enforced *verbatim et literatim* by a supervision from which there is no escape—and on principles not unlike the administration of civil courts,* p. 31.

4. The pastoral office is robbed of its primitive, legitimate, essential, reasonable influence, p. 33.

5. The excessive amount of labour that is demanded of the clergy is undermining their health, and sending scores to their graves every year long before they ought to go there, p. 39.

6. The mode of admission to full communion is objectionable, p. 45.

As there is nothing very new in these objections, or in

* The author speaks with special horror of the "Assembly's Digest."

Mr. Calvin Colton's presentation of them, we shall not be expected to follow him through his details. The following remarks have occurred to us in reading them.

1. With respect to many of the things which he alleges, "there are," to use his own words, "hundreds, not to say thousands, of the Presbyterian and Congregational clergy, who will sympathize with him fully," (p. 37.) Some of the things complained of have no natural connexion with any particular organization, and are so entirely at variance with our's, that the regular operation of our system is at this moment counteracting and suppressing them. For example, it is admitted by this writer, that fanatical excess is not congenial with the spirit of genuine Presbyterianism; and yet we, as a church, are to be lectured on the evil effects of "special effort," "protracted meetings," "novelties," "rash experiment," "sallies of fanaticism," "over-heated excitements," "spurious excitements," "religious mania"—and by whom? Who is the sage reprover? Is it some one of acknowledged and established reputation, who, having long waged war against spurious religion, has a right to speak with authority? Or is it one who could play the zealot when fanatical excitement was the order of the day, who could try to import new measures and new nonsense into England, while they were in vogue at home; but now when the tide has changed, can change his course, and cease to be fanatical as soon as he discovers that fanaticism is *mauvais ton*?* We are more opposed to fanatical imposture than Mr. Calvin Colton ever was, or probably ever will be, because we are opposed to it on settled principle; but we disclaim his alliance as a party in the contest. Let him go to Mr. Finney with his recantations, and receive for answer, *Et tu Brute?* not in Latin but in Saxon.

2. Mr. Calvin Colton shows his candour by mixing Presbyterianism and Congregationalism together, urging against both what is true (or false) of either, and drawing conclusions from this mongrel monster of his own creation, in favour of Episcopalianism. We mention this only to show the fairness of his logic, not because his misdeeds of this kind can have any bad effect; for as he takes great pains to contradict himself, his cogent arguments neutralize each other. While we sympathise sincerely with our sister churches, we feel bound only to defend our own, and we are perfectly contented

* We may possibly do Mr. Colton injustice in calling him a zealot at that period. We really do not know precisely what it was that he advocated when he was in England; but he repents of having been an ardent friend of "special effort," and that we suppose must mean what we call "new measures."

with the following concessions of Mr. Calvin Colton, who, be it remembered, was brought up a Congregationalist and not a Presbyterian.

"In church organization, or polity, it is known that these denominations differ *materially* not to say **RADICALLY**," p. 31.

"It is true, no doubt, that Presbyterianism has been vitiated by the transfer and incorporation of the elements and leaven of Congregationalism into its body; and that fanaticism commenced its most frightful career in those parts of the Presbyterian church, where the spirit of Congregationalism most prevailed," p. 59.

These admissions are qualified no doubt by him who makes them; but Mr. Colton may comment and qualify forever, if he leaves us in peaceable possession of these facts.

3. As a sample of the author's intellectual operations we extract this paragraph, in which he states what he calls his "grand objection," the fourth in our arrangement.

"The grand objection, which I have to make to these systems, so nearly alike, as ordinarily found in practice, is, that the pastoral office is robbed of its primitive, legitimate, essential, reasonable influence. If any should refuse to concede to me what is implied in the word *primitive*, I will not here insist upon it, although I think so. Or if *legitimate* is objected to, let that go, rather than raise a discussion, for which I have no space; only I would not be understood as conceding to an opponent the argument that might be based upon these terms. I dispense with them simply on the ground that it is an historical argument, which, for my present purpose, would cost more than it is worth. I purposely avoid all learned research, and design to rely upon obvious, generally admitted, practical principles; principles tested by the common operations and developements of society. Say, then, that these systems rob the pastoral office of its *essential* and *reasonable* influence," p. 33.

What acumen! what address! "I will not ask you to admit that the power which I claim for the clergy was *primatively* theirs, or is *legitimately* theirs, if you will only say it is *essential* to the office!"

