

is established by a whole community or state, it is generally in the power of the state, to throw the main burden of the support of religion upon the rent of land. This we conceive, in an economical view, is a very decided advantage. The reasonings of political economists, or, if these are not held convincing, the results of universal experience, demonstrate, that as society advances, a part of the annual revenue of the society is absorbed in the payment of the claims of the landholder. In the course of events, and the progress of time, certain individuals become proprietors of the land forming the territory of the state, and draw from those who till it a variable but large revenue. Now these landholders are not in ordinary called on to perform any service to the community. They may do so; there are many examples of illustrious benefits conferred on their country by individuals of this class. But they are not required to do so. "*Fruges consumere nati*;" their condition is to live and enjoy. It is then, we think, a clear advantage, when a portion of this fund is appropriated to support the expenses of the religion of the people—when it is bestowed on those who labour, not on those who sit idle. Thus it is well known that in Scotland the parochial clergy are supported from this fund. Their whole incomes arise from a small fixed amount yearly paid by the landlord—an amount we believe which is never begrudged them. We shall say that this is equal to a fortieth part of the yearly rent of that part of the kingdom. Were this taken from the clergy, and given to the landlord, it is clear that the community instead of gaining, would lose by the transfer. It would lose that portion of the revenue of the industrious classes, which the support of the clergy would necessarily absorb. In so far then, as the operation of what is termed the voluntary principle, takes from the wages of the labourer, and the profits of the capitalist, what a church supported by the state draws from the rent of land, it would seem to be disadvantageous to the community. But the truth is, that every church, as it establishes itself in a society, is desirous of placing whatever funds it may possess on land, because this species of property is felt to be the most secure of all. In this respect therefore, it is likely that such a church as we have been considering would assimilate itself to a church established by the state; and, just in proportion as it did so, would this disadvantage disappear.

In those particulars, therefore, in which a church supported by what is called the voluntary principle, is held by some to excel a church supported by the state, it seems to us, on the contrary, that it is inferior to it; and that it is inferior to it, in pro-

portion as it differs from it. There remain to be pointed out two inherent defects—the probable sources of considerable evils.

The former of these comes very perceptibly into view, when we consider that such a church, rising up within any community unconnected with the system of government which that community has adopted, and standing apart from it, must be regarded as a separate element—an element moving within the circle of the social compact, but having a motion of its own, not by any means necessarily in union with the other parts—a distinct principle—an '*imperium in imperio*'—one existence operating largely on another, but for whose reciprocating action there is no machinery arranged. Such a condition of things might obviously lead to many evils. For brevity's sake we will only point to one; and, for the same reason, it shall be one connected with the second defect to which we would allude. It is we know very possible for a church, however excellent, to fall away from that excellence. However high therefore in the religious scale we may place any church, it is by no means impossible that in the course of ages it may descend to the lowest degrees; that its clergy may no longer be possessed with a truly religious spirit, and that the efficacy of their ministry may cease. Now in the case of a church established on the voluntary principle there seems no constitutional remedy for this evil. The whole society may have contributed largely for successive generations to add to its means, trusting that by so doing they would add to its utility. But those very means, by giving it independence and wealth, may have fostered the pride of its clergy—may have made them careless about the effects of their ministry, and at length incapable of being effective ministers. The people fall away from them, but they heed not the declension; or, if they do, it is but to chide at what they term the growth of popular prejudice, not to lament over the decay of clerical zeal. Retired within their establishments, all uneasy reflections die away in the learned ease, and leisure, and pleasures, which these establishments afford. For such a condition of things there would be no constitutional remedy. A voluntary church owes the state nothing; for it has received nothing from it; nor can it be called on by the state to discharge duties to which it never pledged itself to the state. A great social grievance might exist for which there would be no remedy but in a great social wrong—in a violent inroad on the part of the state, on property which it had never granted, or never had had under its control. In protestant countries, the voluntary system has not any where continued for a space of time sufficient to mark by