

the one, now on the side of the other;—neutral! but not indifferent, for they are in this world essential to both, the very prize indeed for which the contest between them is carried on. For what is it that is contended for between the kingdom of good and the kingdom of evil, but whether man shall be made happy, and God served, and honoured by the things which he hath made, or whether they shall be turned to man's misery and destruction in the service of sin? Every thing, that God hath made in this world, is pressed into the service of sin, whose wages is death. Man serves it with body and with soul, and with all the powers of both, with all the members of the one, with all the faculties, feelings and affections of the other, with head and heart, and hand; and, as all things in this world were put under man, he carries them with him into whatsoever service he enters. It is the design of the Gospel to turn man from the service of sin to the service of God, and of all that God gave him in the beginning to leave nothing behind. With head, and with heart, and with hand, must he serve God, even as with these he served sin, and in coming over to this new service must bring all his possessions with him, even his silver and his gold, which are indeed but the representatives of the supply of his material wants.

It is, therefore, not more certain that there are gold and silver in the world, and that they have power in the world and exercise an influence over its affairs,—that they exercise any influence at all, than that they exercise it in the cause of the kingdom of righteousness, as well as in that of unrighteousness,—for good as well as for evil. Every man who has power over money uses it on the one side or the other, and it is not more certain that the kingdom of God is helped on by prayer than that it is helped on by money, though it cannot be purchased with money.

I hope no one will suppose that what I have written above was merely intended to establish the very obvious fact, that money is in some way or other absolutely necessary to carry on the affairs of the Church. What I wished to call attention to was the vast extent and power of its influence on these affairs, especially, I wished to call attention to this fact in connexion with the support of the Christian Ministry. The history of all ages of the Church, as well as the nature of the case, points out this as the quarter, in which the effects of any wisdom or folly in the management of Church funds will be most beneficially or most banefully manifested. With many, it is of the nature of an established axiom, a first principle to be laid down and not departed from, in any arrangement for the support of the Ministry, that great wealth always has been, and always must be, the ruin of the Clergy. To this, I might answer, that I doubt whether they ever

had too much wealth, if they had made a good use of it, or whether it were more hurtful to them, or put to a worse use by them, than by other classes of men; or whether riches be more dangerous to the Clergy than to the ordinary professors of religion. The Scriptures speak of them as dangerous and deceitful to all men.

But this were a very idle answer, and little to the purpose, for I do not wish to deny that the uncontrolled management of large funds being in the hands of the Clergy has been the source of great corruption in them, and much mischief to the Church at large. In this matter History shows that, according to the view brought forward in my last letter, the causes of this evil are to be found as much in the Body of the Church at large as in the Clergy. The supineness and unwillingness of the Laity then, as now, to undergo the trouble of collecting the necessary funds, and distributing them to every one as he severally had need, caused this office, which the Apostles rejected, to be first thrust upon good Ministers, who bore it as a burden till in the end it was eagerly grasped at as an instrument for securing wealth and power. The modern cure for this ancient evil in the Church will, I fear, prove little better than the disease. The remedy now proposed is, that the Laity, giving themselves as little trouble as possible about the temporal affairs of the Church, shall only take good care not to spoil the Clergy through too much wealth, by keeping it to themselves. But I would just suggest the question, May not the Ministry be injured by too little as well as by too much? May it not perish of inanition as well as of surfeiting? May it not be starved into feebleness, as well as pampered into indolence? When the People raise the cry "Beware of giving the Clergy riches," may not the Clergy justly raise the counter cry "Beware of appointing for us poverty?" The prayer of Agar—"Give me neither poverty nor riches," attests that there is danger in the one condition as well as in the other. Yet now it is the almost universal cry "Keep Ministers poor, keep them as dependent as possible upon the good will of their people for the supply of their necessities; the whole hope of their usefulness hangs upon this." Such sayings we meet with every where, in books, in pamphlets, in tracts, in newspapers, in speeches from the platform, in private conversations. Every where we hear that in the early ages under persecuting governors, when Ministers were poor and persecuted, they were zealous and pious, faithful, self-denying, and laborious—that all kinds of evils overflowed the Church, when peace and wealth came in with Constantine and the favour of the Empire. Be this as it may, it is a grand mistake to suppose that a condition of poverty and hardship imposed upon the

Ministry, by the covetousness and carelessness of those who profess to be Christians, can produce the same effects as the poverty and hardships imposed by the open enemies of Christians with the avowed design of getting Christianity extinguished. That there were men who assumed the office of the Ministry with wicked hearts, and evil designs in the times of persecution,—indeed from the very beginning, we know to be true. That there were none who undertook it as a labour of love for the glory of God and the good of man,—that there were none or even that they were fewer in numbers under Constantine, and the ages that followed, than in preceding ages, is much more easily asserted than proved. I mean to make no assertion or denial on the one side or the other. In the times of persecution it is easy to understand how the good Ministers stood forward and were seen of all men, while the bad slunk back and withdrew out of sight. Nor is it to me difficult to understand how, when riches and honours were showered from high places upon certain offices of the Christian Ministry, bad men rushed eagerly forward to obtain them with every outward show of zeal, or learning, or eloquence, or piety, or whatever in short was thought available to secure (due) worldly dignity, and wealth, and power,—while under the same circumstances good men cheerfully withdrew to the more humble offices and less public fields of usefulness, having their record not on earth but in heaven, seeking the honour, which cometh not from men, but from God. It may be difficult for us to discern such men in the history of such times, or to trace the print of their footsteps noiselessly going about doing good. Their memorial may have perished from among men, but I cannot easily persuade myself that the path of Christianity through all time has not been, as the path of the just, like the morning light shining more and more unto the perfect day. Let us bear in mind that the light of the present day was transmitted to us through all the confusion of these dark times.—That it must have been through the agency of good men, and especially of good Ministers, that it was kept living and handed down from age to age, and that the blaze of light, which broke upon the world in the days of Luther, was but the concentration into one united flame of many lights everywhere throughout the Church glimmering feebly and apart. It is just as likely as not, that those ages of the Church, which we are in the habit of condemning as having done nothing but corrupt, and betray, and destroy Christianity, may rise up in the day of judgement and condemn us. Is superstition a more deadly enemy to religion than covetousness? If superstition is more of the Devil than covetousness, it is only because the Devil is a spirit, and