4. Mr. Calvin Colton's notions of the Presbyterian church have been picked up on the frontiers of New England. We do not doubt that like most of his brethren in the east, he has travelled through the country, as an agent or as something else; but still his impressions of Presbyteri-

anism are of eastern growth, that is to say, derived from "those parts of the Presbyterian church where the spirit of Congregationalism most prevails." Why else should he complain of public confessions and admissions to the church, as *Presbyterian* ceremonies? Why should he charge upon the Presbyterian church the evils resulting from particular church covenants and private creeds; and then exclaim, "How different this from the practice of a church, which has the same creed throughout the land, in every man's, in every woman's, and in every child's hand!" Have not we one creed, and is not that one universally accessible? As Mr. Colton thinks that so much mischief has resulted from diversity of creeds, we are under the necessity of charging upon him a part, we know not how much, of the evil he deploras. His glowing descriptions of the bad effects of Presbyterianism must of course have been derived in a great measure from the scene of his pastoral labours, "the western parts of New York." Now we have to state that some ten or fifteen churches in that region are supplied with creeds, each varying from the other, and of course from the Confession. And by whom were they prepared? By Mr. Calvin Colton. Hear himself. "I have myself organized from ten to fifteen churches, giving them creeds drawn up by my own hand, which varied from each other, according as by more thinking on the subject I supposed I could improve their forms." (p. 65.) We cease to wonder at the loose, incoherent, heterogeneous mass of notions which makes up the theology of that ill-fated region, when we know that its systems of belief have been thus botched up by itinerant tinkers in theology. No wonder that "special effort" has degenerated into "spurious excitements," and that these have gone from strength to strength, till they have ended sometimes in "religious mania." Do men gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? The quality of Mr. Colton's first attempts at creed-making may be shrewdly guessed from that of the work before us. If this is the product of "more thinking on the subject," for the last six or seven years, what, oh what, must his *coup d'essai* have been!

5. The "grand objection," after all, to Presbyterianism is, that the clergy have not power enough, and are too closely watched, and too much under the control of their parishioners. Complaints of this kind are always symptomatic of a certain something in the intellectual constitution of the sufferer. We need not seriously state that no imaginable church or-

ganization can protect from interference and control men who are born to be interfered with and controlled. Nor can any system, on the other hand, whatever be its forms, impose entire and permanent restraint upon a minister capable of influencing others. Let any man go through our churches and inquire who they are that most frequently complain of being thwarted by their elders or hampered by their people: They are just the men whose inefficiency tempts others to impose upon them. Show us a strong man, in the best sense of the term,* who habitually whimpers about being watched and managed; or show us, on the other hand, a clerical coxcomb who, in any situation, can escape the influence of superior minds; and we will then begin to sympathise with Mr. Calvin Colton in all that he has suffered at the hands of elders, deacons, and "tattling women." If we may judge from the frequency and point of allusions, it is the female class of meddlers that has vexed him most; and we very much suspect that "thereby hangs a tale." Who knows but that officious female hands have laid the deep foundations of that great event which forms the subject of the work before us? *A priori* we should rather have concluded that the peculiar qualities of Mr. Calvin Colton's mind and manner, his intellectual feminality, not to say anility, would have shielded him from peril and alarm in that direction; but the fact is otherwise. We are very far from meaning to dissent from his opinions in relation to the mischief done by meddling women in religious matters; we agree with him *in toto*. As little do we mean to quarrel with his prudent method of escaping from this grievance. All men are not able to resist the strife of tongues; there must be weaker brethren in the church and in the pulpit, and when these are fairly overcome either by male or female strength, they cannot do better than betake themselves to flight.

As we cannot make large extracts from this precious volume, we shall gratify our readers, and perhaps alarm them, by a highly charged paragraph, which seems to be intended to exhibit the essence of the author's argument in deadly concentration.

"My own reasoning on this spectacle has come to this: that the Presbyterian church, from the nature of man, is an impracticable machinery;—that from a spiritual community,

* 'A wise man is strong; yea, a man of understanding increaseth strength.'
'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.' Prov. 24: 5, 10.

professing to be governed by moral influences, it has degenerated into a species of civil polity; first, by burdening itself with too much law; next, by attempting to enforce the statutes under a literal and rigid construction in all possible forms of application, contrary to the design of Christianity, which is peculiarly a religion of *principles*, availing itself of the civil regulations of society to reform mankind by moral suasion;—and, that the equality claimed for all its ministers is the immediate occasion of its perpetual dissensions,” p. 61.

Along with this specimen of reasoning let the reader take a specimen of Mr. Calvin Colton's knack at telling a good story. Those who are familiar with his writings, are aware that, excepting wit, he has all the gifts of an accomplished jester.

“I have heard of one reception of these lay apostles, which may not be unworthy of record. One pair of them—for they went forth ‘two and two,’ and thus far were conformed to scripture—both of them mechanics, and one a shoemaker, having abandoned their calling to engage in this enterprise, came upon a subject, who was not disposed to recognise their commission. They began to talk with him: ‘We have come to stir you up.’ ‘How is the shoe business in your city?’ said the clergyman to the shoemaker, who was the speaker. For it was a city from which they came. The shoemaker looked vacant, and stared at the question, as if he thought it not very pertinent to his errand, and after a little pause, proceeded in the discharge of his office: ‘We have come to give your church a shaking.’ ‘Is the market for shoes good?’ said the clergyman. Abashed at this apparent obliquity, the shoemaker paused again; and again went on in a like manner. To which the clergyman:—‘Your business is at a stand, sir, I presume; I suppose you have nothing to do.’ And so the dialogue went on: the shoemaker confining himself to his duty, and the clergyman talking only of shoes, in varied and constantly shifting colloquy, till the perverse and wicked pertinacity of the latter discouraged the former; and the shoemaker and his brother took up their hats, to ‘shake off the dust of their feet,’ and turn away to a more hopeful subject. The clergyman bowed them very civilly out of doors, expressing his wish, as they departed, that the shoe business might soon revive. Of course, these lay apostles in this instance were horror-struck; and it cannot be supposed they were much inclined to leave their blessing behind them,” p. 36, 37.

