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DIVINE AND HUMAN RIGHTS:

OR, THE

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION

AND THE

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

TESTED BY THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

“Happy is that people whose God is the LORD.”—PSALM cxliv. 15.

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PHILADELPHIA:

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1845.

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PREFACE.

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THE following pages contain the substance of a discourse delivered to the people of the author's charge on the evening of November 14th, 1844; the notes and most of the authorities have been added since the discourse was delivered. The author is not to be understood as adopting the sentiments of the authorities quoted any farther than they are expressed in the quotations themselves. He has laboured rather to be perspicuous than ornamental. He has written in the hope of being useful to plain unsophisticated Christians. 204

The author has four inducements for offering this discourse to the public: First, the request of many who heard it. Second, he confidently believes that a general regard to the principles it advocates is no less essential to the well being of the church, than to the country. Third, he is desirous of adding his testimony, however feeble it may be, to principles believed essential to the temporal and spiritual prosperity of his native land. Fourth, the questions agitated are at present occupying a good share of public attention, as is evident from their discussion by the periodicals of the day. If this production should be judged worthy of notice, by any person who may entertain views differing from those here advanced, it is hoped they will level their artillery not against the writer, nor the defects of his performance, but that they will demonstrate his facts to be unfounded and his reasoning fallacious.

It is confidently believed, so far as different views prevail in the church respecting the constitution of the United States, that difference relates to points which are not terms of communion among us; consequently, these points are legitimate subjects of free discussion, if that discussion be conducted in a proper spirit and manner. The author requests the reader not to infer from his condemnation of certain *principles*, any reproach of those who may hold and preach them, unless they do so against light which they have, or might have, but wilfully reject.



So long as church courts leave their members free to vote or not, as they may think proper, the discussion of the question of allegiance to the constitution should produce no alienation of brotherly love. It belongs to those who cannot vote, to bear with their brethren who can, or secede. Those who do vote have no right to take offence at such as do not, so long as their own liberty remains untouched. Yet, there is a disposition in many of the voters to persecute non-voters, which is wrong, and a sad evidence of a bad cause.

Thomas Paine published a book containing many good and many bad things, entitled "Rights of Man." This book, notwithstanding all its good, was entirely consistent with the same author's "Age of Reason." All his theories rejected the rights of God as repugnant to the rights of man. He assumed that the rights of the Creator could not harmonize with the rights of his creatures. France reduced Paine's theory to practice. The world know the result. In our own land the attempt is made, not so much directly to reject altogether the rights of God, as to effect a total *separation* between his rights and the rights of his creatures. The creature has certain supposed unalienable rights independent of the Creator. These *must* be maintained. God has also some rights, which *may* be maintained, so far as they do not interfere with this supposed independence of the creature. Whether we, as a nation, are destined to meet with any better success than that which attended the experiment of France, a little time will demonstrate. But the author of these pages believing that human and divine rights are as indissoluble and consistent with each other as the relation of creature and Creator, has chosen for the title of his unpretending book,—DIVINE AND HUMAN RIGHTS. C. W.

*Philadelphia, 1845.*

## DIVINE AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

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It is generally conceded that the gospel ministry is degraded by meddling with the mere party conflicts of the times. But the science of civil government embraces moral principles immutable in their nature, and of paramount obligation. A knowledge of these principles being necessary for the welfare of communities, they must be legitimate subjects of sober pulpit discussion. For who, that has the common properties and feelings of our nature, can regard without interest both the glory and the shame of his native land? The love of country is firmly seated in the human breast. No distance, no lapse of time can wholly eradicate this feeling of the heart. In adversity, in exile, in captivity, in far distant and barbarous climes, the mind involuntarily wanders back in its musings to the familiar and cherished objects of childhood, while imagination arrays these retrospective visions in robes of surpassing beauty and excellence. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

Love of country, then, is in all a natural affection, and in some a Christian virtue. But the degree of a Christian's affection for the government of his country, and the nature and extent of his obedience to her laws, should be regulated by the moral character of that government, and those laws; for the simple reason that he is also the subject of a higher power, whose government and laws are not only supreme, but also perfect and divine. His affections, his interests, and his enjoyments, are concentrated in a kingdom, which, though not of this world, is *of right*, and will soon be *in fact*, universal. Its government claims dominion over the mightiest monarchies of the earth. Its supremacy is already acknowledged by Christians, who hold

its laws paramount to all human obligations; and the rapid flight of time will soon usher in the day, when these laws shall be obeyed by the inhabitants of all lands. The question, then, is the government of our country in harmony with this superior authority? or, in other words, is the government of the United States such, that Christians may with a good conscience yield a voluntary obedience to all its requirements, and swear in the name of the living God, as they shall give account to him in the great day, to give it an *active* support? can neither be uninteresting nor unimportant: for if they cannot do this without rebellion against God, by doing it, they certainly expose themselves to the divine anger.\* So, on the other hand, if they can do this without the violation of any divine law, by refusing, they also expose themselves to wrath. "For the powers that be are ordained of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Consequently, it seems necessary that

\* Christians must indeed be *subject* to the laws of the land for wrath's sake, in a passive way. That is, they must make no active forcible resistance; unless either the magistrate require them to do some act of a moral character which God has prohibited, or require them to neglect some such act which he has required; or unless they have the majority or physical power sufficient to throw off the yoke of bondage in the use of lawful means. There is no doubt in my mind respecting the application of Rom. xiii. Titus iii. 1, and I Pet. ii. 13, 14, to the then existing Roman government; and I have read every thing I could obtain from the writings of those who deny this application. This view is confirmed by Paul's appeal to Cæsar. But it is worthy of special attention that in every one of those passages it is not *obedience* but *subjection* that is commanded. *Subjection* in these places denotes a passive obedience to the will of a superior whose power cannot be successfully resisted, in the use of lawful means, while there is no proper assent of the will. We yield to necessity. *Obedience* proceeds from that free choice of the will which arises from a sense of duty. Thus it appears that a voluntary obedience is due to those commands of civil rulers which are lawful, if they rule by the consent of the people, notwithstanding they may be transgressors in their laws, administrations, or persons. It is, however, impossible to separate civil government from religion and morals. It never has been, never can be done. We might as readily expect to see a living man without a soul, as a civil government without a moral character. It is this fact which renders it so necessary that Christians should make themselves acquainted with the moral character of every social and civil action of their lives. Such actions must harmonize with their Christian profession, or that profession becomes a mere nullity. If they would escape the pollutions of the world, let them inquire into the moral character of the laws, of the administration, and of the rulers of their country, and conduct themselves accordingly. Obey or disobey as the government obeys or disobeys the Supreme Lawgiver. There is a passage in the work, entitled, "*A Dispute against the English Popish Ceremonies*," by George Gillespie, a member of the Westminster Assembly, which, though long, is worthy of being committed to memory:



we should know the requirements of the divine law in reference to civil government,—the obligations we assume by our religious profession,—the requirements of the government of

“ Since the power of princes to make laws about things ecclesiastical is not absolute, but bound and adstricted unto things lawful and expedient, which sort of things, and no other, we are allowed to do for their commandments; and since princes many times may, and do, not only transgress those bounds and limits, but likewise pretend that they are within the same, when indeed they are without them, and enjoy things unlawful and inconvenient, under the name, title, and show of things lawful and convenient; therefore it is most necessary as well for princes to permit, as for subjects to take liberty to try and examine by the judgment of discretion, every thing which authority enjoineth, whether it be agreeable or repugnant to the rules of the word; and if, after trial, it be found repugnant, to abstain from the doing of the same.

For, 1. The word teacheth us, that the spiritual man judgeth all things, 1 Cor. ii. 15; trieth the things that are different, Phil. i. 10; hath his senses exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. v. 14; and that every one who would hold fast that which is good, and abstain from all appearance of evil, must first prove all things, 1 Thess. v. 21.

2. Whatsoever is not of faith is sin, Rom. xiv. 23. But whatsoever a man doth without the trial, knowledge, and persuasion of the lawfulness of it by the word of God, that is not of faith; therefore a sin. It is the word of God, and not the arbitration of princes whereupon faith is grounded. And though the word may be without faith, yet faith cannot be without the word. By it therefore must a man try and know assuredly the lawfulness of that which he doth.

3. “ Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” But as we cannot give an account to God of those actions which we have done in obedience to our prince, except we have examined, considered and understood the lawfulness of the same; so an account could not be required of us for them, if we were bound to obey and keep all his ordinances in such sort that we might not try and examine them, with full liberty to refuse those which we judge out of the word to be unlawful or inconvenient; for then princes’ ordinances were a most sufficient warrant to us: we needed try no more. Let him make an account to God of his command; we have account to make of our obedience.

4. If we be bound to receive and obey the laws of princes, without making a free trial and examining of the equity of the same, then we could not be punished for doing, unwillingly and in ignorance, things unlawful, prescribed by them. Whereas every soul that sinneth shall die; and when the blind leads the blind, he who is led falls in the ditch as well as his leader.

5. No man is permitted to do every thing which seemeth right in his eyes, and to follow every conceit which takes him in the head; but every man is bound to walk by rule, Gal. vi. 6. But the law of a prince cannot be a rule, except it be examined whether it be consonant to the word of God, *index secundem legem*, and his law is only such a rule as is ruled by a higher rule. In so far as it is ruled by the own rule of it, in as far it is a rule to us; and in so far as it is not ruled by the own rule of it, in as far it is not a rule to us. *Quid ergo? an non licebit Christiano cuique convenientiam regulæ et regulati (ut vocant) observare?* saith Junius.

6. The rule whereby we ought to walk in all our ways, and according to

our country,—and also the degree of harmony that exists between these divine and human authorities, before we *can* know either the nature or extent of that obedience which is due to the civil authorities under which we live. Without this knowledge we can neither be intelligent nor useful Christians or citizens; but are continually liable to be made the mere tools of ambitious and designing men, to become partakers of other men's sins, and finally to make a total shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

How then is this knowledge to be obtained? Obviously by an examination both of our religious obligations, and the constitutional law of the country, accompanied with a candid comparison of the one with the other. This can be the more easily and readily accomplished, as we have a written constitution

which we ought to frame all our actions, is provided of God a stable and sure rule, that it being observed and taken heed unto, may guide and direct our practice aright about all those things which it prescribeth. But the law of a prince (if we should, without trial and examination, take it for our rule,) cannot be such a stable and sure rule. For put the case that a prince enjoin two things which sometimes fall out to be incompatible and cannot stand together, in that case his law cannot direct our practice, nor resolve us what to do; whereas God hath so provided for us, that the case can never occur wherein we may not be resolved what to do if we observe the rule which he hath appointed us to walk by.

7. Except this judgment of discretion which we plead for be permitted unto us, it will follow that in point of obedience we ought to give no less, but as much honour unto princes as unto God himself. For when God publisheth his commandments unto us, what greater honour could we give him by our obedience than to do that which he commandeth, for his own sole will and authority, without making farther inquiry for any other reason?

8. The Apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 23, forbiddeth us to be the servants of men, that is, to do things for which we have no other warrant beside the pleasure and will of men. Which interpretation is grounded upon other places of Scripture, that teach us we are not bound to obey men in any thing which we know not to be according to the will of God, Eph. vi. 6, 7; that we ought not to live to the lusts of men; but to the will of God, 1 Pet. iv. 3, and that, therefore, we ought in every thing to prove what is acceptable to the Lord, Eph. v. 20.

9. They who cleanse their way must take heed thereto according to the word, Psal. cxix. 9; therefore, if we take not heed to our way, according to the word, we do not cleanse it. They who would walk as the children of light, must have the word for a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their path, Psal. cxix. 105; therefore, if we go in any path without the light of the word to direct us, we walk in darkness and stumble, because we see not where we go. They who would not be unwise, but walk circumspectly, must understand what the will of the Lord is, Eph. v. 17; therefore, if we understand not what the will of the Lord is concerning that which we do, we are unwise, and walk not circumspectly.

which is the supreme law of the land. Let us then inquire,—  
*First*, What are the moral qualities necessary, in a civil government, in order that it may harmonize with the divine law?  
*Secondly*, Whether the Westminster Confession of Faith harmonize with the holy scriptures in reference to the magistrate's power and duty concerning religion? *Thirdly*, Whether the constitution of the United States possess the requisite moral qualities?

I. What are the moral qualities necessary in a civil government, in order that it may harmonize with the divine law? We answer,—

1. It must recognise the being of God, and enter into a formal obligation, to yield obedience to his law.\* This obligation obviously arises from God's essential dominion over his creatures. The light of nature clearly teaches that God is, and must be, the moral governor of the world, the fountain of all governmental authority. This first principle of nature's light is fully confirmed by the light of revelation. "There is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God," Rom. xiii. 1. "Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth," 2 Kings, xix. 15, Is. xxxvii. 16. "O Lord God of our fathers, rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen?" 2 Chron. xx. 6. "Who would not fear thee, O king of nations?" Jer. x. 7. Accordingly, God in his providence not only raises up distinct and independent nations, and appoints the extent of their jurisdiction, but also gives and removes their rulers. "The Most High divided to the nations their inheritance," Deut. xxxii. 8. "He hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation," Acts xvii. 26. "He removeth kings, and setteth up kings," Dan.

\* "By the law of God I understand here *jus divinum naturale*, that is, the moral law or decalogue, as it bindeth all nations (whether Christians or infidels,) being the law of the Creator and king of the nations. The magistrate, by his authority, may, and in duty ought, to keep his subjects within the bounds of external obedience to that law, and punish the external man with external punishments for external trespasses against that law. From this obligation of the law, and subjection to the corrective power of the magistrate, Christian subjects are no more exempted than heathen subjects, but rather more straitly obliged. So that if any such trespass is committed by officers or members, the magistrate hath power and authority to summon, examine, judge, and (after just conviction and proof) to punish these, as well as other men. We do therefore abominate the disloyal papal tenet, that clergymen are not to be examined and judged by civil, but by ecclesiastical courts only, even in cases civil and criminal."—*Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, p. 121.



ii. 21. Such being God's authority and right of dominion over the nations of the earth, in their conventional character, he has punished and will continue to punish all national disobedience to his law. "If they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord," Jer. xii. 17. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," Ps. ix. 17; see also Ps. lxxix. 6. Even national forgetfulness of national duties to God, where no iniquity is positively decreed by law, shall be punished with national destruction and with future wrath upon the individuals thus guilty. But here we are met with an objection that Joseph and Daniel held office under heathen governments which were not only forgetful of God, but also guilty of active disobedience to the divine law; and therefore that Christians may now lawfully hold office under such governments. But suppose the objection true as here stated, it can no more prove the inference, than the fact that Moses permitted a plurality of wives will prove that polygamy is a Christian duty. But it is evident that neither Joseph nor Daniel obeyed any human authority inconsistent with the claims of the divine law; nor did they enter into any engagement by oath, covenant, or otherwise to obey or enforce any human law not in harmony with the divine law. Pharaoh acknowledged that Joseph was in possession of the Spirit of inspiration, and that his people should be ruled according to the word of Joseph, before he accepted office under the king of Egypt, Gen. xli. 38—40. The same thing is also true of Daniel,—“The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is God of gods, and a Lord of kings,” Dan. ii. 47. It is sufficient cause for deep grief that people should be led astray by a misapplication of these examples. They fully sustain our position. Thus it is demonstrated that no nation can violate the divine law, and hope to escape with impunity.

2. Nations who enjoy the light of revelation, must, in order to harmonize with the divine law, recognise the Lord Jesus Christ in his mediatorial office, and enter into a formal obligation to yield obedience to him in their conventional character, as he is the administrator of the law of nature.

To prevent misapprehension, and enable the attentive reader to understand our meaning in this proposition, it is necessary to advert briefly to the nature of the mediatorial office. “There

is," says Gillespie, "in the Mediator Jesus Christ, 1. Dignity, excellency, honour, glory, and splendour. 2. Mighty power, by which he is able to do in heaven and earth whatsoever he will. 3. His kingdom," by which he means the church. But he denies that civil government is put into his hand. It is true, as will be at once admitted by all who have studied the subject, that magistracy is founded in nature, not in the mediatorial authority of Christ; that magistrates hold their office from the three one God as the moral governor, and not from God as the saviour of sinners; that the natural law is the rule of administration, and not the law as connected with the arrangements of the covenant of grace. These truths are now so generally admitted that we need not offer any proof in this place. But subsequent writers have stated the doctrine of Christ's mediatorial office in a more clear and satisfactory manner, although Mr. Gillespie's book taken as a whole has probably never been surpassed. The Lord Jesus Christ should be considered by us both in his *person* and *office*. In his person and essential dominion he is equal with the Father and the Spirit. "Thou ART my Son." The declaration of a fact, an eternal truth, expressing the necessary, eternal sonship of Christ, "This day have I begotten thee," to the mediatorial office.\* Therefore it has been well said,—"He had been the natural son of God, though he had not been mediator, and though men had not been redeemed. But if you suppose the Son of God reigns not as God, with the Father and the Holy Ghost from everlasting to everlasting, then you must needs suppose that he is not the natural and eternal Son of God." Christ then has a two-fold kingdom, essential, and mediatorial. It is the latter after which we now inquire. Here we observe,—1. That this kingdom is the church, not simply all the redeemed, but all who by a public profession of his name acknowledge him as their King and Redeemer. We know that some in this kingdom are unworthy subjects, and will not reign with Christ in glory. But they acknowledge his authority and their obligation to obedience. 2. *As King in Zion he is invested with universal dominion.* Therefore it has been beautifully remarked, almost in the words of David, that "he ruleth *in* Jacob and *for* Jacob to the ends of the earth." This doctrine shines throughout the

\* Many refer the term "begotten" to his sonship instead of his office: we will not dispute with them, but we cannot comprehend their meaning.

inspired volume. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all," 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. On this passage, let it be observed, 1. In the end Christ is to deliver up the kingdom to the Father. What kingdom? Not his essential, not his peculiar kingdom, his headship over the redeemed; for in regard to this kingdom the Father saith, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." "He shall reign for ever." It is true, he shall introduce his redeemed children to his Father without spot or blemish, that they may receive a visible token of the Father's love, as Joseph presented his children to his father, but he shall not cease to reign over them for ever and ever. To suppose otherwise would rob both him and his redeemed of the most precious gem in their mutual crown of glory. While he is crowned, in our nature and as our king, in that "glory which he had with the Father before the world was," his children will rejoice in seeing him as he is, in being like him, and in eternally filling heaven with the melody of his praise. "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." If these things be so, then it is, it must be, his universal kingdom or dominion over all the creatures for the good of his church which is then surrendered to the Father. This dominion was always incidental, tributary, or subsidiary, and its exercise will then be no longer necessary, all enemies having been subdued. But this does not render his universal dominion the less obligatory upon the creatures, so long as it shall continue; nor will it exempt the disobedient from condign punishment. "He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." 2. Civil authority, though it emanate from God as moral governor, is under the dominion of Christ as mediator. The natural law of magistracy is administered by him. The providential government of the world is also in the hand of



Christ as mediator. He only is "excepted which did put all things under him." The Mediator led Israel out of Egypt and through the wilderness, opening the sea, raining manna, arresting the natural laws of the material world again and again, till David and Solomon, his eminent types, held heathen nations tributary to their thrones. "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and bring thee into the place which I have prepared," Exod. xxiii. 20. "And the Angel of the Lord said unto him, Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is Wonderful?" Judges xiii. 18. "His name shall be called Wonderful," Is. ix. 6. "In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them: and he bare them and carried them all the days of old," Is. lxiii. 9. This doctrine does not exclude the Father from the exercise of government, or providence, but includes both the Father and the Spirit; they indeed act through, or by the Mediator. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," John v. 17. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me," John xiv. 10, 11. We see not, then, how the conclusion can be avoided, that *the nations of the earth are bound to acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ in his mediatorial office, and enter into a formal obligation to obey him in their conventional character, as he is the administrator of the law of nature.* It follows, also, that as our Lord overrules and directs natural things to supernatural ends for the good of his church, so he has a mediatorial dominion over natural things; for how should he give direction to that over which he possesses no dominion?

How far nations, as such, are to yield obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ as he is the administrator of the law in its connexion with *the covenant of grace*, will appear more clearly in a subsequent part of the discourse. Our business at present is to prove the proposition just laid down. It will be readily conceded by all who have any knowledge of the subject, for reasons which need not be mentioned here, that all power delegated to Christ is also mediatorial. What then says the Father? "I will make him my first born, higher than the kings of the earth," Ps. lxxxix. 27. To this the Son responds,—"Thou hast given him power over all flesh," John xvii. 2. Hence says the apostle, the Father "hath put all

things under his feet," 1 Cor. xv. 27. Compare Ps. viii. with Heb. ii. 6—8. David, foreseeing by the Spirit the exaltation of Christ at the right hand of the Father "in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion," (Eph. i. 20, 21,) celebrates the glorious event in the 47th Psalm,—“God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet; for God is king of all the earth; God reigneth over the heathen.” If, then, Christ as mediator is the king of nations, it seems necessarily to follow that he administers the law of nature to the nations, considered as distinct from its connexion with the covenant of grace; he having committed the administration of that covenant, not to magistrates, but to officers appointed specially for that purpose; from which it also follows, that magistrates, as such, can exercise no jurisdiction in the church, and that their jurisdiction in reference to the church is merely external, but sufficient to restrain her from all external violations of the law of nature. The Lord Jesus Christ has given the magistrate this power over his church. In externals, she has no more right to transgress the law of nature, by public doctrines or ceremonies, under any pretence whatever, than any other association or corporate body, or individual. And the magistrate is as much bound to rule her, in these respects, as any other association. In the exercise of this power the magistrate prohibits the church from usurping any portion of his authority. But the magistrate must also obey those commands of Christ which require him to recognise, protect, and sustain his church in the full enjoyment of all her vested privileges. The view here taken is fully sustained by the scriptures already cited, and by many other similar passages. Our Lord declares, “By me kings reign and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth,” Prov. viii. 15, 16. And John gives him the title,—“Prince of the kings of the earth,” Rev. i. 5. Therefore magistrates are commanded to know, obey, and fear this King of kings: “Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear,” Ps. ii. 12. “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty: he judgeth among the gods. How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked?” Ps. lxxxii. 1, 2. And in thus obeying Christ, the magistrate must recognise the church, wherever she exists within the bounds of his jurisdic-

tion, as a subject of his government, entitled to his protection, and externally subject to his authority in lawful commands. "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm," Ps. cv. 15.

3. If the preceding propositions be true, a third necessarily follows, namely: That civil government, in order to harmonize with divine authority, must receive the law of nature, however made known, whether administered by God as Ruler or Redeemer, as the true and only basis of all human authority, and enter into a formal obligation to obey its requirements. In common discourse the law of nature is frequently confounded with the *light* of nature. The *light* of nature is simply that degree of knowledge which men may or do possess of the *law* of nature, while destitute of a special revelation. But we have the law itself. Its characters are so obscured, or rather blotted out of the soul, that the heathen can only read it through the dispensations of Divine Providence; but we have it in words which we can read and understand, and of whose meaning there can be no rational doubt. Therefore the nations of Christendom have not a shadow of excuse for their transgressions of this law. "They have no cloak for their sin." This law is the *JUS DIVINUM* of both civil and ecclesiastical government. *Every law of man which does not harmonize with this original grant of power is a usurpation, a tyranny, and null from the beginning.* It is a blow aimed at the fountain of all power: it is a contemptuous disregard of the being and authority of God: it is rebellion against the moral government of the world: it is man striving with his Maker: it spreads desolation through this world, and supplies hell with its miserable inhabitants. To demonstrate that such is the character of every human law, not authorized by the law of nature, the original grant of power, we have only to consider,—1. That its claims have never been set aside, nor even varied in a solitary act of the divine government. Positive law may be repealed—the natural law of the material world may be held in equilibrio, the waters may divide, the planets rest in their course, for the redemption of the church, but "till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot, nor one tittle shall pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." The law of the Lord "liveth and abideth for ever." 2. That "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and offend in one point is guilty of all."—These things are true. If the transgressor escape the



penalty of this law, the precious blood of Christ must be the price of his deliverance.

We do not assert that every violation of the divine law destroys the *being* of the civil government thus guilty; nor that it will render its authority null, when it requires obedience to commands that harmonize with the original grant of power. We have ever regarded such a position as inconsistent with scripture and right reason. It is not every violation of law that nullifies the obligations of those natural, social and official relations, which God has constituted. It seems there is but one sin only that can dissolve the obligations of the marriage covenant.

So the warrant for setting up civil government, being from God, it being right in the matter of it, and the *form* being left to human discretion, we see not how the immoralities of men, in incorporating unlawful principles into their constitution, can nullify those which are lawful. Such cases do indeed call for Christians to protest against these unlawful enactments, and forego all civil privileges the enjoyment of which would imply an acknowledgment of these immoralities.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to know precisely the point in transgression where the obligation of subjects to their rulers ceases to bind the conscience in regard to things lawful. Nor is it essential that we should possess this knowledge, as God claims the prerogative of removing and setting up rulers. They may hold their office legally in his sight, or only by providential permission, for the punishment of their sins, and the sins of their subjects. The solution of the question, then, whether they have a valid commission in the sight of God, or are regarded by him as mere usurpers, comes not ordinarily within the scope of our duties. It belongs to God. If the magistrate, though wicked, and though required by the constitution to execute some laws that are immoral, hold office by the will of the nation, legally expressed through the constitutional form of their own choice, it seems clear enough, that his office must be so far valid in the sight of the nation as to require obedience to his lawful commands, whatever it may be in the sight of God. God has given them a king in anger, not in the exercise of his preceptive will, but in his providential permission of man's free agency, for the abuse of which he will inflict punishment.

In order to understand this subject, as it applies to our own country, it is necessary that we should descend a little more into detail. We have a written constitution, a legislative authority, a judiciary to vindicate this constitution from aggressions of every kind; and an executive power; each of these powers distinctly, and all conjointly, being the creatures of the constitution. But these officers receive their appointment from the people from whom also the constitution emanated. These facts present us with three distinct questions, namely,

1. What is our duty in reference to the constitution? 2. In reference to the exercise of the elective franchise and holding office? And 3. In reference to obedience to the administration of the government?

1. What is our duty in reference to the constitution of our own country? We answer, the law requires that it maintain and enforce its principles, which our Lord has thus briefly expressed,—“*Do to others as you would that others should do to you.*” So far as it violates this principle it is null *ab initio*. The people have the right to make a constitution, but not the right to violate this first social law of nature. Hence says the Spirit of God, “Wo unto them that decree unrighteous decrees.” Is. x. 1. “Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.” Jer. xxii. 13. “Wo unto him that establisheth a city by iniquity.” Hab. ii. 12. “Wo unto you, lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne.” Luke xi. 46. “I beheld the tears of such as were oppressed; on the side of their oppressors there was power; but they had no comforter.” Eccl. iv. 1. “Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, break every yoke.” Is. lviii. 6. “O house of David, thus saith the Lord, Execute judgment in the morning, [speedily,] and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.” Jer. xxi. 12. But why multiply quotations to prove an eternal truth, lying clearly within the scope of nature’s light, and yet almost universally treated with contempt by this nation? It is concluded then that every constitution of civil government, so far as it disregards the principle here laid down, is absolutely void,—that the oath of allegiance

to such a constitution is worthy to be taken only by a nation of atheists. How can a man swear in the church to obey the divine law, and also swear in the state to break it, and be innocent?

