

most unanimously proclaimed their utter despair of obtaining the sanction of parliament or of the nation to such a plan of a Church Establishment, until at least the spirit both of nations and of rulers shall have undergone an essential transformation!

But even admitting that the State did consent to extend all the advantages of an Ecclesiastical Establishment to the Church, without requiring in return any sacrifice of spiritual liberty, or even of the most absolute independence, is there not cause to demur and to deliberate upon the lawfulness of entering into alliance or contracting any formal connection with any body or community, which has not been first ascertained to be truly and thoroughly christian in its spirit and maxims, in its principles and practice? Even should the State be disposed, in the most liberal spirit, to extend the advantages of an Establishment in the fullest measure, to a Christian body under its government, is it possible, at least would it not be infinitely perilous for the Church, in such a case, to avail itself of this support and patronage? Few, we presume, will be so bold as to affirm, that the enlowment of a Church by the State did not infer dependence or a subordination, more or less, of the Ecclesiastical to the Civil power, and a consequent influence thence exerted by the State and its rulers on the Church and its ministers and members, which, in the present state of human nature, and of States, Churches, Clergy, and Christian people, must be powerfully and permanently active in its operation, silently but surely progressive in its secularizing and deteriorating tendency, and in its ultimate issue, it may be feared, universally and fatally corrupting. But, waiving this, is it not incongruous, anomalous, to call it no worse, for "the Kingdom *not* of this world" to enter into alliance or formal or legalized connection with the powers and kingdoms—consequently unregenerate—of this world—a world which, according to the express declaration of scripture, "lieth in wickedness?" Is there no color of truth in the imputation thrown upon us by our voluntary friends, that the course which we advocate involves, in the present circumstances of this world, nothing less than the guilt of counting, or at least accepting the friend-ship of the world, which God, who cannot be, hath declared in his word to be "enmity with God"? I humbly conceive that there is here not only room to doubt and demur, but a solemn call to take heed lest we betray into the hands of ungodly men the interests of the Church of the living God—lest we compromise the cause of Christ and the purity of the faith once delivered to the Saints, by an unwise, unscriptural, and it may be feared, mercenary and carnal seeking after the things which are of men, and striving to the attainment of them, the things that are of God! For, are not courts and parliaments the seats and centers of the most extreme, inveterate, contagious influences of the spirit of this world, of ungodly men, who blind the minds of them that believe not? When we read such passages of scripture as that solemn and indeed awful appeal and warning of the Apostle, addressed to the Corinthians, we cannot but feel that the ground which the advocates of State connection occupy in this instance, would need to be scrupulously and tremblingly explored in order to assure ourselves of its tenability.

11. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?
15. And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he who believeth with an infidel?
16. And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.
17. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you,

18. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.—2 Cor. vi. 14, to the end

Reasoning not from what men—from what States and Kingdoms *ought* to be,—but from what in fact, and without exception, they all are, though it may be in very different degrees, who will be so bold as unflinchingly to affirm, without qualification or reserve, that a *formal* legalized connection with a body, thus known and admitted to be, in spirit and in character, essentially unchristian, can be reconciled with the scriptural view of the Church and of the world? How much more will this hesitancy and suspense be enhanced, in the mind of every candid and enlightened judge, who reflects that such connection necessarily involves not only dependence of the Church on the State for temporal provision, but in some degree also—I fear it must be allowed—renders inevitable an interference, *de facto*, if not *de jure* on the part of the latter, with the Ecclesiastical administration. To say nothing of the influence, and ascendancy which the State, as the constituted pay-master, and purse-holder for the Church and for the clergy, must unavoidably wield over them; we demand what are all the governments, even of the freest and most enlightened nations of our day, but the temporary and often precarious elevation of one political faction engaged with its rivals, in an intensely eager and all-absorbing competition, for the most tempting of all prizes to which human ambition can aspire? Who does not know that all individuals, and orders, and parties—all institutions, organs and interests, are regarded by them, first and chiefly, in the light of political engines, for their own advancement and aggrandizement, and are eagerly and emulously taken hold of by one or other of these conflicting parties, whose first and often only consideration is, how they may be enlisted in their service, and attached to their interest? How is it possible that such an influence as this should not be extremely desecrating, demoralizing, and debasing? We may boldly affirm, that until a marvellous and mighty change shall have passed over the spirit of the world, and especially of its ruling powers, it is the height of ignorant credulity, or the simplicity of childish inexperience, to expect that such connection ever will, or can come to good, in the actual circumstances of the kingdom and governments of this world. Ask what in point of fact has been the result—as it may be collected from universal history and experience—of all connections subsisting between Church and State, from the days of Constantine, down to the Reformation? Let the history since the Reformation of the Lutheran Churches of Germany and the North of Europe, as well as of the originally Calvinistic Churches of England, Holland and Geneva, and above all, the boasted Establishment of Scotland, be closely scanned and explored, and we doubt not their actual condition at the present day, will be acknowledged to afford a verification—from the testimony of history and experience, in favor of the speculation, principle or truth, for which we have been contending—than which none was ever more complete. And whoever will listen to the testimony of time, of experience, of facts, will see, as it were, the seal of God and of truth set upon the great principle, that as there is no warrant can be produced from Scripture, to sanction any formal connection between the Church and the kingdoms of this world, so the voice of past history, and the view of the present aspect and condition of those churches which have entered into such connection, furnish conclusive evidence of the disastrous consequences which sooner or later must thence result.