We like this tale, and wish to make a 'practical improvement' of it. Mr. Colton considers it a capital joke that a cobbler should presume to stir a parson up. And so it is; but is it not a better joke that Mr. Calvin Colton, of all men in the world, should undertake to settle, in half a dozen flimsy chapters, what never could be settled to mutual satisfaction by a Cartwright or a Hooker, an Usher or a Baxter? The tone and import of his volume, as addressed to Presbyterians, is this: "I have come to stir you up." And a better answer could not be returned than by copying the humour of the anti-lay-apostle. "How does the Thames Tunnel come on, Mr. Colton?" "I have come to give your (pretended) church a shaking." "What sort of breeches did the king wear at his levee?" or "How many guineas did the coronation-stalls cost?" And so the dialogue might well go on, to the finishing stroke, "Your business, Mr. Colton, we presume is at a stand. We suppose you have nothing to do." And this, no doubt, is the simple truth. When in the receipt of his penny a line from Mr. Morse, he was industriously working at a somewhat decent trade, and we wish for his own sake, that when he first thought of leaving his lapstone and his last, to "stir us up" and "give our church a shaking," his guardian angel had whispered, in intelligible English, *NE SUTOR ULTRA CREPIDAM.*

Mr. Calvin Colton's *defensive argument* is a curiosity. With an air of self-complacency peculiarly his own, he begins and ends with a *petitio principii*, and then talks of having reasoned on the subject! As a sample of his manner in ratiocination, we need only state that he assumes the necessity of perpetual succession in the ministry as an "axiom;" not merely as something which has been fully proved, but as an "axiom!" He evidently does not know the meaning of the word; and we are sorry to say that in this part of his performance, he is chargeable with something worse than nonsense. "I must beg leave to insist, that the necessity of such a perpetuity is an axiom in this argument. *It would be impossible for me* to repose that confidence in the head of the church, which *I wish to feel* and do feel, as having made all necessary and indispensable provisions for the perpetual maintenance of his visible kingdom and as having sustained those provisions by his providence, if I did not take this ground." (p. 149.) Impossible for ME (i. e. Calvin Colton) to feel that confidence which I (i. e. Calvin Colton) wish to feel in the Head of the Church! We do not believe that the

man who wrote this sentence designed to be irreverent; but we quote it to show that the gangrene of his vanity has eaten its way to his religious feelings, so that he can write such revolting trash as that just quoted, without meaning any harm by it.

As a sample of his logical acumen we may quote his frequently repeated statement that "Episcopacy is the only ministry that has been uninterrupted." Does he mean by *Episcopacy* the order of bishops, or the Episcopal organization to which three orders are essential? If the former, his own system has at some time been imperfect since the days of the apostles. If the latter, then on his own hypothesis the succession of presbyters has been uninterrupted.

As a sample of his learning, or rather of the sense which he attaches to that term, we may state that, after recommending the new Episcopalian *vade-mecum* (containing the tracts by Mr. Barnes and Dr. Onderdonk) as the best thing on the subject "for common and popular reading," he oracularly says: "For the scholar and the more learned who may wish and who have leisure to extend these investigations further, I may mention"—what does the reader think? A complete set of the fathers, Greek and Latin?—"Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Potter on Church Government, Slater's Original Draft, Skinner on Episcopacy, Works on Episcopacy, the last being a collection of tracts in two volumes," (p. 147.) And this is a prescription for "the scholar and more learned!" but as we cannot help suspecting that the names were given to Mr. Calvin Colton on a slip of paper, perhaps by his diocesan before his ordination, we shall not hold him responsible, at least until we learn that he has drained the Original Draft and mastered the collection of tracts in two whole volumes.

Another proof of Mr. Colton's learning and of his condescension to the ignorant, is afforded by the following fine specimen of felicitous translation. "The above reasoning from Papal and English Episcopacy is what is called in the forum, a *non sequitur*. For those not learned the version is, *It does not follow*," (p. 81.) Ergo, they are learned who can construe two words of Latin and read Works on Episcopacy.