2. The exercise of the elective franchise, and the holding office under such a constitution are of the same character; for if we may not take the oath of allegiance we may not hold office, nor by our suffrage encourage others to do it, which can only be done by taking the oath.

3. What then is the nature and degree of that obedience which we owe to such a constitution and the laws enacted under it? In regard to those provisions of the constitution and the laws enacted for their enforcement, which violate the principle laid down in this head of discourse, it is perfectly clear that we can yield no other obedience than that which weakness surrenders to superior and irresistible power: we can only obey for wrath's sake.

And this obedience for wrath's sake can be only *passive*, and yielded under a protest against its iniquity. If the magistrate go a step beyond this, and require *active* obedience to any immoral law, *active* resistance even unto blood becomes at once necessary. "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." "He that findeth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it." Mat. x. 28, 39.

But in every such constitution many lawful principles are imbodyed. We see not how it can be possible for men seriously to frame a form of government without some good degree of conformity to the law of nature. How then are we to regard our obligation to obey those things which are lawful? We are inclined to place our obedience to such laws in the same category with that which is due to wicked magistrates who administer a righteous government in a righteous manner. "Infidelity, or difference in religion, doth not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their due obedience to him." Conf. Chap. xxiii. Sec. 4. Why then should the wickedness of one law nullify all others that are righteous, any more than the wickedness of a magistrate should have this effect in relation to his righteous acts of administration? We confess our inability to perceive the differ-



ence. If then I am correct, on this principle, we may avail ourselves of the protection of any civil government under which we may be placed in the providence of God, and may cheerfully pay our ratio of its taxes, as a *quid pro quo*, taxes for protection. We may sit on juries in those cases where no oath of allegiance to the constitution is required and where the law by which the cause is to be decided is righteous, the jury being sworn to render a true verdict according to the law and the facts. In a civil cause, when his life was threatened by violence, Paul appealed to Cæsar.

The history of Saul seems to illustrate the view here advanced. The people in the exercise of their right to set up magistracy, sinned, because they were influenced by a desire to evade at least some of the restraints of the divine law. They rejected God. 1 Sam. viii. 7. Yet God would not repeal his law which required men to choose magistrates, (Ex. xviii. 17—26, 1 Pet. ii. 13,) nor do violence to man's free agency, because men abused both, but take his own time and way to punish the transgressors. Therefore he directs Samuel to comply with their request, to make a king, God himself appointing the individual. At the same time Samuel is directed to declare the evils that would follow, and solemnly to protest against them. 1 Sam. viii. 9. Saul also reigned several years after God had rejected him from being king. 1 Sam. xxv. 15. Yet who can doubt the obligation of the people during that period to obey Saul in lawful commands? 1 Sam. xii. 14. The misery of that people was brought upon them chiefly on account of their obedience to the unlawful commands of their kings. So voluntary obedience to wicked laws of our own making, administered by wicked rulers of our own choosing, must certainly prove the ruin of our country, if the evil be not speedily removed, and the everlasting ruin of those who are thus guilty, if they repent not. But the reflection, that millions of human souls, coming into the world in each successive generation, during the continuance of these iniquitous governments, are through their influence snared and taken, and eternally lost, is not the least bitter ingredient in that cup which constitutes the afflictions of the righteous. "Give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpeh, and a net spread upon Tabor." Hosea v. 1. "For the statutes of Omri are kept, and all the

works of the house of Ahab, and ye walk in their counsels." Micah vi. 16. Infidels may say these scriptures are not applicable to us, but Christians will not.

So the administrations of all the kings of Judah were of a mixed character, partly moral, partly immoral. The same doctrine is proved from the history of the kings of Israel. The revolt of the ten tribes proved in the end to be a total apostacy. Yet it is evident that God recognised their authority to enforce lawful commands, while he punished them for immoral acts of administration, and the people for yielding a voluntary obedience to their unlawful commands. Compare 2 Kings x. 29—31, with Micah vi. 16. Were it necessary, many similar examples might be adduced. It is not then a passive subjection to wicked laws and rulers, nor obedience to their lawful commands, when we give them no countenance in their crimes, and have neither the authority nor the power to break their yoke, that will destroy us; but our *doing* that which God prohibits. Let the following position be duly weighed,—the good actions of wicked men, because they proceed from vicious principles, are not accepted in the sight of God, as to the agents themselves; but being good in their own nature, are accepted as they terminate upon others, who give no countenance to those actions which are wicked, in the agents.

On this principle, the apostle instructs us to buy in the market, asking no questions. On this principle, we justify the deputation from the Free Church of Scotland in receiving the money of slaveholders, provided they did not connive at slavery in order to obtain the money. If they did countenance slavery, they cannot be innocent. That Dr. Burns did not, the evidence is conclusive;—for he boldly denounced instrumental music, choirs, human psalmody, &c. in the worship of God, as also slavery wherever he went.

Why should the wickedness of a father make it sinful in the child to obey his lawful commands? But still it is urged that the constitution contains sinful provisions which render it absolutely invalid. True, in regard to these sinful provisions, it is so. But the constitution of the ten tribes contained sinful provisions. Why then should this invalidate those provisions which are not sinful? But it is urged farther, that the nation is bound to recognise the being of God in their constitution. True, but does their refusal destroy their being as a nation,

or the being of their magistracy, or their right to enforce and obey the social law of nature, in every thing, which they are willing to do? God in his providence may and does overthrow nations for their rejection of him, but till he do this, the minority, protesting against their sins, must regard the lawful commands of their magistrates as valid. An atheistical drunkard may eventually lose the *ability*, but not the *right*, to support his family, at least he cannot lose this right, so long as the ability remain.

But some will still cavil and maintain that we must reject the government of our country altogether as the ordinance of Satan, or we must yield obedience to it altogether as the ordinance of God. If we will not swear allegiance, we cannot consistently claim protection, pay taxes, nor consume the products of slave labour, &c. They reject the middle ground here assumed, and consequently, while a very few become perfect anarchists, the great mass rush heedlessly and recklessly into the active support of the government, in immoralities and tyranny as execrable as ever the world saw! For the sake of the youth of our country, who are deceived by this specious, but fallacious reasoning, let the following things be considered.

1. We do not expect perfection either in laws, or their administration, but we deny in every instance the validity of laws which infringe upon the inalienable rights with which God has invested human nature.
2. There is a difference between obedience to the lawful requirements of a constitution which contains some unlawful provisions and swearing the oath of allegiance. In the former case we reject that which is unlawful, in the latter we recognise it. But still some will say we only swear to obey such provisions as are agreeable to the divine law. If so, why not make this exception when taking the oath? If the magistrate administering the oath will permit me to make the exception, as publicly as he administers the oath, and with the same solemnity, I will take it; but this he will not, cannot do. I must either swear to sustain all its provisions or reject all. To swear allegiance then to its unlawful provisions with the view of abolishing those provisions, is to imitate the Jesuits of Great Britain who swear to support the British constitution that they may destroy it. It is worse than this, it is like swearing allegiance to the devil's kingdom as the first step for its overthrow! To take this step is to subvert both law and



common sense, and to make ourselves guilty of odious hypocrisy. But we hope in this way to effect an amendment, and how can it be done in any other way? Our fathers, who, through cowardice admitted slavery into the constitution, hoped that its conservative principles would soon eradicate the evil. How has a period of sixty years mocked their vain hope! It is not for us to say how the constitution is to be amended. Let those who swear to it amend it, or bear the punishment of their iniquity. This we know, that we are not permitted to do evil that good may come; not to swear to a lie, that we may vindicate truth! Some will say "physician heal thyself," for it is well known that the writer of these passages, born on the soil, has himself frequently exercised the elective franchise, and it is probable he would have continued to do so through life, had not the word of God taught him better. The evil is so common that it scarcely attracts attention. 3. There is a difference between *active voluntary obedience*, and *subjection* to law. God does not require active obedience, or the performance of social duties from his people, when any external physical or moral hinderance is in the way which they have no power to remove. He does not require you to liberate the captive while you are chained to a rock. So neither when you have liberty does he require you as an *individual* to break the law in order to restrain another man's transgression. If I see one man rob or murder another and the civil magistrate stand over me with a sword, saying, if you move a finger to rescue the oppressed, I will cut you down, I am not bound as an *individual* to interfere, except by protest; because God has given me neither *authority* nor *power* as an individual to offer *active* resistance in such cases. Neither are Christians to run unsent into persecution. We are not answerable for other men's sins against which we protest, if we have neither power nor authority to prevent them. If the magistrate require me to acknowledge that he is right, or to assist him, I must then resist even unto blood,—prefer suffering to sinning.

In cases where a revolution by force becomes necessary, it can only be done by regular political organization, by setting up and fighting for a lawful against an unlawful form of government. God then has given neither to *individuals* nor *mobs* the right to resist magistrates. Here some of the abolitionists have erred. In such cases individuals submit to necessity. But it

is the duty of the community to interfere at once through their conventional forms of political action. But who does not see the difference between this kind of *subjection* and a voluntary oath to join with robbers and murderers to help on the work of wrong and death? If there be any who cannot see this difference, it would be the height of folly to reason with them. 4. There is a difference between paying taxes and swearing allegiance. (1.) I am not individually responsible for the magistrate's abuse of the public money if I took no part in his elevation. (2.) Government in itself is right, and the simple payment of money to its support a duty if no sinful condition be imposed. (3.) Necessity comes in here, the magistrate commands, and I must obey, especially as he allows me to accompany my payment of it with a protest against its perversion to unholy purposes. But why did the martyrs suffer? Not for refusing subjection, in the sense of Paul, as has been explained; not for refusing the payment of taxes; but for refusing to renounce the law of God. Yet we voluntarily do this, that we may secure political advantages, carnal interests, and the friendship of the world. For if there be any truth in the scriptures, the oath of allegiance to the constitution of the United States is a renunciation of the divine law; it is swearing in the name of the living God that we renounce his law for the gratification of our lusts! Let him who can avoid this conclusion. And to the great mass of my countrymen, involved in this sin, I say look to yourselves. The Jews would not listen to the overwhelming evidence which the Son of God laid before them, that he was indeed the Christ, because they judged that a national recognition of Christ would injure their worldly interests. You know the result: you ought to know that like causes produce like effects. But we perceive that you are wedded to your idols. Go on, fill up your cup. Nevertheless, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride. (5.) But it is inconsistent for you to purchase and consume the product of slave labour, if you refuse allegiance to the constitution, say our opponents. Well, then, you are content to make *my inconsistency* your apology for renouncing the divine law, under the solemnity of an oath! I am not bound to reconcile the inconsistency of men in this argument. I am explaining and labouring to enforce the claims of law. But I am content to take the apostle's advice in this matter, and buy whatsoever

is offered in the shambles, asking no questions for conscience sake. If the seller tell me this is the production of slave labour, and I understand by your purchase that you approve of slavery, I will let him keep his goods, or dispose of them to another. But the ten thousand objections to law, invented by infidelity and carnal interest, are unworthy of notice. The Almighty will sweep them away in the whirlwind and furious storms of his wrath. The world must one day learn that God reigns.

The conclusion, then, is, that we are bound to obey the lawful commands of magistrates, ruling by the consent of the nation, not merely because they are right, but also from a regard to the powers that be. Nor do we see any practical utility in a controversy respecting the validity of the magistrate's power in the sight of God, provided he rules by the consent of the nation. For both parties come to the same practical result; both obey his lawful commands because they are right; both obey these commands also from a regard to the magistrate. The one indeed for wrath's sake only, but the other also for conscience' sake. The former do indeed seem to exclude themselves from a voluntary payment of taxes, as well as from lawful protection, if any of the laws should be immoral, or at least if any of the constitutional provisions should be so, while the latter, in such circumstances, may avail themselves of protection and pay taxes with a good conscience, to a wicked government.

But the doctrine here advanced requires to be well guarded with suitable limitations, or it will be in danger of perversion and abuse. If, while yielding obedience to the *lawful* commands of magistrates, some of whose requirements are *unlawful*, we refuse to bear an explicit testimony against those which are unlawful; or, if our obedience would infer a justification, or recognition as valid, of those things which are unlawful, we cannot obey voluntarily without guilt. Again: If we yield a voluntary consent to a form of government, much more if we swear to maintain it, while it imbodyes unlawful requirements, we are guilty. If we use any portion of political power which we may possess to establish, or perpetuate, when established, any such form of government; or, if we use that power for the elevation of men to office, whom we have no evidence to regard as men "fearing God and hating covetousness," when we have no reasonable assurance to believe that they will prove



“a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well,” we are guilty, and make ourselves personally responsible for all the moral evil that may characterize their administration. God never permitted us to do an immoral act to procure a good, or avoid an evil.

But civil government being the ordinance of man, (1 Pet. ii. 13,) as well as the ordinance of God, will it not follow that nations have a right to enact laws not founded upon the ten commandments? Civil government is the ordinance of man only in reference to its outward form, to questions of expediency, to incidental details, &c., but in no sense is it the ordinance of man in reference to its moral principles. It is the conformity of human law to the original grant of power that constitutes its binding obligation. He that yields a voluntary obedience to human law, which infringes upon this original grant, casts himself into the jaws of a ferocious beast, which will “tear the soul, rending it in pieces while there is none to deliver.” We are not to live for the gratification of the lusts of men; and let those who enforce their own will upon others in violation of the eternal law of righteousness, merely because God in his providence has given them the power, look well to themselves, before they awake in the flames of divine and endless wrath. “Power belongs to God.” And “shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?” To suppose that nations may make and enforce such laws as they please, because civil government is the ordinance of man, would repeal the divine law, make men independent of God, and exclude him from the government of his creatures, so far as this *can* be done by human will and power. Such has ever been, and must continue to be the practical effect, where the ten commandments are not made the fundamental constitution of all human law, and the supreme rule of all human administrations. Every government must necessarily possess its first principles; and these must be either human or divine. If the ten commandments be rejected, the *will* of man becomes the supreme law to *man*; and the promise of Satan, “ye shall be as gods,” is made good. “Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?” Jer. viii. 9.

If individuals are not permitted to make active resistance to magistrates, as explained p. 22, how can those benevolent individuals in the free states who assist slaves to escape be justi-

fied? It is replied, first, that the law prohibits them from *returning* the runaway to his master; but it does not require them to go into a slave state and help them run away. The slave is already away before the supposed assistance is rendered. They therefore, who, in any manner, actively assist in forcing the slave's return to his master, defy the authority of the God of heaven, and must answer to him. If the law did not permit a Hebrew *servant* to be returned who enjoyed the means of religious instruction, and the protection of personal rights, it cannot permit the return of an American *slave*, who has been robbed of his all. But still, by aiding the slave, they violate the law of the country which requires his return. It is true they do so; but neither that law, nor any other law by which the slave is held has any binding obligation; the reluctance of magistrates to enforce a law which violates the rights of human nature, or the force of right public opinion, is such, that either the magistrate connives at their conduct or is unable to restrain them. This is matter of joy. It is an opening in Providence enabling good men to extend a helping hand to the oppressed. The reason then why the individual can make no active resistance to the unlawful acts of the magistrate as explained p. 22, is not because the law under which the magistrate acts has any validity, but because the individual has not, as such, either the authority or power to remedy the evil. To deny this, and maintain the right of individuals to make active resistance to magistrates is to bury in one common ruin all government, good and bad, civil and ecclesiastical. How the right of private judgment consists with this doctrine will be shown in a subsequent section.

4. It follows that civil governments favoured with revelation, are bound to require of their subjects, and, if need be, enforce upon them, an outward conformity to both tables of the moral law, in all their natural, social, and official relations. This position requires no proof. It rests upon the preceding propositions. If they have been proved, this follows as a necessary consequence. The magistrate then, must, in general, under the penalty of his country's ruin, and the loss of his personal salvation, in case of disobedience, SUPPRESS AND PUNISH, IF NEED BE, avowed atheism, image worship, heresy,\* public

\* We use the term "heresy" in its legal sense, as it is evidently used by the Westminster Confession, and defined by our lexicographers, which con-

blasphemy, open breaches of the Sabbath, insubordination of every kind, breaches of the peace, drunkenness, keepers and frequenters of brothels,—the venders of lascivious books, pictures, &c.,—fraud, theft, and gambling, libellous publications and perjury,—protect every human being under his jurisdiction from oppression of every kind,—and to secure to all the exclusive, unmolested enjoyment of the fruit of their own labour, skill and industry. All these things, with others incidentally or necessarily connected with them, must he do, with all the sincerity, ability, perseverance, and patience obtainable in our present imperfect state. And if the magistrate is bound to do these things, subjects are bound not only to obey, but also to sustain him in his administration. But if he refuse to do these things, so far as that refusal goes, they are bound to petition, remonstrate, and testify against the evil; and all these measures having failed, to use all their lawful power, that may be lawfully exercised, for his removal, and for the appointment of another that will obey the law. If, however, the people choose and support such a magistrate, divine power only is adequate to the removal of an evil so monstrous.

The doctrine of this section, though necessarily inferred from the preceding sections, is also proved from the first table of the law, as well as from the expositions of that table dispersed throughout the scriptures. Lev. xxiv. 16; 2 Kings xviii. 4; xxiii.; Neh. xiii. 17—22, and elsewhere. Here one of two things devolves upon those who deny that the magistrate is bound to SUPPRESS, if need be, with civil pains, all avowed atheism and blasphemy, all public idolatry or image worship, and all public breaches of the Sabbath: first, they must prove that the magistrate is not bound to yield, nor enforce upon his subjects an external obedience to the ten commandments; or, second, they must prove that magistrates are not bound to yield, nor enforce upon their subjects obedience to the first four of the ten commandments. We assert that both magistrates and subjects are bound by both tables of the law, as here stated. This, both wings of Satan's army, popery and infidelity, deny. Here is the turning point between the king of Zion and his enemies. The enemies of Christ have struggled from the beginning of the world to maintain the negative. The witnesses of Christ

sists in a denial of some of the essential doctrines of Christianity, publicly avowed and distinctly maintained; such heresy as is clearly condemned by the moral law. But more of this in the sequel.



have prophesied in sackcloth in favour of the affirmative. To maintain the negative, Rome has imbrued her hands in the blood of sixty millions of the human race, who surrendered their lives to maintain the affirmative. The Roman beast, the fourth terrible monarchy described by Daniel, instigated by Satan, crouched down and took upon his back the apostate church, the scarlet coloured woman, which John saw, and for more than a thousand years, his ten horns, the modern kingdoms of Europe, have been the pliant tools of this apostate church, as her will has been expressed through the human god, as he blasphemously claims to be, who sits in the pagan temple of Rome under the assumed character of our Lord's vicegerent on earth. The ten horns must continue to be ridden by this strumpet till they obey and force upon their subjects external obedience to the moral law. When the witnesses of Christ obtained a partial victory over the pope, Satan changed his mode of attack. Seeing that some of the magistrates were disposed again to claim the power which they had treacherously given to Rome, he persuaded Henry VIII. of England, and his successors, not only to claim the right of administering the law independent of Rome, as it is applicable to the external order of society, but also to step into the house of God, the peculiar kingdom of Christ, and claim dominion there! This new aggression was resisted; the blood of the witnesses again flowed for the rights of Christ's crown and kingdom. In this trying time God enabled his witnesses, after a hundred years' struggle, to declare their testimony by giving to the world, through many prayers and tears, and much labour,—THE WESTMINSTER CONFSSION, which many of them were honoured to seal with their blood. In this country we have got fairly back upon the old field of battle. Here, there is no danger, till popery obtain the ascendancy, that the magistrate will interfere in the internal affairs of the church. The question then with us, is purely this, Shall the magistrate obey or disobey the ten commandments? Or, in other words, Shall he prohibit a violation of the law of nature, in any and every form of religion, under which infidelity may seek concealment? Papists and infidels with one voice say, No. We assert the affirmative. Again; Is God Lord of the conscience, or is man the Lord of his own conscience? This age declares that man is the Lord of his own conscience, that he may be tolerated with a conscience that not

only necessarily invades the rights of others, as every violation of natural law must do, but may also make himself independent of God, because his conscience dictates disobedience to God, who is the Lord of conscience! Will these men tell us what they mean by the rights of man? Has man a right to renounce his Maker? or the authority of his Lawgiver? or violate the social law of nature which God has given for the good of his creature man? We do not design to permit any evasion of this point. It is the corner stone of all that we have advanced, or intend to advance respecting the magistrate's power *circa sacra*; and though our adversaries may be able to demolish some parts of our superstructure, (for we claim no infallibility of reasoning,) yet they have accomplished nothing, till this foundation be removed. We call upon them to prove, by the law of nature, or by God's holy word, that magistrates are not bound to obey and enforce an external conformity to the ten commandments. Until this be done, nothing is done to purpose. Either God or the people are the original source of power. Either magistracy as to its origin is a divine or human institution. Either divine or human will is the law of social intercourse. If you assert the latter, you declare man independent of his Maker; a *heresy* which ought to be punished by the magistrate. If you admit the former, as all but atheists will, then where has God declared the law of man's social relations? If not in the ten commandments, where? If magistrates claim divine authority to suppress theft, as all except atheists do, where did they obtain that authority, or the knowledge of it? If not in the ten commandments, where? If they have authority to enforce the *second* and not the *first* table of the law, where did they obtain such authority? Show us from the scriptures, or right reason, the magistrate's warrant to select one table of the law and reject the other? "He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, is guilty of all." Show us the book, or chapter, or verse, in natural or revealed law, that restricts the administration of the first table to the church in respect to external conformity, or that releases the magistrate in his official character and administration from the obligation of external obedience to the first table. The Anti-christian civil powers, from the beginning of the world, and in later ages in conjunction with Romanism, have frequently deluged the world in blood in their vain and impotent attempts

to break off from their necks the yoke of the first table; but they never have succeeded, they never can succeed in removing this yoke. There it remains, firm and immutable as the being and throne of God. In the absence of all evidence to prove their independence of God, they have vented their cruel rage against the witnesses for the government, the law and the honour of God. Hence the Pope, and the ten horns who have given him their power, know that either they or protestantism and an open Bible must perish. They sneer with ineffable contempt upon the sickly sentimentality of pseudo protestants, who are afraid to execute God's law. They know that obedience to this law is the strong-hold, the *only* refuge of protestantism. They know that the absence of any direct public recognition of the protestant religion in the constitution of these United States renders our people an easy prey to Rome. They know that the struggle is for existence; that it can only terminate by the total annihilation of one of the parties. Revelation tells us which party must fall; and that its fall will be effected instrumentally by national obedience to the first as well as the second table of the law.

We have been the more minute here, because all that we have written must stand or fall with the doctrine here advanced. Yet we look with no friendly eye upon any connexion of church and state, that has ever yet been established. The Episcopal hierarchy and the Erastian encroachments of Great Britain, have indirectly played into the hands of Rome. Men have resorted to infidelity instead of God's law, as the only mode of escape from its overshadowing despotism. No sooner delivered from the tyranny of Rome, than they found their chains again riveted by institutions professedly protestant. These facts, operating upon corrupt nature, led men to conclude that God's law must itself be tyrannical, or surely it could not lead to oppression in every form of its administration, forgetting that the law was trampled down by both protestant and popish governments; that it was the transgression of the law, in both instances, that produced these bitter fruits. We seem to forget that the British government was, and is still, one of the ten horns; that the United States has identified herself with these ten horns by substituting human will in the place of divine law, as the basis of civil government. This will clearly appear in our examination of the constitution.

5. How far is the civil government required to obey and



execute the moral law, as it is connected with our Lord's administration of the covenant of grace? We have hitherto only considered the obligation of national obedience to the law as administered by our Lord, in its natural state, that is, irrespective of the covenant of grace. In our present view of the law, the magistrate has no *direct* concern, for many reasons, which might be adduced: he is no ruler, and has no jurisdiction *in* the house of God; consequently, he cannot restrain, or in any manner hinder the free discussion of theological questions, so long as the contending parties keep within the limits of the law in its natural state. He *can* neither dispense nor appoint others to dispense gospel ordinances, nor interfere in any manner with the internal government of the church, nor establish by law any particular creed or mode of worship. One fact alone is sufficient to prove the truth of this, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed others to do all these things. But the magistrate of a Christian people has *indirectly* much to do with the church, as we have already seen. He must recognise her existence, secure her independence in her own sphere, as she is a public body of men under his jurisdiction. The church, in common with the magistrate, requires an external obedience to the law. But she goes much farther; she explains its spirituality, enforces its claims upon the conscience, exhibits the only remedy for transgression, the only means by which the law can be properly obeyed. Thus she instrumentally communicates a vital principle necessary to secure any good degree of outward obedience to the lawful commands of the magistrate. He is therefore to regard the church as a co-worker with him for the good of his subjects, as bringing to his aid the strongest guarantee known to the world for the maintenance of his authority, and for that obedience to law which is as essential to national as to individual prosperity. He is therefore bound to give the church such temporal support, equitably raised, as may be necessary; or at least, to give her all legal facilities requisite for acquiring and holding and disbursing so much of the property of the world as may be really necessary for her general extension and maintenance in all parts of his dominions, that she may not be hindered in the accomplishment of her divine mission, 1 Kings v.; 2 Chron. xxxi. 11. But in the execution of this part of his office he must treat all denominations on the principles of equality, who hold and teach obedience to the

law of nature, excluding and suppressing all transgressors of that law, while he is careful never to lay burdens upon one party for the benefit of another. This subject, however, must be resumed in considering the doctrine inculcated in the Westminster Confession, when we shall attempt at least to be understood.

