

by its direct and indirect influence, it is among the principal causes of the low state of Christianity in those countries where it is professed, and of the slowness of its progress throughout the world:—And that while thus unreasonable, impolitic, unjust, and mischievous, it has not even the plea of necessity, Christianity having within itself, in the native influence of its doctrines, on the minds of those who believe them, everything which is requisite for its efficient support, and indefinite extension.”

On the 12th of November, the same year, a similar Society was organized, in Glasgow, at the formation of which the Rev. Dr. Dick presided. The committee of this society commenced a periodical, of which Dr. Marshall was appointed Editor, entitled—*The Voluntary Church Magazine*, which was entirely devoted to the advocacy of the principles on which these associations were formed. This magazine continued for several years, and on the whole was conducted with much talent and energy, and with a variety of matter all bearing on the great questions in agitation, which could scarcely have been anticipated, and it proved a powerful auxiliary in advancing the Voluntary cause.

Similar Associations to those we have mentioned were formed in the principal towns of Scotland, and in many of the rural districts; and in England, particularly in the northern counties, several such societies were organized: and many valuable pamphlets on the subject were published, and widely circulated, particularly those of Drs. Wardlaw, Brown, and Heugh, by which the cause was powerfully advocated.

By this time, the friends of the Established Church, who had affected indifference to these movements began to be alarmed, and instead of continuing silent, as would have been their wisdom, they thought it high time to put themselves in a posture of defence by forming associations and issuing publications in support of their own principles. *The Church of Scotland Magazine* as it was called, a monthly periodical, which continued but a short time, and the *Guardian*, a weekly newspaper, both filled with scurrility, misrepresentation, and abuse, were among the instruments employed in attempting to maintain their ground. These measures, however, which the injudicious friends of civil establishments employed, instead of forwarding their cause, were, through the haughty and violent spirit which was displayed, the very means of making converts to ours.

At length a *Vindication of Ecclesiastical Establishments*, by far the most able and effective, was published by Dr. John Inglis, one of the ministers of Edinburgh. “This publication,” says Dr. McKerrow, “is characterized by perspicuity and candour. The pervading tone of it is that of calm dispassionate reasoning, and it is honourably free from all personal abuse of his opponents. As a clear and able statement of the arguments in favour of religious establishments it is fairly entitled to take the lead of all the publications which have been called forth by the present controversy on that side of the question. If the author has failed in conveying conviction to the mind, this is to be attributed more to the inherent weakness of the cause which he had undertaken to defend, than to any want of tact or ingenuity in the mode of conducting his vindication.”

Dr. Marshall had felt that he had been contending with persons unworthy of his notice, as they assailed him under a mask. But now as honorable a champion had come forward as the National Church could furnish. He accordingly prepared to meet him in a series of Letters. But before the volume had passed through the press Dr. Inglis died, which occasioned an awkwardness in the epistolary form which had been adopted, being addresses to one who had gone the way of all the earth. This circumstance did not affect the merits of the work, in which, it has been said that, meeting the Doctor’s arguments, and exposing his fallacies with great ability, and introducing facts and illustrations which were not in his former publications, he fully sustained the reputation he had acquired.