One feature of this argument, which must not be neglected, is its thorough-going character. Mr. Calvin Colton "argues" not merely for Episcopacy, but for Episcopalianism; not merely for a theory of church-government, but for all its

actual adjuncts. It is pleasing to observe what clear conviction he has attained already, upon points both great and small. While he sees something shocking in every lineament of Presbyterianism, he is wholly unable to discern a single blemish in the other *ism* which he now adores. We have known some men to change their "religious connexions," as Mr. Colton calls it, from a conviction that the one system, as a whole, was preferable, while at the same time, they deeply felt that there were doubtful points on either side. Not so Mr. Calvin Colton. His conversion seems to have been effected by a flash of light so vivid, that it brought out every dark point into full relief, and left him nothing to do in the way of solving doubts or slowly overcoming scruples. Thrice happy Mr. Colton! While many weaker brethren have to grope their way in twilight, he basks in sunshine; while even Bishops have been known to question the divine right of surplices, the absolute necessity of praying in white linen and preaching in black silk, our author, from the rare construction of his mind, attains *per saltum* to a comfortable certainty, and looks upon Episcopalianism no doubt as an "axiom." This process of intuitive conviction is so perfect, that the very same things which are eye-sores to him elsewhere, are beautyspots, nay beauties, in his present "pale and section of the church," to use his own pure English. Popular influence, as we have seen, is something very shocking in the Presbyterian system; and yet there is no one thing which Mr. Colton urges with more earnestness in favour of his own sect than this same bugbear. He even goes so far as to say that "of the two, the Episcopal church is more favorable to a predominant influence of the laity!" and again that "in the Episcopal church, the clergy of the three orders combined have actually less power in relation to the laity, than the Presbyterian. So much for these comparisons." (p. 83.) And so much for the man that makes them. What a mercy that all men are not bound to be consistent! Another instance of this graceful versatility, equally clear though not so glaring, may be found in his invectives against Presbyterian strictness, in the interpreting of creeds. Nothing, he thinks, can be more unreasonable and improper than tying men down to all the niceties of a uniform and complex creed. He sees no harm, however, in tying them down to all the niceties of a uniform and complex ritual. To his perspicacious mind, no doubt, it is apparent that Christian doctrine is a very small affair, respecting which men should "agree to differ;"

whereas the postures and responses and manoeuvres of the service-book are everlasting truths, in which no two men can differ and be safe. It is unchristian to enforce uniformity in doctrine; but woe to the young deacon who mistakes a lesson or violates a rubric, whose surplice is ruffled or his band awry!

With such convictions of his having at last got right, it is by no means surprising, that our author should be vastly charmed with all he sees around him. The raptures of his new ecclesiastical *liaison* are sometimes quite amusing. For example, near the end of the book, he describes his agreeable surprise on finding that some bishop or other, whom he happened to fall in with, allowed his subalterns to differ from him upon points of doctrine. Our amiable neophyte "was as much surprised as delighted at the freedom allowed, and at the perfect good nature and kindness with which such differences are discussed; the bishop himself assuming no more the airs of authority, than if he had none," (p. 199.) People seldom "assume the air" of that which they really possess. But did the good man expect to see the bishop cudgelling the priests and deacons? His ideas of the office must have been like that of the Scotch minister in the days of Charles I., who fainted away at the sight of one of "thae beasts." We are really ashamed of Mr. Calvin Colton's ignorance, and beg that when the Episcopalians laugh at the simplicity of their new convert, they will not extend their ridicule to other Presbyterians.

In the same connexion, there occurs a pleasing instance of the awful reverence and implicit confidence, with which Mr. Colton receives the dicta of his new relations. "I am satisfactorily certified, that the Episcopal church is almost perfectly harmonious and increasingly so," (p. 198.) We should be glad to see that same certificate.

At the close of Mr. Calvin Colton's unique *argument*, he modestly remarks: "My object, in this chapter, as declared in the outset, has been rather to *suggest* the argument for Episcopacy in a comprehensive statement, than to arrange it in detail; and to expose briefly the method of my own reasoning on the subject," (p. 156.) Mr. Calvin Colton is, at least in English Grammar, an Independent still, and we dare not determine, from the structure of this sentence, whether he did or did not intend "to expose briefly the method and course of his own reasoning." But if exposure was his object, he has perfectly succeeded. His attempts at concatenated thought are so abortive that they only serve to exem-

plify the proverb, "whoso boasteth himself of a false gift, is like clouds and wind without rain."

As a sense of justice has compelled us to speak with some severity of Mr. Colton's arguments (so called), we cannot deny ourselves the pleasure of stating that this very portion of his book contains one admirable passage, which, at the imminent risk of overrunning our allotted limits, we must quote at length.

"I shall now proceed to compare American Episcopacy-in-form with American Episcopacy that is not in form, or that is not in the usual form. And I do it for the purpose of setting Episcopacy proper in a still more clear and more advantageous light.

"The Episcopal principle under its own proper form is one thing; but it should be remembered, that the principle may be adopted and applied without the form. This is constantly done, as we have just seen, by self-appointed bishops; it is assumed and acted upon to a great extent by theological seminaries; it is the vital principle of our voluntary religious and benevolent associations, national and subordinate.