But it may be inquired, Would not the execution of the moral law by the magistrate infringe upon liberty of conscience? We answer unhesitatingly, No. It would indeed infringe upon a prevalent and shining fallacy which has been incorporated into several of the state constitutions, namely: "That every man has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience." This is saying, that papists may burn our Bibles, may take our lives, because the dictates of their conscience lead them to judge that by doing so they are doing God service. Burning heretics is an act of faith. In the reign of Charles II. and James I. this kind of liberty of conscience was the specious pretext for the introduction of Popery. With what success the same plea is now urged in our own country, let the history of the times attest. It has been well observed that there is but a single step between the sublime and ridiculous, so there is but a single step between liberty and despotism. The papists found their despotism upon the church's supposed liberty of conscience, and right of supremacy over mankind, to crush all liberty.\* We republicans found our despotism upon each individual's supposed liberty of conscience and right of supremacy

\* When we reflect upon the history of Romanism, its blasphemous assumption of divine prerogatives, its interference with magistrates, and claim of supremacy over them; its horrid inquisition; its total annihilation of liberty of conscience, to say nothing of its idolatry and superstition, and that Americans with the light of God's word and the experience of a thousand years before them, should, under the influence of the *lie*, that "every man has the right to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience," not only welcome hordes of Rome's vassals to their shores, not only give their idolatry protection, not only support their paupers, made such by the unholy exactions of an impious priesthood, not only give them political power, and civil offices, not only give them money to build idolatrous temples, not only intrust their children to their education and moral training, not only permit themselves to be shot down like dogs by these Romanists merely for exercising the right of meeting and free discussion; but also permit them to pluck God's holy word from the eager grasp of their defenceless children, and burn it before their eyes, with every possible mark of public infamy, I fear that God has in a great measure ceased to remember my native land in mercy. "How long, O Lord!" When shall this stupidity, this maniac idiocy have an end? From the heart I pity my silly countrymen. If ye still have eyes, look at

over himself. In the one case men become slaves to the lusts of their superiors, in the other to their own. In both cases the practical result is the same, with this difference only, in the latter case we enjoy the poor consolation of knowing that we have been wholly the authors of our own ruin. The truth is, God, who alone is Lord of the conscience, has bound it by his own law. We therefore, humbly suggest, whether it would not come much nearer the truth to say, "*All men possess the right in the sight of God to worship Him according to the directions of his word; and in the sight of men the right to judge for themselves what is the peculiar, distinctive faith or mode of worship which the word requires?* But men have not the right, either in the sight of God or men, to teach any system of faith, or maintain any mode of worship which infringes upon the law of nature. Men may not, under the plea either of liberty or despotism, trample down the immutable, eternal law of the universe. Hence it is inferred that magistrates are bound to restrain, and, if need be, punish the evils enumerated in the fourth particular; that the people are bound to elect such as will faithfully execute the law. If they elect men who persist in violating the law, they become the greater transgressors themselves. If the constitution and laws of a professedly Christian country make no provision for enforcing this supreme law, it is crime to

Rome's regard for the rights of conscience, in her treatment of your protestant brethren in Switzerland in the year 1844:—

"The priests, so skilful in observing after their own way the maxim, 'Redeem the time,' (literally, 'Redeem the opportunity,') have not failed to take advantage of the massacre of Trient, for increasing their influence, and opposing the entrance of protestantism into Valais. In discussing the basis of a new constitution for this canton, which they have the folly of making at a moment of high excitement, when it can only be a work of passion; an article was put to the vote, which ordains that the Roman catholic religion, *solely, has a public worship* in the country. Still, this appeared too liberal: it was proposed to amend by striking out the word *public*, and the amendment was carried by a majority of votes. Thus, no worship, not even private, can be celebrated in this canton by protestants; only they are pleased to allow that visits to the sick do not constitute a worship. The minority, urged in opposition, the tolerance exercised toward Roman catholics in the protestant cantons, and the necessity of a worship of some kind for the protestants of Valais. The reply to the first argument was, that protestantism was inconsistent with itself, while Roman catholicism *is* consistent, in suffering no other communion to occupy a place beside it; and, as to the second, the presence of a priest is necessary to the Roman catholic, according to the principles of the Roman church, while that of a minister is not so to the protestant according to the principles of the reformed church."—*Foreign Correspondence of the Presbyterian under date of Sept. 3, 1844.*



yield a voluntary obedience, or give to them the least degree of favourable countenance in this evil. Such a government is essentially atheistical, and will speedily produce a nation of infidels, constantly growing worse, till it fall by the weight of its own essential depravity, and probably expire in the blood of its own subjects.

6. But the question arises, may not the law which we have cited, or at least some parts of it, be Jewish or ceremonial? or, in other words, are we quite sure that this law is binding under the New Testament dispensation? It is generally conceded by all who bow to the authority of divine revelation, that whatever was not typical and local in the Jewish economy is moral, and therefore of universal and perpetual obligation. At least, we know of no sect, avowedly Christian, who do not acknowledge the law of the ten commandments to be moral. To this law we appeal, we claim nothing from magistrates, beyond the external enforcement of this law; nothing from the people in their social and civil relations beyond obedience to this law. The transgression of this law is as heinous now as it was in the days of Moses, and is attended with increased aggravations of guilt. Is a belief in the being of God less necessary to us than it was to the Jews? Then the "fool" only dared to say in his heart, "no God;" then the magistrate, in vindication of the law, would have laid hands on him, had he declared his atheism, and blasphemy publicly, Lev. xxiv. 11—16, 23. If the Lord our God be "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever," is not idolatry and image worship the same offence now that it ever was? Then, the magistrate restrained and punished these daring crimes. Deut. vii. 5; 2 Kings xxiii. 4—15. If a seventh portion of man's time was then necessary to be devoted exclusively to rest from ordinary labour, the public and private worship of God, and works of necessity and mercy, is it less so now? If the magistrate was then bound to punish the public transgressors of this law, why not now? See Neh. xiii. 15—22. We omit any reference here to the second table of the law, which refers more directly to the duties which men owe to each other, than to the duties which they owe to God. But here it will be inquired, Do you contend for the infliction of the very same penalties that then were inflicted? So far as may be necessary for the *suppression* of these crimes, we certainly do. There was then a local circumstance which does not now exist.

For the confirmation of the truth of divine revelation and the perfect establishment of the law, *examples* of punishment were more necessary then than now, that the people might *see* that the threatened penalties of the divine law were realities. Now the law is sufficiently established in Christian nations to leave the people utterly inexcusable for their crimes. Examples are not needed, for "if they believe not Moses and the prophets, they would not believe, though one should rise from the dead." We conclude then that the magistrate is bound to suppress and eradicate from the land these crimes when publicly committed, at all hazards; and if, through the obstinacy or wickedness of man, it may become necessary, the full penalty of the law must be inflicted. Call this popery, bigotry, tyranny, persecution, or any other hard names you please, we leave you to settle the controversy with him whose law you thus despise. We leave you to settle not only your transgressions of the law but also your blasphemous revilings, with the Lawgiver himself, not with a mortal man like yourselves.

But why is it that men quarrel with the first table of the law, while they insist that magistrates shall enforce the second? Because they are depraved. They are jealous of their own rights, but reckless of God's. In nothing, perhaps, does the moral rottenness of men appear more, than in this. They are ever ready to exact things equal from others, while, if grace prevent not, they weigh the earth down with their oppression of others. Their ferocity in oppression is limited only by the extent of their power. What a world would this be without the restraints of God's grace and providence! Who could dwell on the earth if men in power were not restrained in some measure by his righteous law. If, then, men manifest their depravity in nothing, more than in their reckless disregard of the rights of their equals, notwithstanding all the restraints of the second table of the law enforced by magistrates, who can fathom the deep and awful depravity which they manifest not only by their disregard of the rights and honour of God, but also by their obstinate refusal to bind magistrates by the first table of the law, or clothe them with power to enforce its claims upon their subjects? If our lusts may be gratified, God may be excluded from the government of the world.

But it may be inquired, are men to be compelled to embrace any religious creed by the power of the civil magistrate, or by

any human power, or has God given either to civil or ecclesiastical rulers any power to impose upon men the profession or practice of the true religion? We unhesitatingly answer, No. The magistrate's power extends to the external conduct of men, as that conduct bears upon the rights of others. It is one thing to prohibit men from publishing atheism, and quite another to compel them to believe in the being of God. It is one thing to prevent men from disturbing the public, on the sabbath, and quite another to compel them to keep it holy. It is one thing to prohibit men from disturbing the outward peace of the church, and quite another to compel them to join it. It is one thing to compel men to yield an external conformity to the light of nature, and quite another to compel them to make, profess, and support any distinctive religious creed or form of worship. The former things belong to the magistrate, not the latter. In regard to the latter, God has reserved the jurisdiction to himself. Ecclesiastical rulers have power to compel nothing in the way of civil pains and penalties. In regard to religious coercion, we adopt the language of another, who goes farther than we can in maintaining the magistrate's power *circa sacra*. "The propagation of religion cannot be accomplished by the coercive power of the civil magistrate. Against all attempts to promote religion by force we have protested, and we regard it as absurd as it is impolitic to attempt to compel men to cherish any religious principles, or practise any religious duty."\* To this, I add, in the language of the apostle, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds," &c. 2 Cor. x. 3, 4. The word and ordinances of Christ are the only legitimate means to be used for the propagation of true religion. Popish ceremonies or any other human inventions are as unauthorized as useless, and perhaps more pernicious to the cause of true religion, than even coercive measures of the magistrate, because more likely to deceive, and more readily acquiesced in. "Go, preach the gospel," &c., is the commission of Christ to his ministers. "For it hath pleased God by the *foolishness of preaching*," and not by the *sword of magistrates*, "to save them that believe."

7. It is alleged that the mild spirit of the gospel, in opposition to the ancient economy, is inconsistent with all sanguinary,

\* Reviewer Reviewed by Rev. John Huston, p. 13.



or even severe punishments, as though the rectitude, government, or gospel of God could change their essential moral character. The fifth chapter of Matthew is cited with other similar portions of the New Testament, and perverted to the support of many wicked absurdities. The twenty-first and twenty-second verses are quoted as good authority for magistrates to abolish the punishment of death for deliberate homicide. But this passage leaves the law as it was from the beginning, which is a strong confirmation of its perpetual obligation. God had said, "Thou shalt not kill." The tradition of the Jewish elders had made this gloss upon it, "Whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment;"\* by which they intended that nothing but actual murder was prohibited,—that those sins which lead to it were venial. Our Lord assures them that not only shall actual murder be punished with death by magistrates, as Moses wrote, but whosoever shall indulge in causeless anger shall be in danger of divine judgment. He gave no intimation that the old law was to be repealed, which runs thus: "Whosoever killeth any person, the murderer shall be put to death by the mouth of witnesses; but one witness shall not testify against any person to cause him to die. (Two witnesses are required, Deut. xvii. 6.) Moreover, ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death [killing;] but he shall be surely put to death." Num. xxxv. 30, 31. If the sixth commandment be moral, then is this; for it relates to the same subject. If this and similar passages be not still binding, then the law prohibiting murder has no penalty annexed; and men may kill each other in their private quarrels, whenever they please, as many are now doing in this country. We have clubs of infidels in most of the cities in the United States, frequently meeting, passing resolutions highly denunciatory of this divine law, besieging the legislatures of many states with their memorials, and thus helping on the work of shedding human blood, by which the land is already fearfully polluted. We entreat these men to pause in their work of death, if they regard themselves or their country. They have already polluted the public mind to such an extent that, in many places, it is scarcely possible to procure a conviction for atrocious murder, even when the evidence of guilt in the case is clear and indisputable. And this fact is urged as an argument for the abolition of a divine law!

\* See Dr. Scott's, or any other respectable Commentary.

These men denounce the law as "barbarous," "unchristian," and I know not what opprobrious epithets can be found in our language, which are not applied to it. The law quoted above from Numbers, say they, is Jewish. Well, by what process of reasoning can they show that it was not then as barbarous as it is now? Suppose they could prove that this law has been done away (which they cannot) still they could not prove it "barbarous," without implying a charge against God which a Christian may well shudder to name. In like manner, the prohibition of private revenge, Matt. v. 38—44, and elsewhere, is perverted into an argument against the administration of public justice. But who does not see that this prohibition renders punishment by magistrates the more necessary? God has appointed rulers, that private persons may not attempt to take the law into their own hand, and we voluntarily yield obedience to them on the ground of their covenant obligation to protect us in the quiet and secure enjoyment of our rights.

8. But does the divine law prohibit slavery as it exists in the United States? We answer in the affirmative. But the advocates of this atrocious crime, which tramples down alike the claims of God and human nature, tell us the Bible sustains slavery, referring with great apparent confidence to the twenty-fifth chapter of Leviticus. Thus the Jewish law, which has been repealed, when it requires the punishment of murder, is in full force to sustain slavery! How very convenient to dismiss and call up a law as it condemns or justifies our lusts! But if the Bible sustain such slavery as exists in the United States, it never came from God: God is just. Revelation is God's exposition of the law of nature, together with a remedy for the transgression of that law. To suppose that such a Book sustains or ever did sustain any degree of injustice, or moral evil, is blasphemously to suppose that God is not only the author of sin, but also the transgressor of his own law, which requires men to do no evil to their fellow men, and to do to others as they would that others should do to them. Many able productions have recently appeared which fully vindicate the Bible from the charge of sustaining slavery, which renders it the less necessary to enter formally upon the discussion of the question here. However, for the satisfaction of the reader, the following things may be observed, respecting Lev. xxv., as it bears upon the question before us: 1. The jubilee occurred every fifty years,

in which "liberty was proclaimed throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof." Every man whose possession had been sold for debt was to return to his possession, and every servant or bond-servant, (the same Hebrew word being rendered both servant and bond-servant,) was to return to his family, v. 10. 2. The land of the Jews could never be sold (v. 23,) nor could any dwelling-place among them be obtained by a foreigner except in a house in a walled city, (v. 29, 30,) or as a servant in some Jewish family. To enjoy the privileges of the Jewish church the Gibeonites were compelled to become servants. 3. The tabernacle, and afterwards the temple, were then the only house of prayer for all nations, and the only way in which the true God could be worshipped. 4. All male servants must be circumcised, Gen. xvii. 10, 15; Josh. v. 2, 10; must go up to the tabernacle, afterwards the temple, three times a year, Ex. xxiii. 15, 20. Both male and female servants were required to eat the passover, Ex. xii. 43, 44; but the males must first be circumcised, v. 45; all were required to keep the Sabbath day holy, Ex. xx. 9, 10. 5. Jewish and heathen servants were placed on a perfect equality: a Hebrew brother in bondage was as a hired servant and a sojourner, v. 40, under the same law as the stranger, Ex. xii. 49. 6. The words buy and sell, used in this chapter, express the ordinary voluntary contract of one person to serve another for a specified time and reward, which was at its expiration sometimes renewed, Ex. xxi. 6. 7. One Jew could not hire another, unless the poverty of the one hired rendered it necessary; it being the design of the law, that every Jew should cultivate his own inheritance, and when hired out must return to it at the jubilee, v. 39, 40. 8. The Jews could hire heathens not of a third person, nor against their will, but of themselves or their families, at any time, "for ever," throughout their generations, without regard to their poverty or wealth, ver. 44—46; but they must in every instance be voluntary converts to the true religion. 9. Strangers or heathen converts could hire poor Hebrews, equally with the native born Hebrew, ver. 47. 10. Jewish servants could be redeemed at any time, ver. 48—54; and all Jewish servants or converts from heathenism went out at the jubilee. 11. These servants enjoyed all the privileges of the children of Jewish families, if we allow Paul, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and speaking by inspiration, to be good authority—"Now I say, that the



heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be Lord of all," Gal. iv. 1. 12. If they refused to acknowledge the true religion and observe its rites, they could not reside in the country, Gen. xvii. 13, 14; Ex. xxiii. 9; and they could not be compelled to make a profession of the true religion against their will, Ex. xxii. 21, nor be admitted to its privileges without voluntarily submitting to circumcision, Ex. xii. 45. 13. If one of these servants fled, he could not be returned to his master, nor oppressed, but might dwell in any of the walled cities, or leave the country, Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.

From these facts it is perfectly evident that the servitude of the Jews, as it has been called, was equal and just, and merciful; in every way beneficial to the servant. Poor slave-holders! if this be the foundation on which you rest for a justification of your robbery of God and man, you are indeed poor! You are not to be reviled and mocked, but pitied.

But the New Testament is also said to sustain slavery. It is alleged that slave-holders were admitted to the privileges of the primitive church, because Paul points out the duty of both masters and slaves, as members of the church. But let it be observed that Paul commands masters to give their servants those things which are **JUST AND EQUAL**. If holding and selling men, women and children as property,—if overworking, maiming, mangling with whips, teeth of dogs, hot irons, and rifle balls, their bodies,—if the separation of husbands and wives, parents and children, prostitution—bastardy, selling one's own children into remediless bondage,—if punishing men with death for teaching the poor slave the words of eternal life, or even the alphabet of his mother tongue, be things *just and equal!* then it may be that the New Testament sustains slavery!—not otherwise.

"I have examined no less than twenty thousand pages of octavos and quartos, to ascertain one single fact:—to know whether Grecian or Roman slavery extended to, and existed in the provinces of the Roman Empire, in which the churches were located, to which these regulations were given. Six of Paul's epistles were written to churches in Europe, viz: one to Rome, two to Corinth, two to Thessalonica, and one to Philippi. The term master of a servant does not occur in all these epistles. Masters were not recognised as members of any of these churches. Some of these epistles were long and minute, espe-

cially the one to Rome and the two to Corinth; large cities, in which slaves were as thick as black-birds in southern swamps. Now if the apostle took slaveholders into these churches, is it not strange that we find none in the churches; that not a word was addressed to them? The term 'servants' occurs once, and but *once*, and then in this wise: 'Art thou called, *being* a servant? care not for it; but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, *being* a servant, is the Lord's free man: likewise also he that is called, *being* free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price, BE NOT YE THE SERVANTS OF MEN.' 1 Cor. vii. 21, 23."\*

The directions to masters and servants are found in those epistles which were addressed to the churches located in the provinces of Asia Minor, where neither Roman nor Grecian slavery existed. These were free provinces of the Roman Empire; and if slavery did not exist in the country, how did it find its way into the church? It devolves upon slaveholders and their apologists to prove that slavery existed in these provinces at the time the apostle wrote, before they undertake to apply his directions to their system of slavery. To this they have been challenged by other and more able writers. The United States, like the Roman, is a slaveholding empire, and like the Roman, has also its free states. But Onesimus was a slave! This is denied, and we challenge the proof. That he was a servant of Philemon, by his own voluntary act, or perhaps a younger natural brother, over whom Philemon had a certain dominion by the law of primogeniture, or by Onesimus' minority, the father being deceased, is readily admitted. Calmet, a Romanist, who is justly claimed by slaveholders, tells us that when Onesimus returned to Philemon with Paul's epistle, the latter received him, "not only as a faithful servant, but as a brother and a friend; and after a little time sent him back to Rome, that he might continue his services to Paul, in his prison. From this time Onesimus' employment was in the ministry of the gospel. The apostolical constitutions report, that Paul made him bishop of Berea, in Macedonia. The martyrologies call him apostle, and say he ended his life by martyrdom;"†—some little difference, truly, between a bishop and a southern slave. We give very little credit, however, to Cal-

\* Rev. Edward Smith.

† Robinson's Calmet on the word Onesimus.

met's authorities, but let our opponents produce as good to prove that Onesimus was a slave.

We may safely, without any breach of charity, with all sobriety of mind, and with the most scrupulous and tender regard for the rights of slaveholders and the character of their advocates and apologists, assert, that the Bible, so far from giving the least countenance to slavery, brands it with an indelible mark of infamy, as one of the foulest crimes which go to fill up the catalogue of human guilt. The law of God denounces death to every man that either *steals, holds, or sells* a slave. "He that *stealeth* a man, and *selleth* him, or if he be *found in his hand*, he shall surely be put to death," Ex. xxi. 16. Joseph was sold to the Ishmaelites, Gen. xxxvii. 28. Their purchase of him he calls man-stealing: "I was *stolen* away out of the land of the Hebrews," Gen. xi. 15. To buy a man as property is stealing him. Hence our translators render the Greek word which denotes slave dealers, by the term *men-stealers*, 1 Tim. i. 10. We shall only add here, that the Greek word properly denoting slave or slaves is not in the Bible.\* Nor is the Greek word which denotes slave dealer to be found, except in 1 Tim. i. 10. The Septuagint also renders the Hebrew word, Lev. xxv., which is rendered servants and bond-men, by the Greek word *οικεται*, literally, household, or family servants. But the only Greek word which properly denotes slave, is *ανδραποδον*, literally, a slave. So *ανδραποδισης*, 1 Tim. i. 10, denotes, *one who steals men to make them slaves, or sell them into slavery; one who by deceit reduces free men to slavery.* For the punishment of such persons, and their advocates and apologists, is the law made. The merchants of the earth who have their merchandise in the EN-SLAVED BODIES AND SOULS OF MEN, (Rev. xviii. 13,) are enumerated among those who were made rich by the prevalence of Romanism, or rather the spirit of Romanism, which consists in making the will of man, instead of the law of God, the supreme law to man. These merchants in the enslaved bodies and souls of men join in the general wailing, and lamentation, and weeping, over fallen Rome,—“Alas, alas! that great city! In one hour so great riches is come to naught!” From this it seems that slavery and the Romish Antichrist are to be co-extensive in their duration; and, finally, to fall under such judgments as probably the world never saw. Indeed the only

\* Parkhurst tells us that it occurs in 2 Maccabees vii. 5.



material difference between popery and slavery is this: the one begins its usurpation upon the body, and terminates upon the soul; the other first enslaves the soul, but terminates upon the body; both agree in ultimately effecting the mutual and everlasting destruction of both soul and body.

9. But does not the doctrine advanced in the third particular amount to treason? No. The constitution does not compel us to vote or hold office. If in any case it should do so, suffering is preferable to sin. If we are willing to make a voluntary surrender of these privileges for conscience' sake, it will not compel us to swear allegiance. Besides, it provides for its own amendment. If so, it confers upon the citizen the right to point out its sinful provisions to the nation, and to use all lawful means for their removal. But we may, safely, and should, go farther than this. We should declare its sinful provisions morally null from the beginning, and that every man who yields obedience to these provisions does so at the peril of his soul. He can only be in *subjection*, in a passive way, from necessity; for it is impossible that any sinful law or obligation can be valid; if we say yes, we say that Herod was right in killing John. Suppose a number of persons should associate themselves under an obligation to steal and sell every human being that could be brought under their power; suppose another class of men, who were opposed to such measures, yet through fear of the former class, or of some other enemy, against whom they needed the assistance of the former class, this other class should enter into an obligation with the former to use their influence and power to help them steal and hold and sell men, the former, as a *quid pro quo* entering into an obligation with the latter to assist them in carrying on lawful business and in repelling foreign aggression, both parties agreeing that they will have nothing to do with religion, or the law of God. Do any suppose that such obligations can be binding upon the parties either in the sight of God or men? Are we then to be told that such obligations can bind the successors of these parties? If so, then men can associate and by a human decree of iniquity overturn the government of God. Such, however, is the constitution of the United States, in reference to religion and slavery, as we shall see when we come directly to its consideration. We, the people of the United States, are these robbers! And the wisest and best statesmen

among us say, if the bargain were to be made over again, they would not agree to it; but since it has been made, they are willing, Herod-like, to abide by the obligation, though innocent blood should continue to flow! And we, forsooth, are to be branded as traitors to our country, because we cannot consent to enter into an oath and covenant to renounce God our Saviour, for the worldly advantage of being connected with this band of men-stealers! If any think the government of their country, with such a moral character, a more suitable Saviour than the Lord Jesus Christ, let them take their choice. If they have more confidence in the advocacy of politicians who continue to perpetuate such a constitution, than they have in the advocacy of the Lord Jesus Christ, we say again, let them choose. There are some men who are unwilling to sell their God and Saviour for such a human government? There are others eager for the bargain: we say again, let them choose for themselves; but be pleased also to let us choose for ourselves.

10. Does not the doctrine advanced in the fourth particular constitute the magistrate a judge in religious matters? When we plead the claims of God's law upon magistrates, we are immediately met with the objection, You make the magistrate a judge in religion, you require him to propagate religion by the sword, you seek to establish a state religion, and bury in one common ruin both civil liberty and the rights of conscience. If the half of these objections were true, they would not only overthrow our argument, but destroy divine revelation; for we are not permitted to suppose that God has given a law to men, which in its operation destroys the rights both of God and men. To make the church independent of the state, in externals, has always produced the very evils which are falsely ascribed to the magistrate's just authority in religion. Hence the admirable adaptation of our institutions to the designs of the papacy. Romanists could not desire a better opportunity than we have given them. They laugh at us as the hunter at the silly ostrich. But we hope to show, that these objections are the offspring of ignorance or infidelity. Take this proposition, *Over every thing relating to the external affairs of the church, considered as a corporate body of men, constituting a component part of the social compact, and over all her acts of administration, so far as they have a bearing on the social rights of others, the magistrate has jurisdiction, is the competent judge of the legality of her action,*

*and is bound to compel her, if necessary, to yield obedience to the law of nature.* For two reasons—1. The magistrate is the divinely appointed guardian of social rights in every supposable case: in this respect, he is the minister of God, the representative of God. If he truly administer the divine law, God is with him in his official acts. “God standeth in the congregation of the mighty, he judgeth among the gods,” Ps. lxxxii. 1. Consequently, the transgressor exposes himself to the punishment of God and man. 2. Human depravity, which leads men to invade the rights of others, manifests itself under the form of religion, even that which is most pure, as readily as in any other shape, and frequently with more virulence and malignity than in any other form. Consequently, no man can be permitted to plead conscience for inflicting injury upon others, either in their reputation, lawful pursuits, property, or persons. Every human government must possess an ultimate judge of controversies respecting civil rights, from whose decision there can be no appeal in this world, and no violent disobedience by individuals. Passive subjection is due here, and must be yielded, even when the magistrate is known to be wrong. If the magistrate become corrupt, the law provides a remedy. If the majority become too corrupt to apply the remedy, we must wait for the great Lawgiver, who will interpose in the right time and way. The magistrate is and must be the judge, and is accountable only to God and the laws of his country. To deny this, puts an effectual end to all government, and introduces anarchy, with its many-headed monsters and all its horrid progeny. Magistrates are supposed to be qualified for their high office, by suitable intellectual, legal and moral attainments: they are supposed to possess and act in the fear of God, knowing their accountability. Hence, it is absolutely necessary to good government that they be men fearing God and hating covetousness. If the people appoint unqualified men, they betray their own liberties and provoke the divine anger.

