

ters free from flower to flower, from sweet to sweet. We have no such extravagant, such ærial expectations. If the reader will pardon the comparison, we should say, that our condition more resembles some of the crustaceous tribes. The lobster we know has a thick and a heavy shell, and one, which, as he lives and thrives, at length begins to fetter and confine, and would at last squeeze him to death. He is therefore occasionally compelled to reform matters, and, though at risk of life, to throw off his case and give room to his limbs. But wise instinct is too strong with him to let him think of remaining in this free and shellless condition: he feels that this is not the life for him, and retreats to some shelter, nor is at ease till another shell incases him, larger, thicker, and therefore heavier than the former; but which is nevertheless necessary to give strength to his moving powers, and security to his existence. A similar necessity seems entailed on the social condition of man. While man is man, universal experience demonstrates that it is essential to the safety and even to the existence of society, that it be encompassed by a great frame work of institutions, which might be called burdensome, were it not necessary for its well being and security. We cannot therefore join with those, who, because they think—and perhaps truly think—they perceive great defects in existing national churches, would therefore have all national churches abolished, or, because some evils can be traced to the union of church and state, proclaim that these ought never to be united. We think that such sweeping assertions bear on the face of them a presumption of being erroneous. They are contrary to the general principle guiding us to social amelioration—reform, not destruction. They are false as to the particular case. As religion is a necessary element in the existence of civilized man, it must make a necessary part of the frame of society in every civilized community. Religious institutions and establishments will grow out of, and along with, every civilized community. They may grow symmetrically with the great stem, a part of it, giving and receiving strength and harmony as they rise and spread together, or standing out from it, unshapely and cumbersome, exposed to be severed by some passing blast, to the ruin of trunk and offshoot. As it can never be a matter of indifference to the community how these things are arranged, we maintain that when government or people have the power of modelling the religious frame-work, so as to suit it to existing circumstances, they mightily err if they neglect the opportunity. They have indeed only to do with the frame work, but, it is exceedingly important that that frame work

be well fitted, and aptly joined, and capable of sustaining the fabric. It is surely the interest of every community to provide religious instruction for all its members. It is its interest that the ministers of religion have a competent education, and that they be so paid and maintained that they have neither the temptations of wealth or poverty to struggle against, but, without flattering the passions of either high or low, be prepared to devote their whole energies to the sacred cause in which they engage.

Shortly to speak, we are ourselves voluntaries; but, we are systematic voluntaries. So far from being opposed to what is called the voluntary system, we believe, that, as religion must have an existence in every civilized community, so that existence must be voluntary. We believe that every civilized community must in somehow *will* to sustain an establishment for the maintenance of religion—that this is a necessity of its existence, as a civilized society—but we assert that this *will* ought to be exerted in a systematic form; and that they who affirm that the whole community, though *willing* to support religion, ought not as a community to give it this support, would impose on us a principle false in theory, inefficient, injurious, and dangerous in practice.

We are aware that, as a reply to facts and reasonings on this subject, it is usual to refer to the example of the United States. We have no objection. In the history of that people we have an example of systematic voluntarism, and of unsystematic—of a community *willing* as a body to establish religion, and carrying the will into action, and of other communities, not so uniting for this purpose. The fathers of New England crossed the wide Atlantic for these western wilds, for the express purpose of there establishing their religion, and they succeeded in their object. As their abodes spread along each stream, and throughout each valley, religion was settled with them. It was a distinctive feature of their polity, that provision should be made for its support, and care taken that every member of the community should be trained up in the knowledge and practice of its precepts. In the other sections of the territory now forming the union, no such purpose was carried into effect. They trusted to unsystematic voluntarism. Here then the experiment has been tried—let us look at the results.

Whoever knows new England, knows that its population are a church provided and church-going people. Universal testimony tells us that in point of moral character they excel. It is apparent, that in other respects, their social condition must surpass their neighbours, for, under their