"Take, for example, the American Home Missionary Society. This is an appropriate Episcopal institution on a stupendous scale and of great energy, wanting only the form and name. Its diocess is the United States of America; nay, it would seem by one of the resolutions brought forward at its annual meeting in 1835, that it proposes to extend its jurisdiction over the world. But we will consider it first, as limited to the United States.

"This society was organized under this name in 1826, having taken the place, and assumed the work and responsibilities of the United Domestic Missionary Society, which was merged in this. It then had one hundred and nineteen congregations connected with it, and one hundred and one ministers in its employ. From year to year this society has been extending its connexions, its operations, and its influence, and multiplying its agencies, to an extent unexampled, till in 1836 it reported "seven hundred and nineteen missionaries and agents" (all ministers, I suppose) in its employ; four hundred and eighty-four of whom were settled pastors; and one thousand and fifty congregations and missionary districts. The income of this society, as reported for the first year, was twenty thousand and thirty-one dollars; as reported in 1835, it was eighty-eight thousand eight hundred

and sixty-three—having gradually increased annually for nine years from the first mentioned sum to the last.

“The instructions, or canons, of this society, as contained in the form of their commission for the guidance and government of the ministers in their employ, are minute, specific, and imperative. ‘You are required,’ &c., on *six* several and specific points, together with a reference to *six* other specifications in ‘General Instructions.’ In addition to these is another ‘Notice,’ embracing *ten* specifications—the whole comprehending the entire code of canons for the regulation of individuals in commission of the society.

“The effect of this commission is to bring all its agents and beneficiaries into an intimate connexion with the society, and under its supervision and control. The connexion is much more intimate, and the control much more absolute and energetic, than that which results between the relation of a bishop on the one hand and the clergy and congregations of his diocese on the other, because, in the former case, it is a connexion of *dependance*; and the canons of instruction are no less minute and specific.

“The secretary of the American Home Missionary Society, then—who stands in relation to these numerous clergy, and to these still more numerous congregations, as a Bishop, exercising Episcopal supervision and control in a far more absolute and energetic sense, than any Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal church of the United States—had under his care in 1835, of clergy, seven hundred and nineteen, and of congregations, one thousand and fifty; while all the seventeen Bishops of the Episcopal church together, for the same ground, have only seven hundred and seventy-two clergy, and eight hundred to nine hundred congregations—averaging, if we take eight hundred for each class, forty-seven for each Bishop.

“It is not my business to certify to the worthiness or usefulness of this Episcopal Missionary Institution—for it is obviously of an Episcopal character. It does not require such certificate from me; if it did, I would most cheerfully give it. ‘Its praise is in all the churches.’ It has done and is doing a great and good work. May the head of the church still prosper and smile upon it. My only object is to show, that for extent of influence, for power in actual possession, and energy in the execution of the Episcopal office—an energy resulting from the peculiar character of the relation—the whole college of Bishops presiding over the Episcopal

church of the United States, in their united sway, fall far behind the secretary of the American Home Missionary Society," (p. 88—90.)

Our inference from all this is of course far different from that which Mr. Colton draws; but we admit his premises. If we had doubted them before, the recent events at Pittsburg would have established sufficiently the episcopal character of Dr. Absalom Peters. Nor is he by any means so lax in the discipline of his enormous diocese as the nominal bishops whom Mr. C. admires. A word, a nod, from this Right Reverend Father seems to have been sufficient, on a late occasion, to reverse the judgments, belie the professions, and annul the pledges of himself and all his followers. We cry aloud with Mr. Colton, "If such power is dangerous," which he denies and we affirm, "then is it high time to look to this society."

Having paid our respects to Mr. C. C. as a reasoner, we have now to view him in the light of a comforter, healing by his blandishments the wounds which his defection has inflicted on our church. That he really believes himself to have been guilty of this outrage, is apparent from the whole strain of the book, and may be proved by some particular expressions. "To pass from one Christian sect to another,* is an indirect censure on that which is left behind" [left in the lurch, he means,] "and a compliment to that which is adopted; the latter is gratified, the former feels injured. One has gained what the other has lost." (p. 21.) That equation will not answer; loss and gain in this case are not always equal. The Episcopalians have certainly gained Mr. Colton; but we should like to know what we have lost. Again: "When ministers change their relation, their conspicuous standing before the public makes an impression. The public is in some measure and for a moment startled," (p. 22.) The startling, in the present case, must have been measured and momentary indeed; it was probably accomplished like the twinkling of the eye, unobserved and unremembered. These extracts will, however, serve to show that Mr. C. is sensible of what he has inflicted; now for the salve and plaster. "Of one thing the author feels a good degree of confidence: that none of his former friends will accuse him of a bad spirit, nor generally, if at all, of want of fairness," (p. 16.) Far be it