In regard to the internal concerns of the church, the magistrate has no direct jurisdiction. He may not impose upon his subjects any distinctive creed or form of worship, nor interfere in any manner with the church's ordinances. But he may and is bound to compel her to abide by her own laws of outward administration, on the same principle that he may compel individuals to fulfil lawful contracts of any kind made in good



faith. He is present in ecclesiastical assemblies by the law which he administers, and may be personally present if he judge the public good so require; not to participate in the proceedings, but to support the law of social intercourse. In a disordered state of society, when religious factions are infringing upon the rights of each other, he may, and should, if he judge it would be conducive to the public interests, call an ecclesiastical assembly to settle their disputes in a lawful manner; leaving them to unite, or form separate ecclesiastical organizations, according as they may agree or disagree; and then compel the contending parties to abide by their own arrangements, taking order that all parties keep within the requirements of the law of nature. Here again the magistrate is judge. He must protect temporal interests and social rights, none the less because connected with religion. In regard to the internal affairs of the church, organizing congregations, election of church officers, ordination, dispensing the word and sacraments, admissions to communion, admonitions, rebukes, suspensions, excommunications, he cannot interfere. But after these things have been done by the church, he may inquire how far they affect the pecuniary and social interests of the parties; and how far the parties have kept or violated their voluntary obligations towards each other; and nullify or give validity to her acts, so far as they affect these interests, according as he may find those acts lawful or unlawful. Nor does it alter the case, whether the dispute respect doctrine or discipline. The magistrate is supposed capable of judging of the legality of every covenant which men are permitted to make with each other, and also of the violation of the covenant, by any of the parties. If the covenant be unlawful, he must abolish it; if lawful, confirm it, and punish the transgressor of covenant obligations so far as the covenant may have only an indirect or remote bearing on civil rights. Those who deny this doctrine should never resort to civil law to settle the claims of contending parties to church property, nor to redress any wrong done to character, or worldly interests, by the action of church courts. Whenever they do so, they acknowledge all for which we here contend.\* Suppose a minister, suspended by an ecclesiastical court, rebel and con-

\* This doctrine is fully maintained by the decision of the Vice Chancellor of the fourth circuit, in the state of New York, published in the Evangelical Repository, January, 1845.

tinue the exercise of his ministry, the civil magistrate, can neither restore, nor silence him. So far the case is purely ecclesiastical, the magistrate has no jurisdiction. Suppose a church court suspend one of its members on a charge calculated to destroy his reputation as a member of civil society, the magistrate has no jurisdiction; he cannot review, reverse or affirm any decision of a church court. But so far as the excluded minister or member suffer temporal loss either in character or property, or so far as the rebellion of the excluded persons against the decisions of the church court defrauds the court or any persons adhering to it of either property or character, the magistrate may interfere. He is the guardian of the temporal and social rights of all his subjects. If the proceedings of the church court have been in conformity with its own acknowledged laws, which the state as in duty bound had recognised by permitting them to be established, the magistrate will give legal efficacy to its action so far as it involves property or reputation. He will not, cannot inquire into its ecclesiastical bearing, but he will inquire into its temporal bearing. He will compel the church court as well as the individual to abide by their own covenant engagements with each other, so far as a violation of these engagements affect temporal interests. If the magistrate should decline an inquiry into the regularity and legality\* of ecclesiastical proceedings in such cases, and confirm them merely because they have been done, it would convert church courts into irresponsible and tremendous engines of oppression; they might with impunity denude any of their members, merely for dislike, not only of their status in the church, but also of their reputation and property, and means of subsistence in the world. So on the other hand if he refused to give legal validity to the regular and lawful\* acts of church courts so far as they affect both character and property, church government could not exist; all bequests or donations to religious and charitable objects might at any time be diverted from the purpose designed by the donors. It may not be amiss to observe here that when the majority of a church court alter their constitution, the minority adhering to it may obtain all the ecclesiastical, temporal and civil rights of the body, both in the sight of God and men, unless the constitution provide

\* The terms *legality* and *lawful* are here used in reference to the established laws of the church.

for its own amendment, and also prescribe the manner in which amendments shall be made: then the amendment must be effected in the regular or prescribed manner. If it contain no provision for its own amendment, and prescribe no manner in which amendments may be made, it must remain as it is, if a minority be found adhering to it; and those who dislike it must secede. The solemn covenants which men make with each other, being lawful in the matter of them, are to be treated neither as men of straw nor ropes of sand. The magistrate then must give to his subjects full liberty, security, and necessary support, in setting up and maintaining any distinctive mode of worship and form of ecclesiastical government, which they or any number of them may judge agreeable to the word of God; but he must also see that none of his subjects, under the plea of religion, transgress the law of nature, or invade the social and religious rights of others. Religion of some kind, brought within the restrictions just named, is essential to all of man's temporal interests, as well as his future felicity. To secure interests so vast to the human race, magistracy and the ministry have been ordained of God co-workers together, each in their divinely appointed sphere. In this sense the union of church and state is indissoluble. The union of soul and body is not more necessary to constitute a human being than is such a union of church and state to the constitution of society. The moral character of a nation is, and must be, both exhibited and formed by its form of government. The people are like the rulers, and cannot be otherwise for any considerable length of time. True religion can never flourish, nor long exist in any nation, where the magistracy disregard the great conservative principles here laid down. They are the only protection from anarchy on the one side and popery on the other. The reformers understood this. Hence we find these principles in all their confessions. The pope is this moment demanding from England, as a *sine qua non* of international correspondence, the removal of every legal disability out of the way of Rome's image worship, while all protestant worship is beginning to be suppressed in Romish states. But who does not see that if statesmen would enforce the law of nature, it would extirpate Romanism at once. This, the British covenants bound that nation to do. But, alas, they have proved themselves covenant breakers, and liberty in Europe is fast



losing the foothold it obtained by the Reformation. Grim and ghostly tyranny is again creeping from the dens to which it had been driven for a season, with its army of hyenas, snarling and eagerly watching their opportunity to devour the little but gallant band who still rally round the genius of liberty, resolved to perish in her last fortress. While this conflict is raging in Europe, we Americans, like a silly flock of sheep driven by wolves into the wilderness, no sooner cease to feel the teeth of our destroying enemies, than we invite them to come and herd among us till they shall again become sufficiently powerful to suck the blood from our veins. The little band who have hitherto stood by the law of their God and the rights of their fellow men, are becoming weary of resistance to the popular current; they are almost ready to bury in oblivion the purest, the truest, defence of Divine and human rights, next to the Bible, that has ever been given to the world, namely, the Westminster Confession. They have fallen asleep in this hour of darkness, while the means for slaying the witnesses of Christ, as Christ himself was formerly slain, are in active preparation. In a little time we may say to these witnesses, Sleep on now, seeing ye could not watch one hour with Christ. Whether they will escape as safely as did the sorrowing disciples, for laying down the banner of Christ at the foot of the enemy, is not for man to say. Their light is certainly greater. When the witnesses of Christ are to be slain we need not look for fidelity in magistrates. We need not expect the magistracy of this country to enforce the law of nature, so long as they continue to be, as they have hitherto been, misled by the ministry. Protestants and abolitionists must be content to wear the chains which the bulk of the nation have forged for themselves. They have made "an agreement with death, and a covenant with hell;" and if the yoke sometimes prove galling, they may console themselves that it is of their own making. Most of them propose to renew their oath of allegiance to this covenant of death as the best means of abolishing it! This shows the dangerous symptoms of the disease; they have lost their reason under the influence of this raging fever. Swear allegiance to Satan, that we may put Satan to flight! Renew the potation, that we may remove the surfeit! Plunge deeper into the slough, that we may find dry land! Swim to the centre of the ocean, that we may escape drowning! Renounce by an oath

our professed principles, that we may keep them! Alter our Confession, because we believe it as it now stands! In short, let us all go to work doing evil with all our might, that good may come!

It would be well, if men knew that nothing less than Almighty power can break these chains. But they are not compelled to yield an active obedience. Herein lies their sin. If these United States would embody in their constitution and enforce in their administration the law of nature, there would be no necessity to declare an indiscriminate warfare against all foreigners, as such. If they would do this there would be no more cries and prayers and tears ascending to Heaven against them from the poor and oppressed; no more alarms at the approach of Romanism; no more mobs; no more murder of citizens in cool blood for the lawful exercise of their constitutional rights. This they will not do. It is said, they have not the power. But if God has not conferred upon magistrates and ministers the power to execute the functions of their office, why were they appointed? An agent without power to accomplish the design of its agency, may as well be annihilated; it will answer no valuable purpose. But God has clothed his ministers with sufficient power to execute the design of their mission. The conclusion, then, is to my mind irresistible, that the magistrate of a Christian nation is bound to impose upon his subjects such a tax as may be necessary for the support of some form of religion which harmonizes with that law which he is appointed to administer, and to suppress every other form that transgresses that law, which of course must be a false religion. Should any doubt this, we will not dispute, as it does not affect our principal arguments. But in the imposition of this tax, he must leave the subject free to select for himself the peculiar or distinctive creed and form of worship which he may desire to support, that conscience may be left in the free enjoyment of that liberty which God has conferred upon it. The magistrate may not come in between me and my God in regard to his worship, but he may compel me to obey the social law of nature, without any regard to my scruples of conscience on that subject. This distinction is recognised in most, if not all of our church courts. In regard to doctrine, order, and worship, a conscientious approbation is required; but in regard to acts of administration, which consist in the application

of the law to emergent causes, passive subjection only is required, not conscientious approbation. Hence the right of protest. The same distinction is also recognised by the civil magistrate. The French have a proverb, "He that has lost a lawsuit is permitted to rail at his judges ten days;" but he must submit.

New England, till infidelity poisoned the minds of her people, acted upon this plan with the happiest results. Her views of the magistrate's power *circa sacra* were entirely scriptural, during the whole of the eighteenth century, and till a very few years ago. After the first settlers had learned the principles of liberty, they abolished or suffered to become a dead letter all those laws, the principles of which they brought with them from popish Europe, that infringed upon the rights of conscience. Persecution expired altogether about the beginning of the eighteenth century. The law imposed a moderate tax upon every one for religion, and bound him to choose and support *some form of worship*: and where individuals refused to make any selection for themselves, the state made the selection. The magistrate established no distinctive creed or form of worship, but enforced an external obedience to the decalogue. During this period, New England enjoyed a greater degree of civil and religious liberty and general happiness, made more rapid progress in diffusing general intelligence, true religion, sound morality, and every other thing which goes to constitute national greatness and elevate the condition of men, than has ever been allotted to any other people on earth. If there be any exception to this remark, it is found in the superior religious attainments in Scotland from 1638 to 1707, notwithstanding the oppressions of a tyrannical government, during the greater part of that period.

Why then was not New England preserved from the withering influence of infidelity? Probably because she refused to adopt the divinely appointed form of church government. Independency in the church is a pretty name for anarchy and every evil work. The error of New England then was not political, but ecclesiastical. What little they had of church order was, however, after it had been adopted by ecclesiastical councils recognised and maintained by the state, so far as it affected in its operation temporal interests. It is in vain then, that evil-disposed persons declaim against the early persecution



of New England in order to increase in the minds of ignorant and wicked men their natural hatred of truth; for the doctrine here advanced put an effectual end to persecution; and if universally acted upon, by the powers that be, it would not only secure to men their natural rights, but would speedily extend the kingdom of Christ over all nations. By enforcing the law of nature kings will become nursing fathers and queens nursing mothers of the church.

11. In the note to the sixth page the right of private judgment is asserted. How then is this right to be reconciled with the doctrine advanced p. 45, that passive subjection must be yielded to the magistrate in the decision of causes, when his action is supposed or known to be wrong?\*

The following observations will help to solve this difficulty.

(1.) The right of private judgment regards religious doctrines to be believed and duties to be practised. The subjection to magistrates, when known to be wrong, regards civil duties, and is limited to individuals, and unlawful, unorganized bodies of men, such as mobs. The community, if a sufficient number can be enlisted, have always the right to organize, under any righteous conventional form agreed upon in an orderly manner, for the overthrow of tyranny; peaceably, if they can; forcibly, if they must. Hence the Scottish rebellion against James and other acts of resistance to the Erastian encroachments of England were entirely scriptural, as also the American revolution, and the present refusal of some among us to engage in any political action with the supporters of slave laws.

(2.) Individuals are not, nor can they be authoritative exponents of the civil law. For this magistrates are appointed, and there is no medium between passive subjection and a general, open, organized, forcible rebellion. A denial of this is equivalent to a denial of the divine authority of civil government. The minority of the nation, however, have the right, and may, whenever they have the power, throw off the yoke of tyranny in the use of all such lawful means as God in his providence may furnish.

(3.) As the magistrate can establish by law no particular

\* It is perhaps hardly necessary to state, that we use the terms "magistrate" and "magistracy" to express the whole machinery of civil government, and the terms "obedience" and "subjection" in reference to the action of courts of the last resort.

creed or form of worship, so he cannot be the judge here. He cannot decide what the scriptures do or do not teach on these points. They have been superadded to the law of nature; purchased by the blood of Christ, and belong to his peculiar kingdom, who only is the Lord of conscience. Every individual must here be the sole judge, as an individual, and every ecclesiastical organization must be the sole judge, as a public body. The magistrate must see that the liberty of his subjects in this respect be preserved inviolable; for, here, conscience is placed as high above the control of any, or all things, in heaven, earth, or hell, as God is high above his creatures. It belongs to the Romish whore and the ten horns of the beast on which she rides to deluge the earth in blood, rather than recognise this right of conscience.

(4.) Neither individual professors of religion, as such, nor any other private persons, not appointed magistrates, nor ecclesiastical bodies, can be authoritative judges in controversies respecting civil rights. Hence the claim of Romanism to crown and dethrone and prescribe the duty of kings, is one of those things which render that system destructive to the rights of all men. Her claim to *order* the magistrate to inflict civil penalties upon those whom she judges guilty of ecclesiastical offences, and her constant interference in politics, and intrigues with the governments of the world, called her fornication with the kings of the earth, constitute the common and most malignant enemy of God and man. Science, wealth, happiness, religion and liberty, in short, all the temporal and eternal interests of the human race, are arrested before her terrific approach. Her reign embraces the DARK AGES of the world. With professed reverence for the Bible, she has extinguished its light.

“He that would usurp an absolute lordship and tyranny over any people, need not put himself to the trouble and difficulty of abrogating and disannulling the laws made to maintain the common liberty; for he may frustrate their intent, and compass his own design as well, if he can get the power and authority to interpret them as he pleases, and add to them what he pleases, and to have his interpretations and additions stand for laws: if he can rule his people by his laws, and his laws by his lawyers. So the church of Rome, to establish her tyranny over men’s consciences, needed not either to abolish or corrupt the holy scriptures, the pillars and supporters of Christian liberty: (which in regard of the numerous multitudes of copies

dispersed through all places, translated into almost all languages, guarded with all solicitous care and industry, had been an impossible attempt:) but the more expedite way, and therefore more likely to be successful, was, to gain the opinion and esteem of the public and authorized interpreter of them, and the authority of adding to them what doctrine she pleased, under the title of traditions or definitions. For by this means, she might both serve herself of all those clauses of scripture, which might be drawn to cast a favourable countenance upon her ambitious pretences, which in case the scripture had been abolished she could not have done; and yet be secure enough of having either her power limited or her corruptions and abuses reformed by them: this being once settled in the minds of men, that unwritten doctrines, if proposed by her, were to be received with equal reverence to those that were written; and that the sense of scripture was not that which seemed to men's reason and understanding to be so, but that which the church of Rome should declare to be so, seemed it never so unreasonable and incongruous. The matter being once thus ordered, and the holy scriptures being made in effect not your directors and judges (no farther than you please) but your servants and instruments, always pressed and in readiness to advance your designs, and disabled wholly with minds so qualified to prejudice or impeach them; it is safe for you to put a crown on their head, and a reed in their hands, and to bow before them, and cry, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' to pretend a great deal of esteem and respect, and reverence to them, as here you do. But to little purpose is verbal reverence without entire submission and sincere obedience; and, as our Saviour said of some, so the scripture, could it speak, I believe would say to you, 'Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not that which I command you?' Cast away the vain and arrogant pretence of infallibility, which make your errors incurable. Leave picturing God, and worshipping God by pictures. 'Teach not for doctrine the commandments of men.' Debar not the laity of the testament of Christ's blood. Let your public prayers and psalms, and hymns, be in such language as is for the edification of the assistants. Take not from the clergy that liberty of marriage which Christ hath left them. Do not impose upon men that humility of worshipping angels which St. Paul condemns. Teach no more proper sacrifices of Christ but one. Acknowledge them that die in Christ to be blessed, and 'to rest from their labours.' Acknowledge the sacrament after consecration to be bread and wine, as well as Christ's body and blood. Acknowledge the gift of continency without marriage not to be given to all. Let not the weapons of your warfare be carnal, such as massacres, treasons, persecutions, and, in a



word, all means either violent or fraudulent: these and other things, which the scripture commands you, do, and then we shall willingly give you such testimony as you deserve; but, till you do so, to talk of estimation, respect and reverence to the scripture, is nothing else but talk."—*Chillingworth*, p. 105, 106.

So, under the pretence of attachment to republican government, the hordes of Romanists among us, combined with unprincipled and atheistical politicians, are, not altering the letter of our civil constitution, but bringing it into subjection to Romanism. The people, dreaming of liberty, are forging chains for themselves.

(5.) The magistrate is an authoritative judge of the law of nature, and the avenger of every outward transgression of that law under any and every form of pretence which men may assume as a cloak or excuse of disobedience; but respecting religious creeds and forms of worship there neither is nor can be any visible or earthly judge, binding the conscience. The church's power is declarative and administrative; her sword is the word of God; and all obedience to her is voluntary; and not only voluntary to her, but the obedience of all her members to Christ is voluntary. He will accept no other. His people are a willing people. To acts of administration, however, or the court's application of the law to emergent cases, members of the church may yield a *passive subjection*, while they disapprove and protest against these acts. Chillingworth has marked and illustrated with sufficient accuracy the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical authority, the right of private judgment in regard to each, and consequently the nature and difference of that obedience which is due to each.

"I grant it very necessary, that besides the law-maker speaking in the law, there should be other judges to determine civil and criminal controversies, and to give every man that justice which the law allows him. But your argument drawn from hence to show a necessity of a visible judge in controversies of religion, I say is sophistical; and that for many reasons.

"First, because the variety of civil cases is infinite, and therefore there cannot be possibly enough provided for the determination of them; and therefore there must be a judge to supply out of the principles of reason, the interpretation of the law, where it is defective. But the scripture, we say, is a perfect rule of faith, and therefore needs no supply of the defects of it.

"Secondly, to execute the letter of the law, according to

rigour, would be many times unjust, and therefore there is need of a judge to moderate it; whereof in religion there is no use at all.

“Thirdly, in civil and criminal causes the parties have for the most part so much interest, and very often so little honesty that they will not submit to a law, though never so plain, if it be against them; or will not see it to be against them, though it be never so plainly; whereas, if men were honest, and the law were plain and extended to all cases, there would be little need of judges. Now in matters of religion, when the question is, whether every man be a fit judge and chooser for himself, we suppose men honest, and such as understand the difference between a moment and eternity. And such men, we conceive, will think it highly concerns them to be of the true religion, but nothing at all that this or that religion should be the true. And then we suppose that all the necessary points of religion are plain and easy, and consequently every man in this cause to be a competent judge for himself: because it concerns himself to judge right as much as eternal happiness is worth. And if through his own default he judge amiss, he alone shall suffer for it.

“Fourthly, in civil controversies we are obliged only to external passive obedience, and not to an internal and active. We are bound to obey the sentence of the judge, or not to resist it, but not always to believe it just: but in matters of religion, such a judge is required whom we should be obliged to believe to have judged aright. So that in civil controversies every honest understanding man is fit to be a judge; but in religion none but he that is infallible.

“Fifthly, in civil causes there is means and power, when the judge hath decreed, to compel men to obey his sentence; otherwise, I believe laws alone would be to as much purpose for the ending of differences, as laws and judges both. But all the power in the world is neither fit to convince, nor able to compel a man’s conscience to consent to any thing. Worldly terror may prevail so far as to make men profess a religion which they believe not, (such men, I mean, who know not that there is a heaven provided for martyrs, and a hell for those that dissemble such truths as are necessary to be professed:) but to force either any man to believe either what he believes not, or an honest man to dissemble what he does believe, (if God only commands him to profess it,) or to profess what he does not believe, all the powers in the world are too weak, with all the powers of hell to assist them.

“Sixthly, in civil controversies the case cannot be so put, but there may be a judge to end it, who is not a party; in controversies of religion, it is in a manner impossible to be avoided, but the judge must be a party. For this must be the first,

whether he be a judge or no, and in that he must be a party. Sure I am, the pope, in the controversies of our time, is a chief party: for it highly concerns him, even as much as his popedom is worth, not to yield any one point of his religion to be erroneous. And he is a man subject to like passions with other men; and therefore we may justly decline his sentence, for fear temporal respects should either blind his judgment or make him pronounce against it.

“Seventhly, in civil controversies, it is impossible Titus should hold the land in question and Sempronius too; and therefore either the plaintiff must injure the defendant, by disquieting his possession, or the defendant wrong the plaintiff by keeping his right from him. But in controversies of religion, the case is otherwise. I may hold my opinion, and do you no wrong; and you yours, and do me none: nay, we may both of us hold our opinion, and yet do ourselves no harm; provided the difference be not touching any thing necessary to salvation, and that we love truth so well, as to be diligent to inform our conscience, and constant in following it.

“Eighthly, for the deciding of civil controversies, men may appoint themselves a judge: but in matters of religion, this office may be given to none but whom God hath designed for it; who doth not always give us those things which we conceive most expedient for ourselves.

“Ninthly and lastly, for the ending of civil controversies, who does not see, it is absolutely necessary, that not only judges should be appointed, but that it should be known and unquestioned who they are? Thus all the judges of our land are known men, known to be judges, and no man can doubt or question but these are the men. Otherwise, if it were a disputable thing, who were these judges, and they have no certain warrant for their authority, but only some topical congruities; would not any man say, such judges, in all likelihood, would rather multiply controversies than end them? So likewise if our Saviour, the king of heaven, had intended that all controversies in religion should be by some visible judge finally determined, who can doubt, but in plain terms he would have expressed himself about this matter? He would have said plainly, The bishop of Rome I have appointed to decide all emergent controversies; for that our Saviour designed the bishop of Rome to his office, and yet would not say so, nor cause it to be written, *ad rei memoriam*, by any of the evangelists or apostles, so much as once; but leave it to be drawn out of uncertain principles, by thirteen or fourteen more uncertain consequences, he that can believe it, let him.

“All these reasons, I hope, will convince you, that though we have, and have great necessity of, judges in civil and criminal



causes; yet you may not conclude from hence, that there is any public authorized judge to determine controversies in religion, nor any necessity there should be any.

“But the scripture stands in need of some watchful and unerring eye to guard it, by means of whose assured vigilancy we may undoubtedly receive it sincere and pure. Very true; but this is no other than the watchful eye of Divine Providence; the goodness whereof will never suffer, that the scripture should be depraved, and corrupted, but that in them should be always extant a conspicuous and plain way to eternal happiness. Neither can any thing be more palpably inconsistent with his goodness, than to suffer scripture to be undiscernibly corrupted in any matter of moment, and yet to exact of men the belief of those verities, which, without their fault, or knowledge, or possibility of prevention, were defaced out of them. So that God requiring of men to believe scripture in its purity, engages himself to see it preserved in sufficient purity; and you need not fear but he will satisfy his engagement.”—*Pages, 113—115.*

We may see from the sound principles here advanced by Chillingworth:

(1.) Why the magistrate cannot establish by law any distinctive creed. It necessarily infringes upon the prerogative of God as sole Lord of the conscience, and destroys that liberty wherewith Christ has made his people free.

(2.) Why the magistrate must be the ultimate judge of all controversies, whether connected with religion or not, so far as temporal interests are concerned. He is a peace officer appointed for this purpose.

(3.) If the magistrate be such a judge as is here supposed, then he must have a law as a standard of judgment. He is not the *giver*, but the *executor* of law, we speak of the supreme civil power in reference to all its departments and all its subordinate agents. This law of the magistrate, we have seen, is the decalogue; for every law of man which prevents, or in any way hinders the operation and full execution of this supreme law is not only invalid, but the enactors, executors, or even apologists of any such law have brought themselves under the condemning sentence of the supreme law, and must answer to the great Law-giver himself, as best they can.

(4.) But some will inquire, after all that has been said, is it quite certain that the magistrate is bound to enforce the first table of the law for the regulation of the outward and social conduct of men? Does not that table refer exclusively to the

glory of God? Is not the church appointed exclusively to take care of the holy things of God? and the magistrate to take care exclusively of the natural rights of men? Does the magistrate's duty regard men as members of civil society and not as Christians? If all these questions could be satisfactorily answered in the affirmative, we are free to acknowledge that this answer would destroy most of our arguments. It would do more. It would prohibit the magistrate from recognising in any shape the being, name, law, or providence of God. He could not administer an oath in the name of God, for that is an act of religious worship. He could not permit the introduction of the Bible into our common schools, for that teaches that whatsoever men do, even to eating and drinking, they are bound to do all from a regard to the glory of God. He could appoint no religious teacher in the army or navy, or in any prison in the land.\* He could restrain no breach of the Sabbath, however flagrant; that is a day peculiarly devoted to the glory of God. And it would be a great stretch of power in him to prevent a mob from breaking up a worshipping assembly on the Sabbath, especially if they should do this by shouting, noise, and clamour, being careful not to assault persons, nor destroy property; for religious worship, Sabbath sanctification, are altogether Christian, and the magistrate's duty respects men not as Christians, but as members of civil society. I suppose Thomas Paine himself desired nothing more for the establishment of his kingdom of darkness than that the magistrate should refuse to enforce an external obedience to the first table of the law.

But let candid men reflect, and they will see that both tables must stand or fall together. 1. The authority of the Lawgiver must be established and recognised as the basis of all law. 2. If the Lawgiver be not honoured, the law will not be obeyed. 3. There never has been, there never can be a nation, heathen, or professedly Mohammedan, or Christian, without a more or less direct acknowledgment of some supernatural power as the fountain of all human authority, and that if this be not the true God it must be a false one. 4. That an outward observance of the first table of the law is no less essential to the preservation of civil rights than the observance of the second; and there-

\* The papists maintain that the magistrate cannot appoint chaplains in the navy, &c. till the nation establish *their creed* by law. Many politicians seem to be of their mind. The Pope having claimed lordship over the conscience, of course popery can never recognize the rights of conscience.

fore, although the duty of magistrates directly respects men, not as Christians, but as members of civil society, yet they must enforce the first table or they cannot secure the preservation of the civil interests of society for any considerable length of time. "When thou shalt say, I will set a king over me, it shall be when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book; and it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep the words of this law and these statutes to DO THEM; and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left." Deut. xvii. 14, 18, 19, 20.

Those who deny the authority and duty of magistrates to enforce external obedience to the first table of the law do necessarily adopt the following atheistical principles:—

"1. Men's natural or civil rights to their property, liberty, profits and honours, are not originally derived from God,—and magistrates ought to protect them in their most outrageous sinning against him.

"2. Men's consciences have a right and authority underived from, and independent of God, by which it can warrant them to think and speak of, or act towards God, as insolently and blasphemously as they please.

"3. That, if the law of God be any rule to men, it is not so, in respect of any intrinsic meaning affixed to it by him, but merely as it is understood by every man, particularly in that which relates to their behaviour towards God.

"4. All men being ready to mistake, we ought always to believe that our opponents may have as just a view of the Scriptures as ourselves, and never to condemn them for that which they do not own to be blasphemy, idolatry, or heresy.

"5. Magistrates' right and authority to govern others, doth not originate in God as the Creator, Preserver, and King of nations, but in magistrates themselves, or in their subjects; and so may be exercised as they please, particularly in requiring or allowing their subjects to belie, blaspheme, or rob God.

"6. Magistrates may be moral governors, deputies or lieutenants, under God, without having any power or authority relating to religion, or his honour.

"7. Not the law of God natural or revealed, but the laws of nations ought to be the supreme standard of all civil government.

"8. Not the declarative glory of God, as the Most High over all the earth, but the civil peace and prosperity of nations, ought to be the chief end of magistrates in all their acts of government.



“9. Men’s natural rights of conscience, or their civil rights, or the authority of magistrates, may or ought to empower, warrant, or protect them in gross heresy, blasphemy, idolatry, or other outrageous abuse and injury of God; but can by no means warrant or protect them in calumny, theft, murder, or any other injuries against men.

“10. There is no real difference between moral good and evil, at least in things pertaining to God; and so true and false religion are equally calculated to promote the welfare of civil society, and the virtues which render men good, peaceable, useful, and honourable rulers or subjects,—and hence heretics, blasphemers, and idolaters may be good subjects.

“11. The favour or indignation of God is of no importance to civil society; and therefore magistrates ought to use no means to procure his favour by the encouragement of true religion, or to avert his indignation by the restraint of gross heresy, blasphemy, or idolatry,—but only labour to procure the friendship of men, and prevent their injuring the character, property, or bodies of their subjects.—That all these propositions are really atheistical, is manifest. They all give up with the necessary existence, infinite excellency, and absolute supremacy of God, without any of which he cannot be God at all.—That Locke, Hoadly, Blackburn, Voltaire, and others, advocates for authoritative toleration of false religion, found their pleadings on the above propositions, is no less evident to every judicious and unbiassed observer.—Nay, did not modesty forbid, I might defy all the world to plead for such toleration, without taking all, or some of the above or like atheistical propositions for granted.”—*Brown*.