The second question which I proposed to discuss, is, what are the nature and limits of civil and political authority—what is it competent for the State to do for the Church, and within what bounds is its action, in the nature of things, necessarily circumscribed? I must reserve to be the subject of another letter.

H. ESSOX.

EXTRACT LETTER, D M T O R S

You argue further against "distinguishing grace" from the command to believe, implying, as you say, the power to believe, which must be the same, you think, as having the power to obtain salvation, which power, you add, can only be bestowed through the merits of Christ's sacrifice.

But how does it appear that this power is given to all? Not surely from its being a fact that all exert such a power—for all do not believe. You think that it appears from this "that unbelief is reckoned a capital crime, which could not be the case unless power to believe were given along with the command to believe." The same conclusion, you say, follows from the nature of that faith required by the gospel, which you affirm to be "a personal trust in the doctrine of Christ's sacrificial death as *our* atonement," "which none," you say, "could be required by a God of truth to exercise, if that atonement did not embrace them—nor could they be guilty of refusing to trust in that which was never intended to be the object of their trust," &c. &c.

The fallacy of this argument arises from a wrong definition of the nature of faith, otherwise the premises might be regarded as sufficient to sustain the conclusion; but I deny in toto that faith and trust (in the sense of assurance) are the same thing; and when faith in Christ is understood in distinction from a mere general and speculative belief, they may be used as interchangeable terms. They are doubtless most intimately related, and the one as naturally flows from the other as does an effect from its cause; yet are they still different and distinct operations of the mind. Our trust in the promise of a friend is founded on a belief of his veracity, and a knowledge of his ability to perform his promise; but trust in this case is no more mere belief than it is knowledge.—Knowledge must in all cases precede faith—trust or assurance follows it, where knowledge and faith have reference to an object of trust.

This might be abundantly illustrated from scripture. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved," may be regarded as both a command and a promise. A compliance with the command is then indispensably necessary before any can be warranted to trust in Christ for salvation, for it is only to those who believe in him that the promise of salvation is made. It would be presumption—not faith—for any who did not believe to trust in him. But it, in contradiction to the plain, obvious sense of this passage, trust and faith are to be considered as the same thing, then this absurdity would follow, that sinners are required to trust in Christ for salvation, before they could have any warrant to trust in him, or could trust in him to save them.

The scriptural order is knowledge, faith, trust. When Jesus asked the blind man to whom he had given sight—"dost thou believe on the Son of God?" he replied in the first place, by a most pertinent question—"who is the Lord that I might believe on him?" And when informed that "thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee," he then said, "Lord I believe, and he worshipped him." He required, in the first place, to be instructed, then faith followed, and trust was the result of both—expressed in the strongest manner a creature could express his trust, namely, by an act of worship. The same process of knowledge, faith, and trust, is observable in the case of the Philippian jailor, in that of the Ethiopian eunuch and many others; and in so far as I have a right sense of the meaning of words, and know anything of the operations of my own mind, it cannot be otherwise. The practical, as well as doctrinal error, which results from your definition of faith, is, that you exhort the unregenerate sinner to believe, in the first place, that Christ died for him as certainly as if his name had been inserted in the command to believe, and involves the fearful alternative that, possibly, for anything he can know, you may be requiring him to believe a lie; or, that, in a vast