* Mr. Colton has not perfectly acquired the shibboleth of that which Dr. Parr called *Churchianity*. If he dares to say that THE CHURCH is a *sect*, even by implication, he may find his superiors not so free and easy as they are on points of doctrine.

from us to disturb this confidence. If "a bad spirit" means an angry or malignant one, then can we truly say that the spirit of this book is excellent. The author evidently thinks that Presbyterians can be saved; nay, he is warm in his professions of regard to the deluded ministers of our "connexion," with all of whom he would seem, from his language, to have been on intimate terms, though in many instances we fear the acquaintance was what the Germans call *one-sided*. He is friendly to the American Board of Commissioners, and even patronising in his kindness to the American Home Missionary and Education Societies, one or both of which he has served, we believe, as a travelling agent. But besides these positive expressions of good will, we are glad to be able to state negatively also, that there is nothing acrimonious in the temper of the book. There is not a spice of bitterness or a drop of acid in the whole performance. It has all the sweetness of skim-milk and all its strength; the very jests are as bland as water-gruel. In short, our poor brethren's hearts will leap within them when they find how they are spared. This gentleness, though rare, is not surprising. It is the prerogative of great minds placed in lofty stations, to be condescending. As the Archbishop of Canterbury can afford to be familiar with a country curate, so the Ex-Correspondent of the New York Observer hazards nothing by exhibiting a merciful spirit towards the Presbyterian parsons of America, not a score of whom, perhaps, ever saw the Thames Tunnel, and not one of whom ever held an official station near the Court of St. James. We seriously say, that if the author of this book had been confessedly the greatest man in these United States, he could not have assumed a more patronising air of lofty condescension. His self-esteem is so intense that it excludes all wrath and bitterness.

Such is the spirit in which our author undertakes to comfort us, and we are happy to inform him that his object is attained, though not perhaps in the way that he expected. His expressions of compassion and regard would only have deepened and inflamed our wounds; but happily for us, his books are full of comfort. No one can read them and continue grieved at the defection of the author. Among the consolatory thoughts which they suggest, the following may be specified. 1. The author never was a real Presbyterian, though he may have been an "honest" one; what he lacked was not sincerity, but knowledge. 2. While he wore the name, he did us no great honour, especially abroad. 3. He

was born to be an Episcopalian. We mean no offence; but it is a fact, that some Presbyterians have a sort of second-sight by which they can determine who will turn Episcopalian. Some, it is even said, have made out lists of future converts, and we dare not say that Mr. Calvin Colton's name was never thus distinguished. Be that as it may, he is clearly in his element. No one who has read his correspondence can doubt that he has a very pretty taste in dress and decorations; and no one, we are sure, would wear lawn sleeves with more delight. May we live to see him in them!

Our only fear is that these remarks may be misunderstood by Mr. Calvin Colton. Before he went abroad, he was "a little mortified" on hearing a ministerial brother, of "a narrow and weak mind," say in relation to ministers visiting England—"It sometimes spoils them." Our author was very much afraid of being "spoiled," which, if a possible event, would certainly have been a very dismal one; and so much was he affected by the thought of it, that on his return he actually fancied it had happened: "Either going abroad had spoiled me, or else my country was spoiled," (p. 25.) Oh modest alternative! Oh sad dilemma! "Me" or "my country!" The United States or Mr. Calvin Colton! Now we cannot suffer Mr. Colton to infer from what we have been saying, that we are glad to get rid of him because he has been "spoiled." He has not been spoiled. He is decidedly improved. He evidently knows much more than when he went abroad, though he falls into the error of supposing that because his own vacuum was partly filled in England, it could not possibly have been filled at home, and therefore that every one who has not been in England has a narrow mind, is prejudiced, &c. Hence his implied apology for Presbyterians, that they continue such because they have not been abroad. Dr. Johnson said that Goldsmith, if he went to Constantinople, would bring home a wheelbarrow as a curiosity. So Mr. Calvin Colton has imported, as the result of foreign travel and extensive observation, facts and opinions which have always been familiar to our plainest men of sense. And then he talks of narrow minds, want of information, prejudice, and what not? But all this is easily endured when we consider that he is not "spoiled;" that he is not quite as ignorant as he was when he made the fifteen creeds. Another improvement, which naturally follows from the one just mentioned, is a change of tone and manner. He is not by any means so pert and flippant as he was when he

began his epistolary labours, and exposed himself in London. Profound ignorance and profound knowledge are generally modest. 'A little knowledge is a dangerous thing' in its effect upon the manners. We are happy to bear witness that, compared with his former self, Mr. Colton is decidedly a well bred writer, quite the gentleman on paper. A third improvement gained by foreign travel is apparent in his English. Mr. Colton is scarcely even yet a faultless model for the young Episcopalian clergy. He still belongs to that class of writers who elaborate advertisements for our female schools, over one of which, for aught we know, he has of old presided. A specimen of this style may be found in his remarks upon philosophy, p. 201.* His very first page presents at least two specimens of rather knotty syntax;† his Americanisms are still numerous; and his affected vulgarisms not a few. But just compare him with "Our London Correspondent," and he is—we had almost said—"Hyperion to a Satyr." Now these are great improvements, truly great, when we consider what was to be overcome, what blanks were to be filled, what perversions to be rectified. Surely, then, there cannot be a moment's hesitation with respect to the alternative already mentioned—surely it is not Mr. Calvin Colton, but the country that is spoiled.