12. Heresy or false religion, in the sense of the Westminster Confession, should be suppressed by magistrates. We have already cautioned the reader not to impute to us the views of others any farther than we adopt them, so we desire that the argument quoted from Brown of Haddington in the preceding section, should be restricted to the application we have made of it. It would be foreign to our purpose to inquire into the application the author may himself have made of it. Whether he maintained that the magistrate should establish a distinctive creed and suppress all others, is not the question before us. We quote his reasoning to prove the absurdity and wickedness of tolerating men in outward violations of the first table of the decalogue, and for no other purpose. This it does prove. If not, let our opponents show it, and not impute to us principles which we deny and abhor. To establish by law a distinctive

creed and suppress all others is the essence of tyranny, destructive alike to the rights of conscience and civil liberty. How then can the magistrate suppress heresy and a false religion? It is such heresy and such a false religion as plainly amounts to an outward breach of the decalogue, that is to be suppressed. Such the magistrate may not tolerate; and whenever he does this, he does it at the peril of himself and his country. This is the heresy and false religion spoken of in the Confession. Heresy in law is the propagation of some sentiment or sentiments against the generally acknowledged doctrines of Christianity which are fundamental to its existence. The first table of the law is equally the basis of Christianity and civil government. So a *false religion* is not a corrupted Christianity, but a religion repugnant to the being of Christianity, a religion which cannot co-exist with Christianity, in any country, under any form of government, or among any people. Such are Paganism, Mohammedanism, and Popery. When our reforming ancestors covenanted to extirpate not *papists*, but *popery*, they simply engaged to obey the decalogue. I blush for their degenerate sons. What will be the doom of all Presbyterians who deny the descending obligation of these covenants, eternity alone can disclose! They have rejected not reforming ancestors, but God! Professing to be the friends of Christ, they are on the side of his enemies! They wound him in the house of his friends! They speak sneeringly and contemptuously of those who stand by the Westminster Confession! They sport with the oath of God by which they have bound their own souls! Degenerate children! But it is the fashion of the times for men to answer with abuse and slander those portions of the divine word which condemn their sins. They have fairly seated themselves in the scorner's chair!

Who shall be the judge of what constitutes such heresy and false religion as amount to an external violation of the decalogue? The magistrate is God's appointed minister for this very purpose. Besides, the common sense of mankind, aided by the light of revelation, when released from the chains of Romanism, has unconsciously decided this question, by very clear and strongly marked distinctions between a corrupted Christianity and a false religion. No sect can be charged with maintaining a false religion who recognise the ten commandments to be exclusively the charter of human rights, the moral

law of the world, and of paramount obligation upon all men in all their relations. This is done by all protestant sects who mutually acknowledge the validity of each other's ordinances. If I acknowledge the ordinations, baptisms, &c. of any Christian sect, I cannot at the same time regard their religion as a false religion; though I may justly regard it as a corrupted Christianity, and on that account refuse to unite with them in their ecclesiastical organization. So far as protestants deny the validity of each other's ordinances, that denial arises either from some defect in the form of the administration, or because they have so far violated the ten commandments as to constitute their system a false religion. Romanists and their kindred, Puseyites, by their denial of Protestant ordinances have demonstrated themselves to be Antichrist; because they, in fact, rest the validity of these ordinances, not upon the authority of Christ speaking in his word, but upon the authority of the Pope, or of some visible human authority. Protestants acknowledge the validity of the ordinances of Christ, if they are dispensed by any regular body of professing Christians entitled to that name. But how they can acknowledge the validity of the ordinances of the Romish Antichrist or of any other sect who transgress the law of nature, we see not? for it is evident that every such sect has embraced a false religion. Especially is this true of Romanism: therefore we conclude that popery should be suppressed, and will be when magistrates learn the duties of their office. The following considerations will make this evident:—

1. Popery is a system of outward and gross idolatry, and to sustain its idolatry has suppressed the second precept of the decalogue.

2. It is the inveterate enemy of the scriptures, the charter of all civil rights, and the means of salvation.

3. It enforces a distinctive religious creed and form of worship by civil pains and penalties, requiring that magistrates should be mere passive tools for the infliction of her penalties.

4. It claims dominion over magistrates.

5. It claims for its priesthood exemption from the authority of the civil magistrate in civil causes.

6. It does not hold its subjects bound even by oaths made with magistrates or individuals, if in their judgment the viola-



tion of such oaths would promote the interests of their religion.

7. It makes the infliction of death upon all who dissent from the creed of the church and her superstitious observances, or who refuse subjection to the authority of the pope, an act of religious worship.

8. It has not, cannot surrender any of these features; for it claims infallibility; always has enforced, and is still enforcing its demands, wherever, and whenever it has the power.

Seeing all these things, and others that might be named, are universally acknowledged facts, it necessarily follows that popery can never co-exist either with Christianity or the rights of men; therefore magistrates are bound to suppress it, and every Presbyterian on earth, whether he acknowledge it or not, is under a covenant obligation to use all the lawful means in his power for the extirpation of popery. But the great majority are now nursing it. Perhaps, should they find themselves incarcerated in prisons, tortured upon racks, and many of their brethren slain with the most barbarous engines of cruelty Satanic cunning can invent, they might see their sin. If, however, the country will have popery, rather than obey the divine law, they must reap its rewards. The Jews would have idolatry, and they enjoyed its benefits for seventy years in Babylon.

13. There is in some respects a marked difference between our condition and that of Presbyterians in Britain, which renders some of the arguments of distinguished ministers in that country inapplicable to our circumstances, while much of their reasoning is as applicable to us as it is to them, truth being always the same, and yet applicable to every condition in which men can be placed, requiring always the performance of the duties which pertain to the peculiar relations and conditions in which the providence of God may place us. They have creeds established by law, and toleration for dissenters; they have political and local matters connected with their covenants, with which we have no concern. But every thing in the British covenants scriptural and applicable to our condition is binding upon all Presbyterians, as all have descended from these covenanting ancestors, and the Associate church in this country has sworn to these covenants, as far as they are applicable to our condition, and consequently to maintain the authority and duty of magistrates as pointed out in the religious principles to

which the covenanters have obligated themselves. In Britain they are compelled to contend against the government for intruding into the house of God. In all other respects our condition and theirs is very similar. In both countries faithful men are compelled to contend with infidelity, government toleration of popery, &c., and, worst of all, with a host of apostatizing brethren. Let us learn to "endure as seeing Him who is invisible."

But we give no more countenance to the establishment of creeds by law, or to the Erastian encroachments of Great Britain than we do to the atheistical radicals both in this and that country. The civil power is not designed for the propagation of true religion; its immediate duty is to regulate the social relations and intercourse of men. The high church party, in common with popery, contend that the propagation of religion is one of the principal ends of magistracy. If there be any difference between churchmen and papists, it is this: the former are willing to bow the knee to the magistrate, hold their ecclesiastical offices from him, and become his humble and obedient servants in the propagation of religion: the latter, holding office from the Pope, require the magistrate to become their servant: the former make the king the head of the church, the latter the Pope: both agree in rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ. "Mr. Gladstone's [a high churchman and member of parliament] whole theory rests on this great fundamental proposition—that the propagation of religious truth is one of the principal ends of government, as government."\* To this we reply in the language of another, "Magistrates are not the deputies of Christ as mediator, but they are of God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and all their administrations are subjected to Christ, as Head over all things to his church."† Thus, Christ is sole king in his own house, and has officers of his own appointment, for the propagation of the true religion, altogether independent of magistrates in regard to the peculiar duties of their office, as the magistrate is of them in regard to the peculiar duties of his office; both being under the dominion of Christ as mediator, the one to enforce the law of nature, the other to administer the covenant of grace. The gospel ministry must be subject to the magistrate in the external things of the church so far as they

\* Macauley on church and state, Miscellanies, p. 379.

† Brown of Haddington.

affect social rights, and the magistrate must be subject to the ministry in regard to all religious ordinances; and must be in subjection as an individual to the government of the church, even as the humblest individual in his dominions. In the body of Christ there is no artificial, natural, nor earthly distinction, not even that of male or female.

“All these different forms of power and authority being derived from the *same God*, may have the same things for their object, but viewed in different respects. The same man may be subject to the power of his conscience as he is a rational creature,—subject to the power of parents as a child,—subject to the power of masters as a servant,—subject to the power of magistrates as a member of the commonwealth,—subject to the power of Church-rulers as a member of an organized visible Church,—subject to the mediatorial power of Christ, as a member of his mystical body, or an agent for promoting the welfare of it.—The same good work of piety or virtue may, or ought to be required by conscience, by parents, masters, magistrates, ministers, and even by Christ as mediator, in different respects, as calculated to promote the welfare of the persons, families, nations, and churches concerned,—in subordination to the glory of God as their respective proprietor and superior.

“The performance of the same good work may be encouraged by rewards from all these different powers, answerable to their respective forms.—The same vices of idolatry, blasphemy, calumny, treason, theft, murder, &c. as in different respects hurtful to persons, families, civil societies, and churches, may, and ought to be prohibited by all these different powers, and re-sented by each, as hurtful to itself, as subordinated to God,—in a manner answerable to its particular nature and department,—by conscience with stinging rebukes,—by parents with correction, disinheriting, or the like,—by masters with frowns, stripes, abridgment of wages, or the like,—by magistrates with public dishonour, fining, imprisonment, or death,—by church-rulers with ecclesiastical rebuke, excommunication,—by Christ with temporal, spiritual, or eternal judgment, Acts xxiv. 16; Josh. xxiv. 15; Psal. ci.; Mat. v. vi. vii., &c.

All these powers of conscience, husbands, parents, masters, magistrates, church-rulers, and of Christ as mediator, proceeding from an infinitely wise, powerful and good God, are each of them, in its own place, altogether sufficient to gain its own end. Nevertheless, it mightily tends to the advantage of each, that all of them be rightly exercised at once, and to the hurt of all the rest, if any of them be not. If conscience act faithfully, this promotes the regular and comfortable exercise of the power of husbands, parents, masters, magistrates or minis-



ters, &c. And it is to the advantage of conscience, if they regularly exercise their power, and especially if Christ exercise his, in a remarkable manner. It is much to the advantage of church and state, if husbands, parents, and masters, faithfully exercise their power in their respective departments; and much to their hurt, if they do not. If the rulers in church and state, faithfully discharge their trust, it will tend much to promote the welfare of families. The more faithfully ministers labour in winning souls to Christ, and teaching men to live soberly, righteously, and godly in view of Christ's second coming, the more easy will the work of magistrates, and the greater the happiness of the commonwealth be.——The more faithfully magistrates act in curbing of crimes, and promoting obedience to God the King of nations, as a mean of securing his felicitating blessing to the commonwealth, the more delightfully will church-power be exercised, and the more abundantly it will tend to the welfare of the church. Nay, though the mediatorial power of Christ be infinitely sufficient in its own place, to answer its own ends, yet the delightful exercise and success of it is not a little promoted by the faithful exercise of the powers of conscience, husbands, parents, masters, magistrates and church-rulers, Acts xxiv. 16; 1 Tim. v; Eph. iv.—vi.; Col. iii. iv.; 1 and 2 Tim.; Titus i.—iii.; 1 Pet. ii. 5; Psalm ii. 10,—12; Rev. ii. 15; xvii. 14, 16; xxi. 24; Isaiah xlix. 23; lx. 3, 4, 10, 16.

“ Though the marital, parental, magisterial, magistratical, and ministerial powers be altogether distinct from, and independent of one another, and each of them has its own particular exercises pertaining to it alone;—yet the same person, in respect of different relations, may be at once superior or inferior to another person,—and so may be required to fulfil the particular duties of his station, by one who hath not any lawful right to perform them himself. Thus magistrates and ministers, as such, may require husbands to perform their duties to their wives, parents to perform theirs to their children, or masters theirs to their servants, as a mean of promoting the welfare of the commonwealth and of the Church, in obedience to God, and aiming at his glory. An uncrowned husband of a queen may command her faithfully to exercise her magistratical power, as a mean of honour and happiness to his family; and she as queen may command him in every thing relating to the welfare of the state as her officer or subject. A parent may require his son, as such, faithfully to exercise his ministerial, magistratical, or magisterial power as a mean of honour and happiness to his family. A son may command his father, who is his servant, in every thing pertaining to the service due from him, and even to order his family aright, in so far as it tends to promote that service.

Ministers, as the ambassadors of Christ, have power to require magistrates, as church-members, faithfully to exercise their magistratical power, so as may best promote the honour of Christ, and the welfare of his Church. And, on the other hand, magistrates have power to require ministers, as their subjects, faithfully to exercise their ministerial power, as a mean of rendering the nation pious and virtuous, in order to promote its happiness—and all this in subordination to the law, and to promote the glory of God as the supreme governor of families, churches, or nations.

“ Though the marital, parental, magisterial, magistratical and ministerial powers, have, each of them, something for its peculiar and distinguishing object, in which no other power can interfere with it;—Thus, it is always unlawful for husbands, parents, masters, or ministers, as such, to assume the power of civil magistrates in levying taxes, adjudging criminals to death,—always unlawful for parents, masters, or magistrates, as such, to preach the gospel, dispense sacraments, or church-censures—yet if the exercise of some of these powers be fearfully neglected or abused, the other powers may be exercised, in order to rectify the disorders occasioned, farther than would be proper if there were no such neglect, abuse, or disorder. Thus, if husbands, parents, or masters, fearfully abuse their power, relative to wives, children, or servants, the rulers of church or state, for the benefit of these societies, may interfere more with their family concerns, than would be proper in other circumstances. If church rulers be notoriously negligent or wicked, magistrates, as church members, and to promote the welfare of the state, may do more in the reformation of the church, than would be proper for them, if church rulers were diligent and faithful. And, if through the indolence or wickedness of magistrates, the affairs of the nation be thrown into terrible confusion, ministers, as members of the commonwealth, and to promote the welfare of the church, may do more in the rectification of affairs, than would be proper, if the magistrates were faithful, 2 Kings xi.; 2 Chron. xxiii.

“ All governing authority empowers the possessors of it, to issue forth laws or commandments, binding on the subject of it. But these laws or commandments can extend their binding force no farther than the particular department belonging to that power, as by that, every particular form of authority, derived from God, is limited. The laws or commandments of parents, masters, magistrates, and church rulers, extend only to external things in the family, commonwealth, or church. These of conscience and of Christ extend also to that which is inward in the heart.—And as all human superiors are imperfect in knowledge themselves, and cannot enable their subjects perfect-

ly to understand their whole duty, it is necessary that laws of families or nations, or constitutions of churches require nothing but what is plainly agreeable to the law of God, and nothing in religion but what is plainly required by the word of God, that so nothing may be contrary to these laws but what is not only really, but plainly contrary to the word of God. And, the weaker the subjects are, the more condescension ought to be exercised towards them in this matter, Rom. xv. 1, 2.\*

14. If civil government be a divine institution, and if individuals and unorganized bodies of men have not the right to resist magistrates, even when known to be wrong, as we have asserted, will it not necessarily follow, that individuals must yield a voluntary obedience to the powers that be in every instance? No. It only follows that they must yield a passive subjection from necessity to wrong commands which do not require them to disobey actively any divine law. For as Rutherford well observes, "It is natural that men join in civil society, though the manner of the union be voluntary." By which we understand that individuals are bound by the law of nature to unite with others in setting up civil government, but are left to the exercise of their own free will in regard to the particular form of government which the majority may adopt, they may acknowledge, or decline any particular form, according as they judge it to be sinful or otherwise, while they as individuals make no forcible resistance to the majority. Though we may be overwhelmed, borne down and oppressed by unrighteous laws, sustained by superior physical force, we cannot without sin give any countenance to such laws; and this is the reason why a conscientious man should prefer voluntary disfranchisement to sinful obligations. We may not in any circumstances enter into a contract, association, or covenant obligation of any kind for the accomplishment of any object, however excellent or necessary that object may be, if there be any thing sinful required as a part of such contract or covenant. Consequently we cannot take an oath to a civil government which binds our souls to do any thing of which God has said ye shall not do it. God has said, Ye shall not oppress the poor, nor the stranger, but ye shall break every yoke. We go and swear we will do all in our power to oppress the poor and the stranger. We will make the yoke of wood brass, and the yoke of brass iron, and will perpetuate every yoke now upon the necks of the poor

\* Rev. John Brown.



and the stranger, and will subject as many more to the yoke as God in his providence may place within the grasp of our power! We will vote for those who perpetuate this tyranny! We will be partakers with them in the iniquity and its rewards! True, we have sworn allegiance to Zion's King in his house; we have sealed the covenant confirmed with his precious blood: True, God, holy angels, righteous men, as also wicked men and devils have witnessed our tears of penitential sorrow for sin, for all sin, while with the affecting memorials of his broken body and shed blood in our hands and in our mouths we said, *all that the Lord our God has spoken will we do and be obedient*: True, our Lord has said, Break every yoke: *But*, we hear some one say,—I made these vows as a Christian, I now swear to renounce them as a politician! then I was in the church, now I am in the state! then I was performing a holy duty, now a natural duty! then I had a regard to the soul; now I am acting for the body! then I was seeking spiritual and eternal interests, now I am in pursuit of temporal good: then I swore to obey God, now I swear to obey the magistrate! Magistrates have no business to make laws respecting religion, and the constitution prohibits them! The church has no business with politics! Magistracy is from God, he that resists "shall receive damnation." Bad government is better than none! If I refuse the oath to Cæsar or deprive myself of the privilege of interfering in the affairs of Cæsar's household, the government will fall altogether into the hands of wicked men! Besides the constitution provides for its amendment, and we should vote to effect an amendment! But suppose, it should turn out in the day of judgment that God never permitted his people to do evil that good may come—that he never permitted them to enter into sinful engagements with their fellow men, nor go with a multitude to do evil,—that he required political rulers and subjects to obey and administer his law,—and suppose he should sentence to remediless woe all such as in this life took an oath of an allegiance to the civil powers that be, which required them to trample his law in the dust, what then is to become of these politico-religious men? If he condemn the politician to wrath, will the Christian escape? or rather will not his perjury aggravate his doom? Will it not be more tolerable in the day of judgment for Sodomites than for him? Let every man be persuaded in his own mind.

We have said in the note, page 6th, "we have no doubt of the application of Rom. xiii. &c. to the then existing Roman government," that is, we have no doubt that the apostle required Christians as individuals to be in *subjection* for peace's sake, and also to obey lawful commands for conscience sake, while, they were required not only to abstain from all voluntary and active participation in its evils, directly or indirectly, but also to bear a faithful testimony against those evils. But this is not the whole or even principal view of that passage. The grand and ultimate design of the Spirit of God in that passage undoubtedly was to reveal and explain the law by which God has bound all the nations of the earth to the end of the world, and for the violation of which He will inflict condign punishment.

"In comparing the writings of all philosophers and lawyers with Paul's, you seem to me to act rightly, in allowing to his authority so much preponderance in the balance. But you should consider whether you have sufficiently weighed his opinions; for you ought to examine, not only his words, but also at what times, to what persons, and for what purposes he wrote. First, then, let us see what Paul wrote. In the third chapter of his letter to Titus, he writes, "Put subjects in mind to be obedient to principalities and powers, and to be ready for every good work." Here you see, I presume, what end he assigns to obedience. In the second chapter of his epistle to Timothy, the same apostle writes, "That we should pray for all men, even for kings and other magistrates, that we may lead a peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty." Here, also, you see that he proposes, as the end of prayer, not the security of kings, but the tranquillity of the church; and, hence it will be no difficult matter to comprehend his form of prayer. In his epistle to the Romans, his definition of a king is accurate, even to logical subtilty; for he says that "a king is God's minister, wielding the sword of the law, for the punishment of the bad, and for the support and aid of the good." "For these passages of Paul's," says Chrysostom, "relate not to a tyrant, but to a real and legitimate sovereign, who personates a genuine god upon earth, and to whom resistance is certainly resistance to the ordinance of God." Yet, though we should pray for bad princes, we ought not, therefore, to infer directly that their vices should not be punished like the crimes of robbers, for whom also we are ordered to pray; nor, if we are bound to obey a good, does it follow that we should not resist a bad prince? Besides, if you attend to the cause which induced Paul to commit these ideas to writing, you will find, I fear,

that this passage is greatly against you; since he wrote them to chastise the temerity of certain persons, who maintained that Christians ought not to be under the control of magistrates. For, since the magistrates were invested with authority on purpose to restrain wicked men, to enable us all to live under equal laws, and to exhibit a living example of divine justice, they contended that he was of no use among persons so uncontaminated by the contagion of vice as to be a law to themselves. Paul, therefore, does not here treat of the magistrate, but of magistracy—that is, of the function and duty of the person who presides over others, nor of this nor of that species of magistracy, but of every possible form of government. Nor does he contend against those who maintained that bad magistrates ought not to be punished, but against persons who renounced every kind of authority; who, by an absurd interpretation of Christian liberty, affirmed that it was an indignity to men emancipated by the Son of God, and directed by God's Spirit, to be controlled by any human power. To refute this erroneous opinion, Paul shows that magistracy is not only a good, but a sacred and divine ordinance, and instituted expressly for connecting assemblages and communities of men, and to enable them, conjointly, to acknowledge God's blessings, and to abstain from mutual injuries. Persons raised to the rank of magistrates God has ordered to be the conservators of his laws: and, therefore, if we acknowledge laws to be, as they certainly are, good things, we must also acknowledge that their conservators are entitled to honour, and that their office is a good and useful institution. But the magistrate is terrible. To whom, I beseech you? To the good or to the bad? To the good he cannot be a terror, as he secures them from injury; but if he is a terror to the bad, it is nothing to you, who are directed by the Spirit of God. What occasion, then, is there, you will say, for subjecting me to the magistrate, since I am God's freeman? Much. To prove yourself God's freeman, obey his laws; for the Spirit of God, of whose direction you boast, framed the laws, approves of magistracy and authorizes obedience to the magistrate. On this head, therefore we shall easily come to an agreement, that a magistrate is necessary in the best-constituted societies, and that he ought to be treated with every kind of respect. Hence, if any person entertains contrary sentiments, we deem him insane, intestable, and worthy of the severest punishment; since he openly resists God's will communicated to us in the Scriptures. For, supposing that no punishment for the violation of all laws, human and divine, should be inflicted on a Caligula, a Nero, a Domitian, and other tyrants of that sort, you have here no countenance from Paul, who is discoursing of the power of magistrates and of bad men by whom it is badly exercised. Indeed, if you examine that kind



of tyrants by Paul's rule, they will not at all be magistrates. [They indeed are not magistrates according to God's *preceptive* will, but only according to his providential permission.] Again, if you should contend that even bad princes are ordained by God, take care lest your language should be charged with captiousness. For God, to counteract poison by poison, as an antidote, sometimes sets a bad man over bad men for their punishment; and yet, that God is the author of human wickedness, no man in his senses will dare to affirm, as none can be ignorant that the same God is the author of the punishments inflicted on the wicked."—*De Jure Regni apud Scotos*; by G. Buchanan.

15. The disingenuousness and plausible sophistry of our opponents pointed out. This part of our duty is most painful, and yet, of all, the most necessary. No man desires to be regarded by his fellow men as an Ishmaelite whose hand is against every man. But "the sounding of my bowels" for poor souls already snared, and the multitudes daily falling irrecoverably into the condemnation of the devil, impel me onward; and by the grace of God, what little of mental energy, or moral qualification, or influence among men, or worldly goods, may be committed to my stewardship, all, all, shall be sacrificed upon the altar of my God, and the public weal of my native land. The glory of God and the eternal salvation of immortal souls are interests not to be trifled with by the ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, though nothing but fagots, and racks, and scaffolds should greet their vision, already dimmed, perhaps, by weeping day and night over the crimes and miseries of the human race. Let the man who has drunk nothing of this spirit cast this book from him, or commit it to the flames. Its perusal can do him no good. It will only aggravate his condemnation. But let the humble soul draw near and contemplate the chambers of imagery, while we draw aside the gilded veil that conceals from common observation the abominations of a proud, worldly, time-serving ministry, and an apostatizing people. "Son of man, seest thou what they do? Go in, and behold the wicked abominations that they do here. Hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? For they say the Lord seeth us not; the Lord hath forsaken the earth. They have filled the land with violence; therefore will I also deal in fury." Ezek. viii. 6, 9, 12, 17, 18. So, in our day, they say the Lord regards not the civil rulers of the land; he

has forsaken the earth. His law is not for kings and mighty men. Let it be obeyed by women, and children, and slaves, so far as may be necessary to secure us in the unmolested gratification of the lusts of the flesh! If our drunkenness, and gluttony, and whoredom, and gambling, and oppressions of the poor and fatherless be secure, all is well. If the professed ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ will teach the people submission to the powers that be, that we are under no obligation to obey God's law, either as individuals or rulers, because we have no power to interfere in religious matters; and that church members must confer upon us political power because the church has nothing to do with politics; if these ministers in their holy horror of a union of church and state will cringe and fawn at our feet, and never open their lips against any iniquitous law which we may enact; if they will say nothing against popery, because we are indebted to papists for our elevation; nothing against slavery, because this is the source of our wealth; we will suffer them to exist in the land. They may *profess* to obey the laws of the Lord Jesus Christ, and may even go the length of enforcing obedience to those laws upon others, so far as it does not interfere with our liberty to sin; but if they require *us* to obey, we will soon teach them better manners.

We may notice three methods of prevalent delusion.

1. Ambiguous language. Take, as a specimen, the language of a newly formed society in London, entitled "The British Anti-state Church Association."

"That in matters of religion man is responsible to God alone; that all legislation by secular governments in affairs of religion is an encroachment upon the rights of man, and an invasion of the prerogatives of God; and that the application by law of the resources of the state to the maintenance of any form or forms of religious worship and instruction, is contrary to reason, hostile to human liberty, and directly opposed to the genius of Christianity.

"That the object of this society be,—the liberation of religion from all governmental or legislative interference."

It will be readily perceived that this is the almost universally prevalent language of our countrymen. But let it be observed,

(1.) While it is in part applicable to the Erastian establishments of Great Britain, and pronounces upon them a just condemnation, it asserts a number of glaring and dangerous false-

hoods. It is not true that in all matters of religion man is responsible to God alone. It is not true that secular governments are prohibited from legislating concerning the affairs of religion. The very reverse of both these propositions is true, as we have clearly seen, pages 45—48.

(2.) There is an artful and designed suppression of any allusion to the all-important difference that exists between the consideration of religion as *internal* and *external* to the church. The propositions are true in regard to the former, but totally false in regard to the latter. It was evidently intended by the authors of these propositions, that they should be taken without limitation; and they well knew that the ignorant mass would so receive them. Hence, every infidel and papist in the United States is boisterous and vehement in the utterance of these propositions, the former with the design of overthrowing all religion, the latter to effect the establishment of Romanism. The propositions are the imbodiment of atheism, such heresy and such false religion as ought to be suppressed by every good government, because it denies the just authority of civil rulers, and must of necessity aim a malignant blow at the corner-stone of the social edifice.

2. Designed deception is another prevalent trick. We have seen this in the London society. It would be well if such dishonesty were confined to politicians, but it exists in the church. It has been common to charge the witnesses of Christ with giving to the magistrate too much power *circa sacra*, and then apply the language which they have used in reference to the *external* affairs of the church, to its *internal* concerns. By this easy process the multitude are led blindfold to destruction. This was the method used to induce, first, the General Assembly in the United States, afterwards the Associate Reformed church, to mutilate the Westminster Confession of Faith; and more recently about one-half of the Reformed Presbyterian church, to depart from the principles of that Confession.\* And this is the method now used for drawing the Associate Presbyterian church into apostacy, with how much success a little time will demonstrate.