* "If I may presume to say it, the Christian world wants more philosophy—philosophy of mind and philosophy of observation. It has been cantingly said—We have too much philosophy—that it is philosophy which has done religion so much injury. This is a mistake. We want the philosophy of common sense—inductive—founded upon facts—growing out of observation. So long as religion is propounded as a mystery—a thing not to be understood—not to be philosophized upon—so long it will be at war with common sense; and so long, it may be expected, that attempts will be made to enforce its dogmas without allowing the privilege of thinking." And this writer talks of cant!

† "Admitting that he has manifested such an inclination, it can only be said, that he has changed his opinion, which is in part, the design of this book to set forth, with the reasons thereof. If he has written against, and in the conflict, or in any train of consequences, has been convinced, that his former position was wrong, the least atonement he can make is to honour what he now regards as truth, with a profession as public and a defence as earnest, as any other doings of his on the other side."

Mr. Colton's style is apparently formed upon two models most unlike, the magazines of Old England, and the sermons of New England. From the former are copied his affected piquancy and point; from the latter such favourite forms of speech, as "in the light of this or that," "in view of this or that," and many others. We need not particularly notice his original constructions, such as having a preference to Episcopalianism, (p. 31.) nor his hard usage of some words, e. g. *pale* and *section*. We shall merely give as a closing example these two lines: "There may be incidental betrayals of opinion; but it was not an object to declare opinion as to the expediency of the practice, which has been scandalized. It was virtually the proof of a negative; that's all," (p. 16.) And that's enough.

Mr. Colton gives us some historical account of his conversion to Episcopacy and Episcopalianism. He thinks he never would have changed if he had staid at home. But going abroad enlarged his views and overcame his prejudices. He saw that amidst the corruptions of the Church of England, arising from her unnatural relation to the State, there was something apostolical and excellent, &c.; and that this important something was possessed in common by the mother church and by her daughter here. He came home, found the country spoiled, i. e. the non-episcopal division of it, and the rest soon followed.

This is not quite correct. Mr. Colton will allow us to dispute his facts a little, as we do not mean to question his sincere belief of them. We would tell the story hypothetically thus. He went to England filled with a false sense of his own importance and of what he was to do, and by precipitate exposure of his weakness there, soon made himself ridiculous. When this became obvious even to himself, he no doubt honestly endeavoured to retrace his steps. As he had done injustice to the Church of England, he laboured to repair it. He began to regard her with amicable interest, and to smile at the excess of his foreign prepossessions. All this was well enough. The Church of England was entitled to the reverence of greater men than he. But when his feelings were released from the constraint of early prejudice, his natural bias soon began to operate. We do Mr. Colton no injustice when we say, that all his writings mark him as a person fond of show. This taste was gratified in England, and the gratification soon became a necessary element of comfort. Then his taste operated on his understanding, and he thought he was convinced of the divine right of Episcopacy. When he came home, he felt an aching void. The stimulus afforded by the tasteful splendour of the English church was wanting. The Presbyterian worship was, as Crabbe said, "bald and bad." Episcopalianism was not quite the same thing here as in the old world; but still it was the best thing to be had. Now he remembered the "old, stiff, dry, cold elders," as Mr. Finney calls them, and the pragmatical deacons, and the tattling women, who had vexed his soul in "the western parts of New York." The "special efforts" in which he once delighted, rushed upon his mind, rendered doubly hateful by the thoughts of the *faux pas* into which they had betrayed him. The "Assembly's Digest" and his own fifteen creeds hung like so many millstones round the

neck of Presbyterianism, and it sank like lead in the mighty waters. But how could he, "the observed of all observers," change his "connexions" without public notice? How could mankind fail to mark the obscuration of that "bright particular star" in the Presbyterian firmament? It could not be. The world would expect an explanation; it was written; the Harpers published it; and here it is;—"that's all," as Mr. Colton says.

All this might have happened, and we admit did happen, to a conscientious man; but it never would have happened to a man who went to England with a sound judgment, and a well-stored mind. Our version of the story is of course hypothetical, but not on that account less worthy of attention. We appeal, in confirmation of it, to the correspondence of the *New York Observer*, the *Four Years in England*, and the work before us.