\* How easily do men vibrate from one extreme to another. From the work of straining the Confession, as we think, to an undue exaltation of the magistrate's power, they have rushed to the opposite extreme, and are now ready to go we know not what length.



3. Ascribing to the Confession the Erastian principles and persecuting tenets of the seventeenth century, against which its framers and adherents protested and suffered. This is slanderous, as will more fully appear upon an examination of the Confession.

4. Charging the Confession with the taint of popery, intimating that it requires the civil magistrate to inflict civil pains for ecclesiastical offences. But we shall see that the Confession points out the only remedy against popery.

16. We have now endeavoured to place before the reader the great outlines of the magistrate's power *circa sacra*, as we find that power revealed and enforced in the holy Scriptures. We have employed all the human helps within our reach; we are certain that we fully agree, if not in every shade and particular, yet in the great outlines, with the Confession. The subject is acknowledged to be as difficult as it is important. Many more scriptures might be adduced, many more testimonies of eminent men might be given, but we fear the danger of perplexing honest minds. Our desire is to enlighten the humble inquirer after truth, and it is hoped that those who may differ from us will not lose any thing by an attentive perusal of these pages. Those who have leisure and opportunity are referred to "Aaron's Rod Blossoming,"—"Lex Rex," by Rutherford,—"*De jure regni apud Scotos*,"—"The Secession Testimony consistent with Liberty of Conscience," by Rev. James Morrison, published in the Religious Monitor, vol. x. p. 373; vol. xi. pp. 22, 71.\* "Testimony of Original Seceders," recognised as orthodox by a resolution of the Associate Synod. "Answers to Reasons of Protest by Rev. Messrs. Donan, Wilson, and Blair, drawn up by the late Rev. Thomas Allison, and published by the Associate Synod." "Letters on the 23d chapter of the Confession of Faith, by William Cunningham, D. D."

We conclude, then, that the venerable Westminster Confession of Faith contains the clearest, the most scriptural statement of the doctrine of the magistrate's power *circa sacra* that has ever been drawn up by the individual or combined ingenuity of man; that all attempts to make it better have hitherto proved abortive; that all the alterations which have been made are seen to be erroneous; that it was given to the church by the

\* This article was contributed by the late Rev. David Carson, who was elected to the professorship a short time previous to his death.

most signal interposition of Divine Providence since the apostolic days; that it is the best human defence against Romanism which has been given to the church, or the world; that any alteration such as is now proposed effectually opens the door for the encroachments of popery through the power of the civil magistrate; that its views on magistracy are more needed now than at any former period, because our liberties are not now endangered by giving the magistrate too much power *circa sacra*, the only thing objected against the Confession; but they are endangered by a refusal to give him sufficient power for the preservation of liberty; and, finally, that it is the combined spirit of infidelity and popery, under a protestant name, that demands the mutilation of this venerable document, which God gave to his church, which she received with unspeakable joy, teaching its principles in mighty perils, watering them with tears, sanctifying them by fervent prayers, and sealing them with their blood.

The spirit of infidelity is the same, arrives at the same result, produces the same practical fruit, whether it make its way up through the hierarchy of Rome and thunder its anathemas from the Vatican; or, whether creeping from the stews, the theatres, the bar-rooms, the political forums of populous towns, and the ballot-boxes of democracy, diffusing itself through the mighty mass, heaving up the dregs of society from their depths to the surface, as if by the convulsive throes of an earthquake, till its voice is heard like the sound of many waters, *we will not have this man to reign over us*; or, whether it perch itself on the pinnacle of proud reason's temple, with blasphemy inscribed on the left, *we will crush the wretch*, and holding the sword bathed in human blood in the right hand, menacing death to nations; or, whether it come whining a false charity and spurious brotherly love, out from the lips of a time-serving ministry, which has found its way into protestant pulpits,—IT IS THE SAME. Knowing that God has commanded the nations, to "kiss the Son,"—that magistracy is his ordinance to protect and support the church, without which she can never prevail throughout the world, that nations who are not for Christ, must be against him, infidels and papists, and nominal protestants coalesce and join the universal chorus in most loving brotherhood. Satan, having swayed the sword of the Roman beast and his ten horns, the modern kingdoms of Europe, by

means of the false prophet of Mohammedanism and the scarlet coloured woman, the apostate church of Rome, to crush true religion, by perverting magistracy into a tool of Romish persecution, now finding the world beginning to grow weary of these long oppressions, has changed his ground, and is causing his vassals to raise the shout from all lands,—“no church and state,”—“liberate religion from all governmental or legislative interference:” So that Rome may not be hindered by protestant states in the performance of her last act in the bloody drama; and all this, too, at the very moment in which she is wielding the sword of the civil magistrate to cut down every germ of liberty that still lingers upon European soil.

II. Whether the Westminster Confession of Faith harmonize with the Holy Scriptures in reference to the magistrate’s power and duty concerning religion?

Having presented an outline of this doctrine, drawn as is believed directly from the scriptures, it is now proper to consider what the Confession actually teaches, answer the arguments of opponents, and consider the vote of certain ecclesiastical bodies, to alter the Confession, with a view to bring about a visible organic union with each other.

1. What does the Westminster Confession actually teach on the important point before us? That there may be no room for evasion on the part either of its friends or enemies, the whole of its language, which has been objected to, is here transcribed.

*Chapter XX. Sec. 3, 4.*

“They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, do practise any sin, or cherish any lust, do thereby destroy the end of Christian liberty; which is, that, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

“And because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God. And for the publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the EXTERNAL peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate.”



*Chapter XXIII. Sec. 3.*

“The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven: yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order, that unity and peace be preserved in the church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed. For the better effecting whereof, he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.”

*Chapter XXXI. Sec. 1, 2.*

“For the better government, and farther edification of the church, there ought to be such assemblies as are commonly called Synods or Councils.

“As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion; so if magistrates be open enemies to the church, the ministers of Christ, of themselves, by virtue of their office, or they, with other fit persons, upon delegation from their churches, may meet together in such assemblies.”

*Adopting Act.*

“But, lest our intention and meaning be in some particulars misunderstood, it is hereby expressly declared and provided, That the not mentioning in this Confession the several sorts of ecclesiastical officers and assemblies, shall be no prejudice to the truth of Christ in these particulars, to be expressed fully in the Directory of Government. It is farther declared, That the Assembly understandeth some parts of the second article of the thirty-first chapter only of kirks not settled, or constituted in point of government: And that although, in such kirks, a synod of Ministers, and other fit persons, may be called by the Magistrate’s authority and nomination, without any other call, to consult and advise with about matters of religion; and although, likewise, the ministers of Christ, without delegation from their churches, may, of themselves, and by virtue of their office, meet together synodically in such kirks not yet constituted, yet neither of these ought to be done in kirks constituted and settled; it being always free to the Magistrate to advise with synods of ministers and ruling elders, meeting upon delegation from their churches, either ordinarily, or, being indicted by his authority, occasionally, and *pro re nata*: it being also free to assemble together synodically, as well *pro re nata* as at the ordinary times, upon delegation from the churches, by the intrinsical power received from Christ, as often as it is necessary for the good of the Church, so to assemble, in case the Magistrate, to the detriment of the church, withhold or deny his consent; the necessity of occasional assemblies being first [to] remonstrate unto him by humble supplication.”

Let us now consider these principles with candour, and compare them with those advanced in the first part of this publication.

(1.) *Of the twentieth chapter.* 1. The 2d section defines liberty of conscience. “In matters of faith and worship” God is the only Lord of conscience; of course every man must be left to the dictates of his own conscience in regard to the kind of religious belief and worship which God requires in his word. Magistrates may judge nothing, establish nothing in this respect; but this doth not hinder them from giving a legal sanction to

any creed or form of worship, first adopted by any number of their subjects, which violates no precept of the law of nature. Therefore,—2. The third section denies liberty of conscience to “practise any sin, or cherish any lust.” Consequently, the public practice of sin, (as the Reformers every where with united voice confine the magistrate’s power to the public acts of men,) is not permitted under the plea of liberty of conscience. The magistrate, then, is bound to suppress every public transgression of the ten commandments. 3. The fourth section asserts the mutual harmony and dependence of liberty and good government. United they stand, separated, both fall. Men may neither publish nor practise any thing contrary to the law of nature, concerning either “the known principles of Christianity,” that is, principles known by this natural law to be repugnant to Christianity; such as atheism, idolatry, and blasphemy; or, concerning “faith, worship, or conversation;” that is, every thing which men may do concerning ‘faith, worship,’ &c. must be according to the law of nature; if not, the magistrate must restrain them; or concerning “the external power of godliness;” that is, men must observe a sound morality in all their public acts, (Tit. i. 16;) or, in one word, whatsoever may be “DESTRUCTIVE TO THE EXTERNAL PEACE AND ORDER OF THE CHURCH,” the magistrate is bound to suppress. These things may be “proceeded against by the censures of the church, and the power of the civil magistrate.”

These principles are denied by those who desire the alteration of this chapter. They object that this chapter gives to the church and the magistrate a joint or concurrent jurisdiction. So it does, and so it should do, in relation to the public conduct of men, and a denial of this doctrine is abominable atheism. We challenge the world to prove that men are exempt from obedience to the law of nature in any relation, or to prove that the church and state are not both required, each in its appropriate sphere, to enforce obedience to that law. Come on then, ye mutilators of the testimony which your fathers gave to the truth of God’s word, let us hear your strong reasons, or cast aside the axes and hammers which you have already lifted up to break down the carved work of God’s sanctuary.

But that we may not be chargeable with unfairness, we will let our opponents speak for themselves. The Rev. Wm. Wilson, the master spirit of the present apostacy, thus analyzes the 4th

section of the 20th chapter, and condemns every item, except the first:—

“ Verily, none have suffered more from the power here conceded to the Civil Magistrate than Covenanters: none have lifted their testimony more pointedly against it; and none should be more willing to have the last vestige of it expunged from the Confession of the Church of God, from civil constitutions, laws, and magistratical action *circa sacra*, throughout all the nations of the earth. And we have it here affirmed:

“1. That ‘because the powers which God hath ordained, and the liberty which Christ hath purchased, are not intended by God to destroy, but mutually to uphold and preserve one another; they who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power, or the lawful exercise of it, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical, resist the ordinance of God.’ This is most excellent doctrine. (a)

“2. ‘And’ that ‘for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the *light of nature*, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, AND *by the power of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE.*’ (b)

“3. That ‘for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the *known principles of Christianity*, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, AND *by the power of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE.*’ (c)

“4. That ‘for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the *power of godliness*; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, AND *by the power of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE.*’ (d)

“5. ‘Or’ for ‘such *erroneous opinions or practices*, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are *destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church*; they may lawfully be called to account, and proceeded against by the censures of the church, AND *by the power of the CIVIL MAGISTRATE.*” (e) *Missionary Advocate*, pp. 244, 245.

(a.) Why not let it remain, and interpret the remainder of the section in consistency with it? You very properly require us to interpret the Bible in this way, and even your own writings. If you allege that it is irreconcilable, we reply that such an allegation is a calumny upon its authors, upon your own church, and upon almost all the Reformers.

(b.) Well, then, the magistrate must not proceed against men for published opinions and public practices contrary to the law of nature! So says Thomas Paine, Voltaire, &c. &c. So says Governor Steele of New Hampshire, in the year 1845; who has officially “objected to prayer in public schools, or any where else publicly,”—that “prayer on public occasions is solemn mockery,”—and has challenged the “whole world to show the utility of public prayer, or prove it a duty under any circumstances.” This impious man has also discharged a teacher of one of the public schools merely because he would not aban-



don public prayer! Here is that liberty of conscience which grows out of the doctrine of refusing magistrates authority to suppress sins against the law of nature! Covenanters are pleading for this doctrine!—pro pudor! But when men begin a course of apostacy they need not expect to stop this side of atheism; for says Jehovah, “if ye walk contrary to me, I will walk contrary to you.” We ask Mr. Wilson, and his hopeful labourers in the same cause, whether the civil law ought to suppress the “heresy” and “false religion” of Governor Steele or not? The light of nature teaches the duty of public prayer, which heathen nations acknowledge and practise.

(c.) The magistrate shall enjoin and enforce upon his subjects atheism, idolatry, blasphemy, &c.! No, says Mr. W., he shall only permit these things. But the Spirit of God says otherwise, as we have seen; for if the magistrate permit, the majority will soon enforce them. We prefer a better guide than Mr. Wilson.

(d.) So it seems that magistrates may not enforce a sound public morality. They must tolerate public atheism, idolatry, blasphemy, desecration of the Sabbath, parental disobedience, violence, stews, theatres, gambling, men-stealing, perjury, &c.; for the external power of godliness consists in the suppression of these, as well as other sins.

(e.) So then the magistrate may not punish crimes destructive to the existence of the church of God on earth! We will not disgust ourselves or our readers by pursuing farther the sickening details of this apostate Covenanter.

2. *Of the twenty-third chapter.* 1. The first section teaches that all civil government is from God as the supreme, moral governor of the world. 2. The second section authorizes Christians to hold office under a lawful form of government,—requires the magistrate to make the *wholesome* laws of the commonwealth the rule of his administration, not his arbitrary will,—and permits necessary defensive war. 3. The third section prohibits the magistrate from any, the least, interference in the *internal* affairs of the church,—but it requires him to maintain outward peace in the church,—to take such order as may be competent to his office, that the word of God be kept pure and entire, which requires the magistrate to do the things prescribed in the twentieth chapter, and which need not be repeated, to correct such “abuses in worship, discipline,” &c., to

suppress heresy, against the light of nature, as explained above, pp. 45—48,—to correct such abuses in worship, and discipline, as violate the acknowledged principles which the church had adopted, so far as such violations affect the social rights of the parties. But it is inquired, why does not the Confession give this explanation? We answer it does so, in many places, particularly in the twentieth chapter—and in the first clause of this very section, the explanation is made. The substance of this section is simply this,—The magistrate may not assume to prescribe the doctrine, ordinances, government or discipline of the church; but must take order that those whose duty it is to wait upon these things, do them according to *their* judgment of the mind of God, while he is bound to suppress public blasphemies and heresies against the law which he administers; and all public hinderances which may be thrown in the way of church officers, according to *his* judgment of those things, which is also according to the mind of God. This section does not define the law; that had been done, in the nineteenth and twentieth chapters; but, it does define the respective powers of magistracy and the ministry, each acting in their appropriate sphere, according to the mind of God. No other view can be maintained, without a violation of common sense—established rules of criticism, and without accusing the framers of the Confession with contradiction. This has ever been the meaning affixed to it, by its framers and adherents, and by the Associate church. It needs no other explanation. It needs no alteration, especially none such as this generation are prepared to make. Should it be altered by the light of the millennium, the alteration will be different, in spirit and meaning, from the schemes of this present age. The world never has been, nor is it yet, prepared to receive the grand and immutable doctrines of this Confession. But the magistrate must also take order, that those who adopt an ecclesiastical organization shall abide by their own voluntary engagements to each other, so far as temporalities are concerned; or, rather, that they shall settle, administer, and observe in an orderly manner those ordinances which they voluntarily adopted, and solemnly covenanted with God and with each other to maintain. But in order to ascertain what are the ordinances of God, to which he is bound to give protection, and suppress all such outward hostility as might prevent their observance, he must take the decisions of

ecclesiastical bodies themselves; and when there is no such organized body or bodies in his dominions, it is his duty to call the ministers and other suitable persons to organize, and settle those matters; and he may be present, as he always is by his law, so personally, if he judge his presence necessary for the preservation of the public good; he is sometimes present, personally, even in this country, to prevent religious furiosos from beating out each other's brains. If he should refuse to be thus present, the church could not long exist in any country. But he is to see that "whatsoever is transacted" in such synods "be according to the mind of God." Is he to judge whether the creed, or the form of worship which they may adopt, be according to the mind of God? We answer, no. This is denied again and again in the Confession. Why then assert it? But he is to see that it be according to the mind of God, as it applies to his official conduct—that no precept of the law of nature be transgressed,—that his prerogatives be not infringed,—that the rights of others be respected and secured, &c. He is the judge of the requirements of natural law for the preservation of social order. Synods are the judges of natural law for the maintenance of the outward purity and order of the church. See the adopting act, as quoted above, which limits this power of calling synods. If this power had been denied to magistrates by the reformers, the reformation would have proved nearly abortive; the church had never enjoyed the benefit of the Confession, or Presbyterian church government, or even our Shorter Catechism. 4. Section fourth removes the obligation of obedience from the character of the magistrate, and places it upon the righteousness of the laws which he administers, and declares the subjection of all ecclesiastical persons to the magistrate's lawful authority. This is a corner-stone in the temple of liberty, laid by the fidelity of Christ's witnesses in troublous times, which is destined to remain while sun and moon endure.

3. *Of the thirty-first chapter.* This chapter contemplates a disorganized state of affairs both in church and state, as does also that part of the third section of the twenty-third chapter, which authorizes magistrates to call synods. 1. This section asserts merely that there ought to be ecclesiastical assemblies in the church. 2. That, if in such circumstances the magistrate refuse to do his duty, the ministers of Christ, by virtue of their office, when they have no regular organization with each



other, may assemble, organize, and settle the affairs of the church. But neither magistrates nor ministers may do these things in a settled state of affairs. The adopting act solves every difficulty which has been, or can be, raised against the Confession.

But our opponents are resolved to fasten upon the Confession all the Erastian acts of the British parliament at that period, and subsequently. They might as well charge Paul with all the tyranny of Nero, because he appealed to Cæsar for personal protection.

Again, it is said the Westminster Assembly contended for uniformity of religion throughout the three kingdoms, and that the magistrate should enforce this uniformity. That they contended for uniformity in the use of all lawful and scriptural means is true; but that they required the magistrate to enforce this uniformity is such a libel upon history as can delude only the *very* ignorant. They did require the magistrate to enforce conformity to the light of nature upon all his subjects, to abolish idolatry, and consequently to extirpate popery and prelacy, as utterly subversive of liberty. And here they made an important distinction between popery and English prelacy. They required the total extirpation of popery; and the extirpation of prelacy in Scotland, as odious to the nation: they denied the right of the magistrate to enforce prelacy upon the people against their will; as they did the right of the magistrate to force any creed, or form of worship, or ecclesiastical order, upon people against their will, in any circumstances. 3. Concerning the third and fourth sections we are not aware of any controversy. 4. The fifth section prohibits ecclesiastical courts from intermeddling with civil affairs; but they may petition, may advise the magistrate when required, &c. Here we might observe, that the enemies of the Confession, in order to be consistent, ought to strike out that part of this section which prohibits the church from intermeddling with the affairs of the commonwealth, or they should unite with Erastians and prohibit the church from inflicting ecclesiastical censure upon disobedience to parents, violence, adultery, theft, or perjury. Are not these crimes against the state? Does not the church encroach upon the magistrate's power by taking cognizance of these crimes? Who will say yes to this question? and yet the mode of reasoning by which the magistrate is charged with Erastianism,

because he enforces an external obedience to the first table of the law, would require an affirmative answer to be given.

The writer already cited is no less displeased with this section than with the others, although it has escaped the mutilating process of the General Assembly, and of the Associate Reformed Synod, already noticed. He delivers himself on this wise:—

“This section has not been modified by the General Assembly of this country, nor by the Associate Reformed Church. The others have. It needs amendment as well as they. They are all of one family. The two former propositions are the least exceptionable in their doctrine: yet it has been used, by the civil Magistrate, as an argument furnished by her own Confession, against the Church of Scotland, in her recent attempts to throw off the grievous yoke of patronage: which is regarded as a *civil affair*. (a) The doctrine of the third proposition no enlightened Christian now believes. Far different ought to be the attitude of the Church of God, from that of crouching before the throne with her **HUMBLE PETITION**. Even the *pro re nata* community, in contrariety to this, which they still profess to hold with peculiar tenacity, as it is in the Confession, decided, at their meeting in Allegheny city, 1840, that thus to petition the civil power would be inconsistent with the character of the church. (b) The doctrine of the fourth is of a piece with the others, which provide that the magistrate may call synods; and all that has been said in relation to them, in this matter, with equal force applies to it. For to **REQUIRE** is to **DEMAND**, to *ask with authority*. The civil magistrate has no such power over, or with respect to, ecclesiastical courts. It ought therefore to be amended.” (c)—*Missionary Advocate*, p. 279.

(a) Who does not know that Sir James Graham’s argument, here alluded to, is based on the Erastian law of patronage, and not on the language of the Confession? Take away the law of patronage, which the Confession condemns every where, by teaching principles totally incompatible with its existence, and who does not see that there could be no place left for Sir James’ argument?

(b) Who does not know that the *pro re nata* community, as the Reformed Presbyterian church is here sneeringly styled by one of her recreant sons, refuses to recognise the lawfulness of the government of the United States, and that they would not object to petition a lawful government. But those who believe our government valid, in regard to lawful commands, as do all the denominations represented in the convention of Reformed churches, can have no objection to exercise the right of petition. We ardently hope that all the genuine friends of the Confession may soon see eye to eye on this, as on all other points.

(c.) Why may not the civil magistrate, not only request, but even demand of the church, a solution of any case of conscience which may perplex him in regard either to his private or official conduct? Is not the church Christ's witness for this very purpose, among others? Let some reason be given, before we entertain this sweeping condemnation of the Confession, beyond any thing which has yet been ventured, by any denomination of Presbyterians, even the most lax. It seems as though the enemies of the Confession were bent on denying the power of the magistrate, even to protect the true religion, that he may have power given him to support immorality, or any false religion, or heresy, that may be clearly condemned by the law of nature. Such is actually the existing state of things among us; and yet professing Christians, while denying any power to the government in reference to religion, are striving who shall throw their caps the highest, and shout the loudest hosannas to a government exercising all its power to enforce immorality, and protect heresy and false religion, which are a flagrant violation of nature's law!

2. What does the testimony of the Associate church teach on this subject?

"14. We declare our adherence to the whole doctrine contained in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, with commissioners from the church of Scotland, and received by said church. And we, being a branch of that church, and still having an immediate connexion with our brethren in that country, (the ministers and people belonging to the Associate Synod,) do join with them in the testimony they maintain for the doctrine expressed in the said Confession and Catechisms, for the divine right of Presbyterial church government; for the spiritual privileges of the church, particularly this, That it is not bound to acknowledge any other head than Christ, or any other law than his; for the warrantableness and perpetual obligation of the covenant-engagements, which the church of Scotland came under, to abide by the principles of the reformation. And likewise we join with them in adhering to the testimonies of those, who, during former times of apostacy and during the persecutions which have formerly raged in Scotland, witnessed and suffered for the truth; so far as these testimonies had the maintenance of the principles of the reformation, which we profess, for their leading design.

"15. We judge it necessary, however, in professing our adherence to the Westminster Confession, to declare, as our brethren in Scotland have done, our mind concerning the civil magistrate in matters of religion, more particularly than that Confession does.

"We do, therefore, assert, that, as the kingdom of Christ is spiritual, acknowledging no other laws, and no other rulers than he has appointed in it, so the civil magistrate, as such, is no ruler in the Church of Christ; and has no right to interfere in the administration of its government. He is bound to improve every opportunity which his high station and exten-



sive influence may give him, for promoting the faith of Christ, for opposing the enemies of this faith, for supporting and encouraging true godliness, and for discouraging whatever in principle or practice is contrary to it. But to accomplish these ends, it is not warrantable for him to use any kind of violence either towards the life, the property, or the consciences of men: He ought not to punish any as heretics or schismatics; nor ought he to grant any privileges to those whom he judges professors of the true religion, which may hurt others in their natural rights; his whole duty, as a magistrate, respects men, not as Christians, but as members of civil society. The appointed means for promoting the kingdom of Christ are all of a spiritual nature. *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty*, not through the force of human laws, compelling men to do that which they dislike, but, *through God*, by his almighty power and grace, making the obstinate and rebellious yield a cheerful submission to it.

“16. If any article of our Confession of Faith seems to give any other power to the civil magistrate, in matters of religion, than what we have now declared to be competent to him, we are to be considered as receiving it only in so far as it agrees with other articles of the same Confession, in which the spiritual nature of the church is asserted, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven denied to belong to the civil magistrate; and in so far as it agrees with this declaration of our principles.

“17. We maintain, with the Westminster Assembly, that God alone is the Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men; and declare that no man possesses a right to compel those who are under his civil authority, to worship God contrary to the dictates of their own conscience. This freedom from compulsion, whether it be called privilege, liberty, or right, cannot be denied to men, under any pretence whatsoever, unless we adopt the principle, that men should serve God, not according to their own conscience, but according to the will or conscience of those who are over them, in power or authority. Yet this right cannot be pleaded in behalf of principles or practices destructive to civil society; therefore the civil magistrate does not go beyond the limits prescribed to him, when he lays those under restraint who teach that it is their duty to destroy the lives of such as they judge heretics; that they are not obliged to fulfil promises made to persons, whom they consider in that light; and that they may lawfully break their oaths, if they obtain a dispensation for this purpose from the pope of Rome. The safety of society renders it necessary to guard against persons of this description, not because they are of a false religion, but because they are enemies to the rights of mankind, and would use their liberty to destroy that of other people. Thus the magistrate, in discharging his duty to civil society, is often the instrument, in the hand of God, for protecting his church from the fury of persecuting enemies.

“18. The civil magistrate not only may, but ought to restrain those vices which are destructive to civil society, and for which none can plead as what they are bound in conscience to practise, seeing the light of nature testifies against them: he ought to be *a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them who do well*. Thus the proper exercise of his office is, in its consequence, beneficial to the church.

“19. It is the duty of Christians, plainly and frequently enjoined upon them in the word of God, and acknowledged in the Confession of all the reformed churches, to submit to the government of that country in which Providence has ordered their lot. The civil magistrate, being an infidel, or of what we judge a false religion, does not, as our Confession most justly declares, free us from an obligation to acknowledge his authority, and to obey him in all lawful commands. Civil societies may, and

ought to preserve their rights and liberties; and to them it belongs to set up those forms of government, and those magistrates, whom they judge most proper. It is a sad truth, that in doing so, nations frequently neglect to acknowledge God, and give things injurious to religion a place in their civil constitutions. Against these evils, Christians ought to testify, as the Lord gives them opportunity. But they ought, by no means, on account of such blemishes in any government established by the consent of a nation, to refuse submission to it in all lawful commands, especially while it grants the same protection to them as to the other members of the community.

“20. As we acknowledge that it was not only lawful, but highly expedient, for the church of Scotland to enter into the most solemn engagements, as she did in the National Covenant, and in the Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations, to abide by the doctrine taught, and the order established, in that church, to study the preservation of the reformed religion, the removing of those corruptions and disorders which hindered its progress, and the uniting of its friends in the same profession of the faith, and to study that purity of life and conversation which becometh the gospel, so we acknowledge these engagements to be still binding on us. Not that we judge every thing in the manner of covenanting, used by the church of Scotland in former times, a proper example for us to follow, or that we may judge the form of words they used still binding as an oath upon us. As to what may be called the civil part of these covenants, it is what we neither have, nor ever had any thing to do with.—Nothing of that kind has a place in the bond which our brethren in Scotland use in covenanting; they judged it improper to mix civil and religious matters in such covenants, and we are of the same mind with them.

“21. But, that we may not be chargeable with deceiving, either the world, or one another, by a general profession of adherence to these engagements of our ancestors, not explained:—

“(1.) We do more particularly declare, that, as our ancestors engaged to hold fast and defend the doctrine received by them, and by the other churches of the reformation, against those who were at that time its most remarkable enemies in Britain, namely, the Papists and others, whose zeal for Episcopal power, and for superstitious ceremonies, together with their persecuting spirit, made them be justly considered as enemies to the reformation; so the same engagements lie on us to hold fast and defend the same truth, against all who do now, or afterward may oppose it, in that part of the world where we live.

“(2.) We declare, that as our ancestors engaged to study the preservation, the purity, and the increase of the church of Christ in Britain; so the same engagements lie on us to study the preservation, the purity, and the increase of the church of Christ in the United States of North America, or wherever Providence may order our lot.

“(3.) We declare, that as our ancestors engaged to assist each other in maintaining the cause of Christ against its adversaries; to study personal reformation; and to perform the duties incumbent on them, as members of civil society, towards superiors, inferiors, or equals; so the same engagements lie on us to walk, in all these respects, worthy the vocation wherewith we are called.

“(4.) Finally, we declare, that it is our duty, relying on the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to engage jointly in a public solemn covenant, as our ancestors did, to endeavour a faithful performance of these and all other duties which the word of God requires; especially of those duties which men are most apt to neglect, or, through fear of reproach, and hurt to their worldly interests, to be deterred from.

“22. Our brethren in Scotland justly reckoned it an absurdity to swear

these covenants as framed in a former period of the church, and full of references to persons and circumstances which do not now exist. They renewed them in a bond suited to the time and situation in which they were placed. In doing so, they followed the example of the church of Scotland in times of its greatest purity. The national covenant had been several times renewed, but always in a bond suited to the circumstances of the church, and the mercies and judgments passing over it, at the particular time when such engagements were entered into; but the matter and design being still the same in the chief articles of all these bonds, each of them was very properly called a renewing of the first solemn covenant of the Reformed Church of Scotland.

“23. The engagements which are binding on a church are binding on all the members of it. The circumstance of their being gathered out of different nations can make no difference. Whatever was the duty of Christians in Britain, is the duty of Christians all over the world, whenever the Lord calls them to it, and gives them an opportunity to perform it. No church can make that a duty, by engaging in solemn covenant to do it, which was not a duty before. We must not add to what the Lord has commanded, nor is the uttermost of what we can do in serving him, more than is required of us. Thus our covenant engagements, as already stated, being nothing more than what the Lord requires of every one, and nothing more than what all who confess the name of Jesus in sincerity and truth, do materially acknowledge to be a duty; so every one, of whatsoever nation he be, who joins himself to that particular church which owns them as binding upon it, comes under the same engagements with his brethren, though he may not have an opportunity of declaring this in public covenanting.”

1. Section fourteenth declares our adherence to the **WHOLE DOCTRINE** of the Confession, as received by the adopting act, quoted above—the exclusive headship of Christ over his church—the warrantableness and perpetual obligation of covenant engagements,—and adherence to the testimonies of those who had witnessed and suffered for the truth, so far as set forth in the Confession.

2. Section fifteenth declares our principles concerning the power of the civil magistrate more particularly than the Confession does, and contains a true and lucid explanation of the Confession; it requires magistrates to *promote* the faith of Christ, and *oppose* its enemies; while it denies their right to use force to establish religion; but here is no testimony against the Confession, as is now asserted. Indeed, the Associate church has been a most contemptible body of men, if she has for more than one hundred years been binding her ministers and people to “the whole doctrine” of a Confession, against which she has at the same time been testifying.

3. Section sixteenth guards against a perverted and unfair exposition of the Confession, by forcing upon it a contradictory construction. “If any article,” taken apart “*seems,*” &c. it is to



be qualified, by other expressions used in immediate connexion, or elsewhere.

4. Section seventeenth declares true liberty of conscience,—and requires the suppression of Romanism, not indeed formally, because it is a false religion, but because it is such a false religion as disregards and invades the rights of others. So with the Confession, it requires the suppression of such “heresy” and “false religion” as violate the law of nature. And it is necessary that the terms “false religion” and “heresy” should be retained in the Confession, and not be surrendered by a pusillanimous spirit which succumbs to the infidel tenets of the age. A recent fact in our history, we mean the Kensington riots, proves the wisdom and sagacity of the framers of the Confession; and if the framers of the testimony intended to give up the terms “heresy,” and “false religion,” as indefensible, which we do not admit; if they really intended to “testify against the Confession,” the sooner that testimony is committed to the flames the better. Suppose the emissaries of Queen Victoria, or the French King, or of any other European monarch, had formed clubs among us, to advance any foreign power, merely political, and suppose the members of these clubs should secretly arm themselves, and shoot down unoffending citizens, assembled under the laws, to take lawful steps for repelling such foreign aggression, does any sane man believe these foreigners would have escaped the just punishment of their impious rebellion and cold-blooded murder, with a fine of ONE DOLLAR? Would not the country have roused like one man from Maine to Georgia? Would not condign punishment have fallen upon the miscreants almost with the celerity of lightning? But this has been done with impunity, in the name and for the advantage of the Roman Pontiff, both a civil and religious despot, more dangerous to the rights of man than all the other monarchies of Europe! Why is this? It can be ascribed to two, and only two causes:—1. The superstitious awe which immediately seizes the minds of the ignorant multitude when any thing bearing the name of religion is involved. 2. The infidel sentiment that magistrates have no power to suppress such “heresy” or “false religion,” as may be incompatible with public liberty. It is necessary, then, that these terms should be retained, that our liberties be not undermined, by such heresy and false religion, which it is supposed the magistrate may not suppress.

5. The eighteenth section fully asserts the doctrine of the Confession. It asserts that the magistrate ought to restrain those vices which are destructive to civil society and the good of the church, though conscience should be pleaded for them.

6. The nineteenth section asserts the duty of obedience to the government of our country, in lawful commands, while we are bound to withhold all voluntary, active obedience to such as are unlawful, maintaining a faithful testimony against them.

7. The twentieth section asserts the lawfulness of the Solemn League and Covenant of the three nations, and its engagements, so far as ecclesiastical, to be still binding on us, while it rejects the civil part of that covenant.

8. The twenty-first section asserts,—1. That we are as much bound to resist papists and other enemies of the Reformation as were those who swore the covenants. 2. That we owe the same duties to our country, that they did to theirs. 3. And to each other. 4. That we are bound to engage jointly as our ancestors did in a public solemn renewal of these covenants, which was actually done by us about fifteen years since.

9. The twenty-second section asserts that our covenants should be renewed in a bond suited to the times.

10. The twenty-third section declares the engagements of a church to be binding on all its members, without regard to change of residence, national, or other artificial distinctions of society, and that our covenanting is simply our solemn oath and engagement, voluntarily assumed, to do those things, and those only, which the law of God always made duties.

Such being the solemn covenant engagements of the Associate Synod of North America, all her members are bound by a covenant higher than any man's covenant, which may not be annulled, to hold as void, condemn and testify against, a resolution of said Synod, passed on the 29th of May, 1844, in the following words:—

“Resolved, that Synod express the following judgment on the plan of union presented to them by the late Convention of Reformed churches. As some of the churches represented insist on the alteration of the Westminster Confession, in the twentieth, twenty-third, and thirty-first chapters, relating to the power of the civil magistrate respecting matters of religion as indispensable to their concurrence in the proposed union; this Synod will not make an alteration of said Confession, in

the above-mentioned particular, an insuperable obstacle to union, if other difficulties can be removed:"—

For the following reasons:—

1. This resolution contemplates all of our professed principles, respecting the duty of magistrates, as things capable of being altered, laid aside, or abolished at any time, by the will of a majority of Synod.

2. Synod actually agrees to lay these principles aside, upon a certain contingency, without proposing, or even naming, any substitute.

3. It proceeds on the supposition, that the language in our Confession has no definite meaning, that the doctrine which it teaches may be different from the obvious import of its words, that it is only received by us for "substance of doctrine," such as may be altered or modified at pleasure without the violation of our engagements; such as filled the Synod of Ulster, in Ireland, with Arianism, the General Assembly, in this country, with Arminian and Hopkinsian errors, and the Associate Reformed churches with latitudinarian principles and schemes, till she now *demand*s an alteration of that Confession, as a *sine qua non* of ministerial and Christian communion with other churches of the reformation; and such as has induced a great portion of the Reformed Presbyterian church to abandon the attainments of reforming ancestors.

4. This resolution is unconstitutional, and therefore null from the beginning. "For preventing innovations, sudden alterations, by passing of acts which may threaten the peace of the church, it is enacted that before any assembly make acts which are to be new standing rules and constitutions to the church, the same be first passed as overtures to be transmitted to the several presbyteries, and their consent reported to the next assembly, who may pass the same into acts, if the more general opinion of the church agree thereto."

"The same authority and method that was necessary unto the framing of an ecclesiastic constitution, must be interposed and used at its repealing."\*

Those only, who acknowledge the sovereign will of a majority in Synod, instead of our established constitution, to be the rule of administration, can recognise the validity of this act.

\* Stuart's Collections, &c. Book iii., Title 3, Sections 7, 8.



5. This resolution is clearly seen to be an incipient step in apostacy, because it was passed in compliance with the demand of a party who have been carrying on a course of defection for a period of more than fifty years. In 1782, a party from the Reformed Presbyterian, and another from our own church, formed a union, and adopted a constitution, styling themselves the Associate Reformed church. Our own church condemned this new constitution, as "one of the most dubious professions of the faith we remember to have seen made by any church."\* Yet with this judicial deed unrepealed, our Synod yield to the demand of these dubious professors, and render themselves equally dubious. And it may here be noticed as an historical fact, that in every instance where the language of the Confession has been modified, it has introduced error: in every instance where a rigid adherence to the Confession has not been required, it has been followed with error. We refer to the Synod of Ulster, to the United Secession church of Scotland, to the General Assembly in the United States, and to the Associate Reformed church. Most of those who altered the Confession soon landed in the General Assembly. These facts are undeniable.

6. This resolution is a severe condemnation of the fathers of the Associate synod in this country, for their faithful contendings for a covenanted Reformation. The parties which formed the Associate Reformed synod by a violation of their former engagements, were mutually condemned by both the mother churches, from which they had made defection, and by the faithful fathers of our own church; and yet, with a hardihood known and practised only by apostatizing spirits, they warned the Associate congregation of Oxford against our ministers for the crime of adhering to their solemn religious engagements.† Thus denying them to be lawful ministers of the gospel! Yet, our Synod are now willing to surrender their principles, at the nod of those, who have long since pronounced a judicial condemnation against them!

7. This resolution is not only inconsistent, but totally irreconcilable with the testimony of the Associate church,‡ and with her judicial condemnation of the United Secession in Scotland, reason third,|| which is the refusal of that church to adopt the Westminster Confession.

\* Narrative to the Associate Testimony, Chap. x.

† *Ib.* Chap. 9. ‡ Narrative, Chapters 9, 10.

|| *Ib.* Chap. 8, note.

It may be said that Synod should not be charged with inconsistency, because none of her present members were members at the time the defection of those who mutilated the Confession and constituted the Associate Reformed church was solemnly condemned. But it is a principle with us, and with all civilized nations, that the lawful deeds of our predecessors, both in church and state, are binding on us. Consequently, the inconsistency is glaring and undeniable. But we intend to bring this charge nearer home, and fasten it upon individuals now members of Synod. A regard to the truth, to the people of God now betrayed, and misled by their rulers, and the hope of helping some out of the snare set for their feet, render it necessary that they should enjoy the benefit of undeniable historical facts.

In 1826 and '27 the Synod condemned the Union which brought the United Secession Church of Scotland into existence, for the following, among other reasons:—

The United Secession Church “declined adopting the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms, as a part of the covenanted uniformity of the church of Christ, in the kingdoms of Britain and Ireland. Nor is the Confession received according to the act of the General Assembly receiving it in 1647, which had been the usual manner of receiving those standards in the Secession church.”\*

In 1838, the Presbytery of Cambridge deposed the Rev. Duncan Stalker for the following *items* of offence, and their deed was sustained by the Synod.

“1. Denying the right constitution of Presbytery, and their authority as a Court of Christ.

“2. Slandering the Presbytery, and charging them positively with unholy motives.

“3. Adopting a divisive course.

“4. Blessing God that he had been a minister in the United Secession church, which he could not do with any character or disposition of a Christian, unless he considered his union with them lawful and just, and that United church as in the path of duty, was a declaration of disagreement with the Associate church in their maintenance of the reformation and secession principles. Now *here* we will not wait to argue respecting the evil of that union, or the propriety of the Associate church's testimony against it; we cannot wait with the latitudinarian at present; the fact of the Associate church's testimony against that union, of Mr. Stalker's admission into this church, and joining with us in our profession as a fellow-member and a fellow-labourer, is enough for us at present. The common sense of mankind may suffice to establish the points, that every voluntary association, as particular churches are, have a right to main-

\* Narrative to our Testimony, p. 54.

tain, and act on their own principles, and to require of every member a professed agreement with them and a conformity of practice, or to exclude them from their fellowship—and that every member be undissembling in his profession and practice. This was what was required of Mr. Stalker, and surely his expression respecting the United Secession required retraction, confession, and some renewed evidence of unity of sentiment and purpose with his brethren: for how could he bless God for having been a minister in the United Secession Church, if with his brethren he accounted that union a sinful defection! How could he bless God for joining in any sin? He must therefore have approved of that step, and could not testify sincerely and practically with his brethren against that union, nor their principles.”

“The secondary cause of deposition was his course under Presbytery’s dealing with him. It must be remembered that the primary offence is not always the principal—that the course of conduct respecting it may be the most heinous offence, and may imperiously require the highest censure.”\*

On this item of ecclesiastical history the following observations are offered:—

(1.) After all exciting causes and all the petty and local interests of that period have passed away, my judgment and conscience approve the action of Presbytery and Synod in this case, however much I may regret some other transactions more or less remotely connected with it, which originated with some of the agents partly from inexperience and incorrect information received from interested persons, and perhaps, in some cases, from worse causes. The rules of Presbyterian church government, the maintenance of justice, and the preservation of the church from confusion, every evil work, and in the end apostasy, rendered this procedure of our church courts absolutely necessary.

(2.) Many of the individuals who now vote to mutilate our venerable Confession then voted for the condemnation of the United Secession church, because she had declined to maintain the Confession, and for the condemnation of Mr. Stalker, because he justified that church! What are we to infer from this? Are these men ignorant of their principles? Who will believe this? Are differences in the church arising from personal considerations more important than doctrinal differences? Are doctrines to be measured by the interested will of a majority as well as personal offences? It is acknowledged that Mr. Stalker’s justification of the Union in Scotland was the effect of alienation produced by other causes, that the whole of the pro-

\* Proceedings of the Associate Presbytery of Cambridge in relation to the Rev. D. Stalker, and Rev. A. Bullions, p. 66.



ceedings connected with that case originated in a "contention for personal standing."\*

Now it is evident the vote of synod, to alter conditionally the Confession, could have had no relation to personal standing in the church, though it is quite possible that that imaginary wizard, popular applause, or that baseless fabric of waking dreams, a great ecclesiastical body under one visible organization, may have flitted across the mental vision of some. It is possible that some forgot at the moment, that the spouse of Christ is not in any one public body; that the unity of the church is invisible, that her members are the children of light, and never unite with others for the suppression of the light, but for holding it forth. We bring no charges against any man; we impeach no man's motives or integrity. But we do condemn public measures which we believe destructive to the well-being of the church.

Is it so, that we can never procure the condemnation of error and immorality, nor the vindication of truth in any one case where personal standing in the church is not the main-spring of action? We do not believe that it is so. Such policy may suit the modern notions of some, regarding the duties of a gospel ministry, but it found no favour with reforming ancestors. The ministry of those branches of the presbyterian church which have surrendered or begun to surrender the Westminster Confession, have become an army of time-serving hirelings; and as far as regards any good they are doing, either towards the overthrow of infidelity or Romanism, or the emancipation of the world from the thralldom of Satan, they might better be found on the exchange, or in our workshops, or at the plough. Whenever we hear men plead compliance with sin in order to obtain a wider field of usefulness, we heartily wish they would go publicly to Rome, and no longer do their master's work in the bosom of God's church. We desire to see the lines drawn, and, with the help of God, so far as I am concerned, they shall be drawn. We have had enough of paltry personal interests, and contemptible ambition in the church of God, enough of sinful compliance for the sake of a piece of bread. We want men that can trust in the providence of God, and the magnanimity of his people, which never yet failed a

\* Reply to the Memorial of A. Whyte and others by Synod's committee, 1842, p. 5.

faithful minister; men who will throw themselves and their all, for time and eternity, into the breach, do the work assigned them, and, when necessary, cast off the trammels of corrupt majorities, and refuse, at whatever hazard, to go with a multitude to do evil. The church has had enough of that policy which makes men offenders for a word, if they happen to be in the minority who are contending against the reigning sins of the day, which can see no sin in the bullying conduct, errors, and slanders of those who happen to go with the multitude, and which makes the will of the majority, instead of constitutional law, the rule of administration. Constitutional law is the shield both of majorities and minorities, and any departure from it is tyranny and apostacy.

It is the policy here condemned that has, from the beginning, rested like an incubus upon the energies of the church, that leads so many in our day to homologate corrupt civil powers, and in some instances to become the patrons and guides of the state in its infidelity and oppression. But we are wandering.

If it was right to condemn the Associate Reformed Synod for mutilating the Confession; if it was right to condemn the United Secession church of Scotland for declining to adopt and maintain the Confession; if it was right to condemn Mr. Stalker for justifying the latter church; is it now right for those who pronounced these sentences of condemnation to engage themselves in this very work of mutilation? It is useless to say that Mr. Stalker was condemned on other charges. The one here noticed, was made not the least prominent of four items of charge.

8. This resolution is a breach of the most solemn covenant engagement that can be assumed by men. If there be any meaning in language, we, as a church, are bound to the **WHOLE DOCTRINE** of the Westminster Confession.\* This resolution is a breach of covenant, both with God and his people. It is vain to plead the example of the church of Scotland, in laying aside her old formulas, that she might receive the Westminster Confession. For in that case the church surrendered nothing scriptural, but went forward in attainments. In this case there is giving up precious truth. And every person at all acquainted with the circumstances of the church of Scotland at the adoption of her present Confession, and our

\* See the bond of the covenant, and formula of questions put to ministers and elders.

present circumstances, must know the difference. She went forward, we are going backward. It is also vain to deny that it has been from the beginning the doctrine of the church of Scotland, that magistrates are bound to suppress public atheism, idolatry, blasphemy, and sabbath-breaking. This doctrine is also in the Confession; it is in the Larger Catechism; it is in the writings of all her approved ministers who have touched upon the subject. It is vain to deny that this has also ever been the doctrine of the Associate church; it is in the writings of all her faithful ministers who have defended the Confession; it is in the first Testimony; it is in the Testimony of Original Seceders; it is in our Testimony by its adoption of the Confession; it is in the catechisms of Fisher and Brown, standard writings, almost universally used among us. It is equally vain to deny the obligation of our covenant, which requires us to use all lawful means, in every relation, not for the extirpation of papists, but popery, and, what is more than all things else in the universe, *this doctrine is in the word of God*. This has been proved in the first part of this pamphlet. If we are not bound as a nation by our own voluntary act to obey God's law, it is time we as Christians should bind ourselves. Is it said the proposed basis of union recognises the duty of covenanting, and the descending obligation of covenants? It is replied, that this only makes the matter worse. First, abolish the peculiar, or distinctive doctrinal principles sworn to in the covenant, and then recognise its obligation! Kill a man, and declare him to be alive! This is like *slavery* in our civil constitution under the loudest pretence of liberty.

9. The passing of this resolution was an act of tyranny. The constitution of the church gives the Synod no such power, and a usurpation of power is always tyranny. And those who rely upon a majority of *five-sixths*, or five to one in such cases, are prepared to adopt a human creed. If indeed the Synod can alter articles of faith at will, and the people are bound to believe, then we can only tell our annual creed after each annual meeting of Synod. We believe as the church believes, and because the church believes! But I prefer higher authority for my faith and practice; so will every intelligent Christian who has any knowledge of the manner in which votes are sometimes carried in church courts.



10. This resolution is suicidal in its operation: it amounts to a public declaration to the world that we ministers of the Associate church have for one hundred years been requiring of the people a solemn adherence to the whole doctrine of a Confession, against which we have all this time been testifying! It is in vain that some say the proposed alterations will not surrender any doctrine! Let those who know nothing better believe this, as many will do! We know that the vast majority of those who demand an alteration of the Confession are honest. They do not believe it, therefore they demand its alteration. We know that *some* in our own church do not believe it, therefore they vote for its alteration, while others yield through weariness of the almost hopeless contest. It is then folly to say the doctrine will be the same. Men do not ask for, nor will they consent to, any alteration of a religious creed which they believe.

11. This resolution is an unjust contempt for the testimony of the Lord's witnesses who suffered in Britain for nearly one hundred years, many of them to banishment, some of them even unto death for the precious truth imbodyed in our Confession, on the very points now called in question.

12. Finally: this resolution is an ungrateful forgetfulness of the Lord's wonderful appearances for the deliverance of his church in ages past. "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known unto their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments; and might not be as their fathers a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God. The children of Ephraim, being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; and forgat his works, and his wonders that he had showed them."

III. Whether the constitution of the United States possess the moral qualities which the scriptures require in civil government?

The general answer to this general question must be in the negative. But notwithstanding its moral delinquencies it ought to be obeyed in lawful commands. The difference between the valid being of government, and its moral character; between *subjection*, and voluntary, active obedience, to unlawful commands; between individual resistance to magistrates and revolution; and also between obedience to lawful commands and swearing the oath of allegiance; have been clearly pointed out in the first part of this pamphlet. The simple question now before us, is this: Is the constitution of the United States such that Christians may take the oath of allegiance and be innocent? We are constrained to answer, No. In support of this answer three principles will be assumed as already proved, and as requiring no farther discussion:—1. That in taking the oath we swear to give an active support to every provision of the constitution. Turn to page 21. 2. That we swear to support the constitution in the sense understood by the administrator of the oath, or we are guilty of mental reservation, which is perjury. 3. That the constitution does not mean what any individual may suppose, but it means precisely what the Supreme Court, and the uniform action of the nation under it, say it means. Turn to page 45, and the quotation from Chillingworth, p. 57—59.

With these principles in view, let us proceed to a consideration of those provisions which are judged immoral. They relate to two points: the magistrate's power and duty in reference to religion, and slavery.

1. In reference to the magistrate's power, we have the following provisions:—

“We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this constitution for the United States of North America.—*Preamble.*”

“Art. VI. Clause 3. But no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.”

This is all we have in reference to religion, as the constitution was first adopted in 1787; but in the amendments we find the following words:—

“Art. 1. Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

Of these provisions we observe,—

(1.) There is no acknowledgment of the being of God, or of his law, or of his good providence in breaking the yoke of foreign domination. "We do ordain and establish," &c. We set up for ourselves, not only independent of earth, but of heaven also. It is said that this was a mere oversight; that the people of that period did regard the being, law, and providence of God. This is, at least, partly true. And if the Constitution had contained nothing worse, this apology would now be generally acquiesced in as good. Yet the omission of all reference to a Supreme Being was ominous of the evil that ensued.

(2.) "No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States." The term "religious," must, in the nature of things, be here taken in its most unlimited sense. There is no restraining or qualifying word or clause. The term religion includes "a belief in the being and perfections of God,—in the revelation of his will to man,—in man's obligation to obey his commands,—in a state of rewards and punishments,—and in man's accountability to God."—*Webster's Dictionary*.

By this provision, pagans, Mahommedans, Deists, atheists, and any who may publicly deny man's accountability to God, are eligible to all the offices in the United States, and all the subordinate offices in the several states; for no state may enact laws repugnant to the Constitution of the United States. If this be not atheism, what is? Had the Constitution made a denial of the being and providence of God, or the universal obligation of external obedience to his law resting upon all nations, a disqualification, and declared that the belief in any particular religious creed or mode of worship shall never be a test, it would have done much to secure the public liberty. As the matter now stands, the people have no security.

(3.) "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Now if we recur to the definition of the term religion as already given, it will readily be perceived, that congress, consequently none of the states, can enact any law for the suppression of public atheism, idolatry, blasphemy, or desecration of the Sabbath. Many of the wholesome laws of some of the states against these crimes, are clearly contrary to the spirit of this instrument, and are constitutional only because the Constitu-



tion has prohibited the national government from taking any action whatever in relation to these crimes. Had the Constitution prohibited public practices of any kind against the ten commandments, and also the establishment of any distinctive religion or form of worship, as a national religion, there would have been some good ground for confidence in our institutions. But now we have none. The government of our country is as insecure as a house founded upon the sand.

We suggest a query for the study of Christians, especially Presbyterians:—How can you, in the church, with the uplifted hand to the Most High, solemnly swear that in every relation of life you will, “without respect of persons, endeavour the extirpation of popery,” and then in the state, with equal solemnity, swear that you will support a Constitution which gives to popery entire, perfect protection? This may be possible to some. Be this as it may, it has now become a historical fact, that popery so far sways the political destiny of this country, as to render the administration of public affairs almost wholly subservient to the rapid strides of her advancing power. Her minions decide our elections. Her priesthood have surveyed the field with an argus eye. They understand the protection given them by the Constitution, and the atheistical democracy of one half the population, which are ready for any religion or no religion, any government or no government, any morality or no morality, any security or no security for the rights of men, which will serve as a stepping-stone to political power. They perceive the growing depravity of all classes; the indifference, or defection and cowardice of a vast majority of protestants, and their almost unanimous acquiescence in the unholy political toleration of popish imposture, blasphemy, superstition, and idolatry. The vote of our Synod, in May last, respecting the Confession, was transmitted to Rome as a joyful surrender of the last testimony in the United States, in favour of persecuting protestantism, where also is recorded the name, and field of labour, and prospects, of every ordained minister belonging to all the bodies represented in the convention of Reformed churches.

2. In reference to slavery, we have the following provisions in the Constitution:—

“ Art. 1. Sect. 2. Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned

among the several states, which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, *three-fifths of all other persons.*

“Art. 1, Sect. 8. Congress shall have power \* \* \* to suppress insurrections.

“Art. 1. Sec. 9. The migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing may think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by congress prior to the year 1808, but a tax or duty may be imposed on such importation, not exceeding ten dollars for each person.

“Art. 4, Sect. 2. No person, held to service or labour in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour, but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due.

“Art. 4, Sect. 4. The United States shall guaranty to every state in this Union a republican form of government; and shall protect each of them against invasion; and, on application of the legislature, or of the executive, (when the legislature cannot be convened) *against domestic violence.*

These extracts comprise all that is said in the Constitution in reference to slavery.

Article I., section 2, bases representation and taxation upon the enumeration of three-fifths of all persons who are neither *free*, nor Indians taxed; of course, three-fifths of all slaves are enumerated. These three-fifths are actually represented by twenty members on the floor of congress, and as many votes for president. Hence, though the name *slave* is not here, the thing is.

Article I., section 9, secured the importation of slaves for a period of twenty-one years.

Article I., section 8, gives congress power to suppress any insurrection; of course an insurrection of slaves struggling for liberty. This section also requires the active co-operation of all the states.