One advantage of the principles professed by Mr. Colton is that they admit of his progressive improvement, and leave room for future changes. No one can suppose that Mr. Colton will not some day visit England again; and who will have a right to wonder if he should return to us a strenuous advocate of the church of England, "as by law established," with her archbishops, bishops, deans and chapters, archdeacons and chancellors, her church-rates, tythes, and lay-impropriations. What if he should then "expose the method and course of his own reasoning" thus: "That an industrious caterer should be able to make an array of things that have dropped from the author's pen somewhat at variance with his present views, as brought out in this volume, is very possible. One principal object of these pages is to give reasons for a change of opinion," (p. 16). "The author's main design has been to address himself to the *present time* and to the *present state* of the religious public," (p. 17). "I frankly confess that had not my pastoral relation been providentially broken up, it is very likely I should not have been shaken or disturbed on this question," (p. 22). "With regard to myself, I confess, that going abroad had spoiled me or else my country was spoiled. Not that my country was spoiled in every thing, nor wholly spoiled in that particular to which I allude." (p. 25). And then he might go on to say, that the church to which he was attached, was lying under desolation for want of connexion with the state; that when he went abroad he was in favour of Episcopacy unestablished, but when he returned, the state of things brought his mind

to a pause and suggested a re-examination of the subject. (See most of these phrases on p. 27.) And what if he should then proceed to copy all the objections to the voluntary system, which have ever been urged by the British Critic or the Quarterly Review; such as an inadequate supply of religious teachers, dependence of the clergy, &c. &c., placing each particular in strong relief; and then go on to defend the English plan, justifying every thing, as he now does in relation to Episcopacy, not even expressing doubt as to any point whatever, but merely admitting that sophistical objections have been urged against some features of the system, by the enemies of all establishments, and winding the whole up by saying, "I have attained to the full conviction, that a church establishment, in contradistinction from the voluntary system, is altogether best." Supposing all this to happen, who would wonder? We should not, and if any one should breathe the word "consistency," Mr. C. would have a right to repeat his manifesto, "Inasmuch as some persons have supposed," &c., to the end of the chapter.

We do not at all suspect Mr. Colton of any such opinions at the present moment. We believe him to be perfectly sincere in disavowing them. But we also believe that such a change of sentiment would be quite as natural as the one already past, and that if the existence of fanatical excesses, the impertinence of ruling elders, and the tongues of female gossips, have enabled Mr. Colton to believe in the *jus divinum* of prelatial episcopacy, the evils which confessedly accompany the voluntary system ought to make him believe in the *jus divinum* of national establishments. We congratulate him therefore on possessing a "method and course of reasoning," which will serve him more than once, and with little change enable him to die a "good Catholic," if that religion should in our age and country become a genteel thing, without which we are afraid that Mr. Colton's head is proof against all argument. Some of our readers may be shocked at our suggesting what implies a change of sentiment as to fundamental doctrines. But doctrines, great or small, do not seem to be regarded by our author as a barrier to the "change of religious connexions." He expressly says, when speaking of the doctrinal diversities in the P. E. Church, "Is not this a lesson? Is it not instructive? Does it not prove that an exact agreement, even in the MINOR POINTS of a common creed; and I may add, in some of THE CARDINAL DOCTRINES OF CHRISTIANITY, is not

essential to harmony of feeling, to Christian fellowship, to general union, to concert of action, to edification, and to efficiency of combined enterprise?" (p. 200.) Could Laud say more? Does not this give Mr. Colton access without scruple to Holy Mother Church? Popery, however, is turning out to be a shocking vulgar thing, quite too low for Mr. Colton. Besides, he has been twice wrong already, which is twice too often. *Semel desipuisse nimium est theologo.* Now that he is right, let him do his best to stay right, and try to be contented with his triple transformation—a Congregational larva—a Presbyterian chrysalis—an Episcopalian butterfly. With this advice we bid him an affectionate farewell.

We have just a word to say to our Episcopalian friends. They are always much elated when they gain a Presbyterian; but of late they seem to have discovered that their lottery, if it gives no prizes, gives abundance of neat blanks. We earnestly entreat them not to lose their equanimity, although we must acknowledge that their bad luck is provoking. They are now in the condition of our southern friends when they first begin to see through the tricks of yankee pedlars. Once or twice they may be cheated and attribute it to chance, but they must lose their patience when they find that the general rule has no exceptions, that all the nutmegs are of wood and all the flints of horn. Nor do we wonder at our neighbours losing patience. A bad bargain of the kind in question is far more injurious to them than it would be to us. Their numbers are so small, and they proclaim their conquests so laboriously, that when they are over-reached, all the world enjoys the joke; while the very same addition to our superior numbers could not possibly occasion either pride or disappointment. If, for example, Mr. Calvin Colton, like a still more zealous advocate of "special effort" in our own vicinity, should take it into his head to turn another summerset and tumble back again, he would be absorbed at once, as a mere chance drop, in our big whirlpool, and become as obscure as he was five years ago. This is a mere hypothesis and may it long continue so; but let our neighbours see to it, that their One, Indivisible, and Apostolic Church does not become a drain—an emptying sewer—for the kirk and the conventicle.