Article IV., section 2, compels every state in the union to use its political power for the return of runaway slaves. This constitutes slavery a national institution. It is to be regretted that ministers of the gospel should help on the delusion of the people, by teaching them that the constitution does not enforce slavery. It does more; it compels the free states to enforce it. No one who has read the Madison Papers can honestly deny this. We insert a few of many extracts that might be given:

“TUESDAY, July 10, 1787.

“Mr. King remarked that the four eastern states, having 800,000 souls, having one-third fewer representatives than the four southern states, having not more than 700,000 souls, rating the blacks as five for three. The eastern people will advert to these circumstances, and be dissatisfied. He believed them to be very desirous of uniting with their southern brethren, but did not think it prudent to rely so far on that disposition, as to subject them to any gross inequality. He was fully convinced that the question concerning a difference of interests did not lie where it had hitherto been discussed between the great and small states; but between the southern and eastern, *p.* 1057.

“WEDNESDAY, July 11, 1787.

“Mr. Butler and General Pinckney insisted that blacks be included in the rule of representation *equally* with the whites; and for that purpose moved that the words ‘three-fifths’ be struck out.

“Mr. Gerry thought that three-fifths of them, was, to say the least, the full proportion that could be admitted.

“SATURDAY, July 14, 1787.

“Mr. Madison (of Virginia.) It seemed now pretty well understood, that the real difference of interests lay, not between the large and small, but between the northern and southern states. The institution of slavery, and its consequences, formed the line of discrimination, *p.* 1104.

“MONDAY, July 23, 1787.

“General Pinckney reminded the convention, that if the committee should fail to insert some security to the southern states against an emancipation of slaves, and taxes on exports, he should be bound by duty to his state to vote against their report, *p.* 1187.

“THURSDAY, September 13, 1787.

“Article 1, Section 2. On motion of Mr. Randolph, the word “servitude” was struck out, and “service” unanimously inserted, the former being thought to express the condition of slaves, and the latter the obligations of free persons.

“Mr. Dickinson and Mr. Wilson moved to strike out, ‘and direct taxes,’ from Article 1, Section 2, as improperly placed in a clause relating merely to the constitution of the house of Representatives.

“Mr. Gouverneur Morris. The insertion here was in consequence of what had passed on this point; in order to exclude the appearance of counting the negroes in the *representation*. The including of them may now be referred to the object of direct taxes, and incidentally only to that of representation.

“SATURDAY, September 15, 1787.

“Article 4, Section 2, (the third paragraph,) the term “legally” was struck out; and the words, “under the laws thereof,” inserted after the word “state,” in compliance with the wish of some who thought the term *legal* equivocal, and favouring the idea that slavery was legal in a moral view, *p.* 1589.

“Mr. Gerry stated the objections which determined him to withhold his name from the constitution: 1-2-3-4-5-6, that three-fifths of the blacks are to be represented, as if they were freemen, *p.* 1595.

Mr. Madison, in the Virginia convention which adopted the Constitution, uses these words:—

“Another clause secures us that property which we now possess. At present, if any slave elopes to any of those states where slaves are free, he becomes emancipated by their laws. For the laws of the states are uncharitable to one another in this respect. But in this constitution, “no



person held to service, or labour, in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour; but shall be delivered upon claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due." This clause was expressly inserted to enable owners of slaves to reclaim them. This is a better security than any that now exists. No power is given to the general government to interpose with respect to the property in slaves now held by the states. The taxation of this state being equal only to its representation, such a tax cannot be laid as he supposes. They cannot prevent the importation of slaves for twenty years; but after that period, they can.

Governor Randolph said,—

"I believe, whatever we may think here, that there was not a member of the Virginia delegation who had the smallest suspicion of the abolition of slavery. Go to their meaning. Point out the clause where this formidable power of emancipation is inserted. But another clause of the constitution proves the absurdity of the supposition. The words of the clause are, "No person held to service or labour in one state, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged from such service or labour; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labour may be due." Every one knows that slaves are held to service and labour. And when authority is given to owners of slaves to vindicate their property, can it be supposed they can be deprived of it. If a citizen of this state in consequence of this clause, can take his runaway slave in Maryland, can it be seriously thought, that after taking him and bringing him home, he could be made free!—*Convention of South Carolina.*

"Mr. Iredell. Now, sir, observe that the eastern states, who long ago have abolished slavery, did not approve of the expression *slaves*; they therefore used another that answered the same purpose.

"In some of the northern states, they have emancipated all their slaves. If any of our slaves, said he, go there and remain there a certain time, they would, by the present laws, be entitled to their freedom, so that their masters could not get them again. This would be extremely prejudicial to the inhabitants of the southern states, and to prevent it, this clause is inserted in the constitution. Though the word *slave* be not mentioned, this is the meaning of it. The northern delegates, owing to their particular scruples on the subject of slavery, did not choose the word *slave* to be mentioned.

"We have obtained a right to recover our slaves, in whatever part of America they may take refuge, which is a right we had not before.

"We have slavery, already, amongst us. The constitution found it among us; it recognised it and gave it solemn guarantees. To the full extent of these guarantees we are all bound, in honour, in justice, and by the constitution. All the stipulations contained in the constitution, *in favour of the slave-holding states* which are already in the union, ought to be fulfilled, and so far as depends on me, shall be fulfilled, in the fulness of their spirit, and to the exactness of their letter."—*Webster.*

But it is unnecessary to continue these extracts. That slavery is a national sin no reasonable man can doubt who is not already resolved to withstand the force of truth for some unworthy purpose.

Article IV., section 4, binds the national government to

suppress "domestic violence in any of the states," and, of course, to put down any slave insurrection that may occur. Slavery, then, is a national sin. The non-slaveholding states are as really involved as the slave states. Their guilt is greater. They are mere panders to other men's lusts: of the two, they occupy the more contemptible position. We omit any reference to the horrid cruelties of slavery. They only harrow the feelings to no purpose.

We may here insert another query for Christians:—Can you, as Christians, receive the affecting memorials of our Lord's death under the solemnity of an oath, to "break every yoke,"—to "do to others as you would be done by,"—to "love your neighbour as yourselves," and then, as citizens, swear in the name of the Most High God, that you will support a Constitution, or form of civil government, which consigns the soul of your neighbour to perpetual ignorance of God, and the only Saviour of sinners, and his body to remediless bondage? Or, in other words, can you swear, in the name of the Most High, both to obey and disobey His law, and be innocent? Some will ask why all this sympathy for slaves, who are really in a better condition than many northern free-men? The overflowings of our sympathy go out towards the deplorable condition of those professing Christians who are involved, as we believe, many of them ignorantly, in the guilt of both perjury and unlawful swearing, and are living under its hardening influence. But if any should fail to be convinced, let them not persecute, nor deprive those who are convinced, of their Christian liberty.

It is time, however, to draw this pamphlet to a close. It was intended, at first, simply to publish a discourse which occupied one hour in the delivery; but the questions discussed seemed so important, and the materials so abundant, that we have nearly perpetrated the crime of making a book, a thing not at first intended.

It is proper to notice a few of the more prevalent objections to our views, which have not been particularly answered. It is objected,—

1. That civil government is designed for the regulation of men's rights to such natural things as refer exclusively to their temporal interests, and therefore it is absurd to connect any religious test with civil government. Why should religious

tests be applied to a philosophical society, a literary or a medical college, a rail-road company, or a banking corporation? We answer,—1. Because man is, and must of necessity be, as much a *religious* as he is a *social* being; and his religious and social rights are as indissoluble as cause and effect. There is not now, nor has there ever been a community on earth, however ignorant, barbarous, degraded, or brutish, without a religion. 2. Because the religion of men may be repugnant to the being of God, the natural law of the universe, and the temporal and eternal welfare of mankind. Men worship not only insects and reptiles, but demons and devils, and think they do God service by cutting the throats of all who question the sacredness of their idolatrous worship. 3. God requires magistrates who have the revealed law of nature, to obey it, and enforce an external obedience to it, upon the pain of temporal ruin to their country, and eternal ruin to themselves. 4. Therefore a religious test is necessary. 5. Who gave to men the right to agree to an immoral law, as a condition of association in the capacity of a rail-road company, any more than in an association for civil government? Besides, magistracy is the ordinance of God, appointed to enforce his law upon its subjects, for the regulation of all their external public conduct. But neither a rail-road company, private corporation, nor any other voluntary association of men, have any such commission. In both cases, obedience is due to the law, while magistracy must enforce it; other associations may not, their power being defined by their charter, or articles of association, and limited to their own members. No distinctive religious *creed* is, or can, lawfully, be a test, but conformity to the law of eternal righteousness, which is also the law of true religion, must be a test, or men must reap the fruit of rebellion against the Most High God.

2. Declining to vote leaves the government altogether in the hands of bad men; and if one of the nominees should possess a better moral character than all the others, I am bound to vote for him. We reply,—1. That so long as a constitution which controls the administration of a government is immoral, that administration must be immoral; so, by voting, you do not remove the immorality, but become a partaker of other men's sins. 2. You do not, cannot, in such circumstances, vote to amend that which is wrong, for (1.) You acknowledge



the wrong in the very act of voting. (2.) You engage to permit the continuance of the wrong, if the majority still persist, and thus you make that majority the supreme rule of duty. (3.) You enter into a confederacy of robbers, knowing them to be such. (4.) You acknowledge that men may swear deceitfully. (5.) That the end justifies the means. Suppose you elect your good man, the first step of his official career is to swear an unlawful oath. The truth is, *the right to make or amend laws is limited by the divine law*. It is no presumption, with God's word before us, to challenge the universe of creatures against this proposition. No human law which infringes upon divine law, ever had, or ever can have, validity. Therefore the motto of a new party among us,—“NO UNION WITH SLAVEHOLDERS,”—is right. An incident occurred in the Associate Synod in 1841, having a direct bearing on the point before us, which ought to be seriously pondered by all her people. A member of the church in western Pennsylvania, being a constable, received from a justice, and served, a warrant for the arrest of a runaway slave. For this act the session suspended him; he appealed, and the presbytery reversed the decision of session. The moderator of session appealed to Synod, and his appeal was almost unanimously sustained. By this decision no officer of government can obey his oath of allegiance to the Constitution, and enjoy the privileges of the Associate Church, and yet the church allows her members to take the oath of allegiance! Here we have a query,—Did this constable sin by obeying his oath of office? The synod have said that he did! If so, we assert that the greater sin was his oath, unless it should be assumed that synod intended to condemn the keeping of lawful oaths! Who will say this? I voted with the majority, because I believe any voluntary obligation to an immoral law to be sin, and the keeping of any such obligation to be adding sin to sin. Those who voted to condemn this constable, and still exercise the elective franchise, are guilty of helping other men to do the very thing which this constable had done, and for which synod suspended him! “Thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?” We hope such inconsistency may alarm the consciences of some, and lead them to renounce

their abolition principles or the Constitution. "No man can serve two masters." No man can serve Christ and Belial.

3. It will naturally be objected, that we condemn all Christians who take the oath of allegiance to the constitution of the United States, &c., and that we require the church to make a refusal of the oath a term of communion. We condemn the taking of the oath, but not all the individuals who have taken it. We think the church is bound to make a refusal of the oath a term of communion; but, so long as she may refuse to take this step, persons who think with me must tolerate their brethren, who think differently, or secede. But this secession must not take place till all lawful means have been used to effect a reformation; nor even then, unless we are fully persuaded that it would be rebellion against the Lord Jesus Christ to continue in a communion where the oath is permitted. But is the condemnation of this oath consistent with the forbearance of those who take it? In present circumstances, we think this distinction is clearly necessary, at least in the case of many persons; for the following reasons:—

(1.) The deception practised upon the people by the framers of the Constitution has been so successfully managed, that the people of the non-slaveholding states had very little cause to suspect the gross immorality of the Constitution. A stranger ignorant of the existence of slavery in the United States might read the Constitution without suspecting its existence. For while the terms "slave," "slavery," "slaveholder" are craftily suppressed, these things are in it in all their odious deformity, and in full force.

(2.) There was really considerable doubt, how far the non-slaveholding states might be implicated in the evil, till the decision of the supreme court, I think in 1841, placed that question beyond controversy. The yoke is now known to rest alike and with the most perfect equality on all the states. Slavery in the United States is now known to be a national institution.

(3.) The church through her ministers must first teach the people the law before she can ask them to obey it. It is preposterous to attempt the enforcement of an unknown law.

4. In regard to our Confession, it is objected,—1. That we are bound to the *doctrines*, and not the *words* of the Confession.

How do we know what the Confession or any other book teaches, if not from its words? Even when the spirit, or tendency of a book may be somewhat different, or more or less extensive than the literal import of its words, we are compelled to learn these things from its words, or not at all. This objection is a mere trick to mislead the unwary. 2. The language of the Confession needs explanation, but we desire our public principles should be expressed in language that needs no explanation. Then you desire what never was nor ever will be. No truth of divine revelation can be expressed in language which cannot be perverted by designing and wicked men. Even the perfect word of God is not exempt from such perversions. Hence the necessity of a Confession to rescue the scriptures from the false glosses and perversions of enemies. And if the scriptures are not exempt from abuse, how can the Confession be? It is enough that the servant be as his master. Hence the necessity of the explanation which the Testimony gives of the Confession, to rescue it from perversion. Hence also the necessity of occasional testimonies against the abuse of both the Confession and the standing testimony. Hence also the necessity of every sermon that is preached. 3. We have testified against the Confession. This we have already seen is a slander against the Secession church. Not the least indication of such a thing ever appeared in our church till the meeting of Synod, May, 1844. But it must be confessed that the vote then passed looks like a disguised, half-way, insidious testimony against the Confession, sent out as a feeler of the public pulse, in order to ascertain whether ministers might venture to testify against the Confession without the fear of losing their congregations. It must also be confessed, that all who yield to that vote will testify against the Confession; and all who are willing to pin their faith upon the sleeves of their ministers, will no doubt submit to that vote, or any other, that Synod may choose to pass. To this there should be no consent. 4. You attach undue importance to the Confession; it is a human work, and therefore imperfect: and if imperfect, it should be altered from time to time, to suit circumstances, or for the more explicit statement or defence of the truth. As this is the only valid argument that can be legitimately urged, for an alteration of the Confession, it demands particular attention. Let the following things be observed:—(1.) The



supreme law of the church is the written word of God. It is only the combined influence of the word and Spirit that guide men to eternal life. As men have obeyed or disobeyed the word, so must they receive their sentence in the final judgment. (2.) The Confession is a standard of visible communion or privilege in any organized ecclesiastical body which may adhere to it. It is the test, not of union to Christ, but of union to a particular branch of the visible church. (3.) The Confession is also a public testimony to the doctrines of divine revelation as understood and witnessed for in the body adopting it, against all opposing errors. It differs from the scriptures in this essential particular: the scriptures are Christ's testimony to us; the Confession is our testimony to His truth. (4.) The Confession ought to embrace, and our Confession does embrace those truths, and those only, which are known, and of universal application. Therefore, no change of circumstances can require its alteration. (5.) If we expunge any truth which it contains, we are found both covenant-breakers and false witnesses for Christ; and this is the very thing now proposed to be done. It was the design of the framers of the Confession, and is still the design of its friends and adherents, that it should be a permanent bulwark of the reformation, and that the church should issue a testimony from time to time, as there might be a call in Providence, vindicating its doctrines against opposing errors. Therefore if it is to be slain and buried, the writer can be no party to its death or funeral obsequies. It shall never be recorded, either in heaven or on earth, that this Confession perished by the assistance of his hand. He fears that such an act might exclude him from the company of that exalted cloud of witnesses around the throne in glory, who, while on earth, sealed the very doctrine, now sought to be blotted out, with their blood. He does not say that such an act would exclude others: with others he has no concern in an affair of this kind.

5. As Psalm ii. 72, Isaiah xlix. 23, and other similar passages, have been pressed into the service of those who plead for the establishment, by the state, of some distinctive creed or mode of worship, to the exclusion of all others; so, in replying to their arguments, their opponents have run into the opposite extreme, and affixed a meaning to these scriptures which they

will by no means bear. We have taken the middle ground between these contending parties, because we believe them both to be wrong. Those who would strip magistrates of all power concerning religion run into atheism, while those who contend for an exclusive state creed take away the rights of conscience.

In regard to Psalm ii., it is admitted,—by one of no mean reputation, who having diverged from one of the above named extremes to the other, is now said, but we hope untruly, to be in favour of altering the Confession, because it is erroneously supposed to teach the doctrine of establishments,—that the second psalm contains “a glowing description of the folly of resisting Heaven’s decree, and the necessary obligation of ‘the powers that be,’ cheerfully to acquiesce in the wise arrangements of him who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Therefore, he exhorts the great dignitaries of the earth, to embrace his truth, and submit to his jurisdiction. ‘Kiss the Son,’ &c.”

In regard to the seventy-second psalm, it is also admitted, that, “The universal subjection of all the potentates on earth, from the highest to the lowest, to Jesus the Messiah, as King of kings, is in this psalm, categorically predicted.” Respecting these concessions from one of the most distinguished of our opponents, it is observed,—1. That they at least, recognise our Lord’s mediatorial dominion over the nations. 2. That our Lord administers to the nations the law by which they are bound, which we have already seen is the ten commandments. 3. The only way of escape from these conclusions, is, by assuming that magistrates are here spoken of in their *private*, not their *official* relation. But such an assumption cannot stand; because, 1. The scriptures do not call private persons kings of the earth. 2. Whatever law of social intercourse a man is bound to obey publicly in his *private* capacity, he is equally bound to enforce in his *official* station.

In reference to Isaiah xlix. 23, the same writer thus expresses himself:—

“But there is another rendering of this passage, viz: “Kings shall be thy foster-sons, and their queens thy foster-daughters.” And, if this is an admissible version, it would appear, that instead of being nursing fathers to the church, they would be nursling children in the church. And it must be confessed that this rendering gives a meaning very consistent with what follows: “They shall bow down to thee with their faces toward the ground.” It is not a common thing for nurses to bow

down with their faces to the ground, i. e., most humbly to acknowledge their inferiority to their nurslings. We can conceive nothing so well calculated to meet the literal fulfilment of this prophecy, on the principle of its usual exposition, as the spectacle of kings and emperors kissing the great toe of the Roman pontiff."

This specimen of reasoning deserves some notice. Suppose the translation here given should be more accurate than that of our common version, which, however, is not admitted, we may inquire,—1. Did it never occur to the learned author, that magistrates, as individuals, may submit to the church, and even acknowledge their inferiority to the gospel ministry in relation to her *internal* interests, while, as magistrates, they claim and exercise dominion over the church in regard to her external and temporal interests, enforcing upon all her members an external conformity to the law of nature?—2. What kind of a blessing to the church was "the spectacle of kings kissing the toe of the Roman pontiff?" Surely that must be a bad cause which requires for its support the perversion of "the exceeding great and precious promises" of the gospel to predictions of Antichrist's reign!

The same author assumes that "the queen's authority cannot be *official* in the life-time of her husband," therefore "the *nursing* cannot be *public, official, or executive.*" Indeed! Is not the authority of the present reigning queen of England, who has a husband, *official*? Or, suppose the queen, like Elizabeth, should have no husband, will not her authority be *official*?

We are not aware of any other objections worthy of notice, which we have not attempted to answer in the progress of the discussion; with what success, is not for us to judge. But this we know, that the "dominion of Christ shall extend from sea to sea;" that "all kings shall fall down before him;" and of course execute his law; that "all nations shall serve him," that he "shall deliver the poor, and the needy, and redeem their soul from deceit and violence."

#### CONCLUSION.

It may be readily inferred from the preceding pages, that we regard the following positions as established:—

1. That forms of government and magistrates, become such, in two ways; either by the preceptive will, or providential permission of God. That it is only to the former kind that we can swear the oath of allegiance, or yield a voluntary, active



support: while to the latter we must as individuals and Christians be in subjection, for peace's sake, and yield obedience to their lawful commands, for conscience's sake, testifying against such as are unlawful.

2. That the ten commandments are the supreme law of civil government, both tables being equally binding upon nations, as such.

3. That there can be no controversy respecting the *meaning* of the ten commandments as applicable to the external conduct of men. On this point the world is agreed, the law having its foundation in the nature of man; on this point, therefore, magistrates are safe judges. The controversy here, respects not the meaning of the law, but the refusal of men to yield obedience to its requirements.

4. That there is room for controversy respecting faith and worship; because the covenant of grace is supernatural to man; and the meaning of its provisions can only be rightly understood and obeyed by a work of the same Holy Spirit who has revealed it. Here the magistrate is totally and for ever excluded. This is holy ground.

5. That, for the reasons advanced in the third and fourth propositions, the covenant of grace, though supernatural, in regard to its origin, operation, and final end, yet, all its *provisions*, or arrangements, being in conformity to the natural law, the enforcement of that law upon the outward conduct of men, by the magistrate, can never violate any liberty of conscience which God has given. For God, who is Lord of the conscience, has required its subjection to this law, in every relation. (See the extract from Buchanan, pp. 71—73.)

6. For the same reasons advanced in the third and fourth propositions, by an external enforcement of the moral law, the magistrate must necessarily become a nursing-father to the church; and by refusing to enforce that law he must as necessarily, become a tyrant, an oppressor, and eventually a persecutor of the church.

7. That the church can never evangelize the world till magistrates enforce the law of nature, for the following reasons:—  
1. Magistrates are Christ's ministers, not for the propagation of religion, but for the punishment of public immoralities, and for "restraining and conquering" the outward enemies of the

church; both of which things they do, by simply enforcing the law that they administer upon all their subjects. Those who deny this reason should begin anew the study of the Old Testament scriptures. 2. The moral character of the great mass of the people will, and must, resemble that of the civil government. No moral influence can effectually resist the combined moral and physical powers of the government over the minds of the great body of the people. And though it is not by might, nor by power, but by His Spirit, that Christ builds up his church, yet His Spirit turns the hearts of nations whithersoever he will, using wicked rulers as instruments for the execution of his purposes; and raising up just rulers who shall govern by administering his law. Thus the joint instrumentality of the ministry and magistracy was, at the reformation, and will be again employed in subduing the nations to King Messiah's reign.

8. The doctrine of the seventh proposition does not contradict, but confirms the truth, that Christ has supplied his church with all the means necessary for the conquest of the world. It only asserts, that she refuses, at present, to employ all those means.

9. The doctrine of the seventh proposition is not popery. It has the following strongly marked points of difference:—  
1. It assumes revelation to be the supreme law. 2. That the magistrate is the judge of the law in its application to externals. 3. It denies the power of magistrates to punish ecclesiastical offences; or to propagate true religion by the sword. Other differences might be noticed, but these are sufficient to show that I am not a papist, as has been slanderously asserted.

10. That popery will never fall till extirpated by the power of the civil magistrate. The sword of the civil magistrate gave it being, continuance, and the power of doing mischief; by the same sword must it perish: "The ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled." Rev. xvii. 16, 17.

11. That liberty of conscience consists, of freedom from human authority, in reference to our religious belief, and mode of worship; but the law sets bounds to this liberty, requiring

that the *public creed* and *outward form* of our religion be in conformity to the ten commandments.

12. That the prevalent notion of liberty of conscience, means liberty to sin; that conscience has no lord; that liberty of conscience may not be pleaded in favour of true religion, but may be exercised in support of infidelity, popery, oppression, and every species of transgression against the first table of the divine law.

13. That the Constitution of the United States is essentially immoral in respect to the power and duty of the magistrate in reference to religion, and in its pro-slavery provisions.

14. That the *enforcement* of slavery in the state, and its toleration in the church, are crimes, such as provoke the Most High to destroy nations.

15. That the oath of allegiance to the constitution,—holding office,—the exercise of the elective franchise under it, is each alike sinful; and amounts to the renunciation of God's authority under the solemnity of an oath.

16. That every argument urged in favour of the oath of allegiance, proceeds,—1. On the assumption that men are permitted to engage in the work of moral evil, in order to remove moral evil;—Or 2. On the assumption that an oath or covenant, unlawful in the matter of it, is binding, and ought to be observed. Consequently, that Herod did right in killing John.

17. That so long as the present constitution of the United States continues to be supported, the following effects must continue to increase, namely:—1. Infidelity. 2. Public crimes of every description. 3. Slavery. 4. Popery, notwithstanding the efforts of the church, Native American, or any other party. We do not condemn this party, nor any other: Our meaning is, that this party can never obtain its object under the Constitution, as it now stands. Nor can any party accomplish any permanent good which recognises the Constitution, and declines to make a distinction between the professors of the Christian religion and idolaters.

18. That the Westminster Confession of Faith harmonizes with the scriptures in regard to the magistrate's power and duty in reference to religion.

19. That any departure from it by Presbyterians is apostacy.



20. That the Associate Synod have formally and explicitly covenanted to abide by the whole doctrine of this Confession.

21. That the vote of last meeting is invalid, and ought to exert no influence over her members.

22. That the act of the Associate Synod excluding slaveholders from her communion is utterly repugnant with the permission of her members to take the oath of allegiance to the constitution. A regard to consistency, to say nothing of morality, or integrity, requires her to repeal that act, or condemn the oath of allegiance to the constitution.

23. That a vast majority of Protestant ministers with professions of abhorrence of church and state, are fawning sycophants of the state, exalting the immoral "powers that be," even beyond their Erastian brethren in Great Britain. At the late numerous convention, which assembled in Baltimore, to promote the better observance of the Christian Sabbath, a resolution, expressed in mild and dignified terms, condemning the transaction of public business on that holy day, by the national legislature, was virtually rejected! In the same cringing disposition to civil power, slavery is tolerated in the visible church of God!

24. The present efforts of associations, ecclesiastical and others, to disseminate true religion, preserve liberty, &c., must all prove abortive, for two reasons: 1. They have surrendered one of the institutions of Christ's appointment for the accomplishment of these purposes, the magistratical enforcement of law. 2. They are involved in a sinful compliance with the immoralities of the "powers that be." There is an Achan in the camp, and the armies of Israel flee before their enemies.

25. The church of Christ, in this land, is rapidly going into captivity to her enemies. The Babylonians are already on the march. The few who, like Jeremiah, see the approaching evil, are as little heeded as was that prophet.

Finally, it may be said for the encouragement of "those men who are sighing and crying" for these abominations, that the time of their duration is fixed in the decree of the Most High God. In the mean time, let such remember, 1. That the church is safe, though but few, comparatively, of this generation should be saved. The Lord God omnipotent reigns, let his people rejoice. He has already made a Pharaoh, a Nebuchadnezzar,

a Cyrus, and a Henry, instruments for the deliverance of his church. He can still use the present Antichristian powers of the earth for the same purpose. 2. That God is in the midst of Zion; nothing can so far remove her as to inflict any real or permanent injury upon such as have their robes made white in the blood of the Lamb. 3. That in a little time the kingdoms of the world must acknowledge the dominion of our Lord; then shall magistrates obey and enforce his law; then shall kings be nursing-fathers; superstition, and idolatry, and oppression shall be banished from the abodes of men; the shout of victory shall ascend from all lands, in loud hosannas to the King of kings and Lord of lords; "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good-will to men." For, "I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like fine wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousands thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him; the judgment was set, and the books were opened. And, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers shall serve and obey him."

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## ERRATA.

Page 3, line fifteen from bottom, for "person" read *persons*.  
Page 44, line twenty-two from top, for "objection" read *objections*.

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