

dient in Institutions supported entirely by free-will offerings, are not to be borne in connexion with establishments of any kind which are, either in whole or in part, supported by the public purse. The great truth is gradually evolving from the agitations and discussions of the day—that general taxation can only be justified by a reference to the general good, and that every man has a natural right to receive an equivalent for his personal contribution to the disbursements of the state. *The inhabitants of Canada will never consent to educate one sect at the expense of all the rest.*

TESTIMONY OF AMERICA IN REFERENCE TO THE
VOLUNTARY CHURCH PRINCIPLE.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN BROWN, D. D.

[The Rev. Dr. Brown is professor of Theology in connexion with the United Secession Church of Scotland—a grand-son of John Brown of Haddington,—and well known as the author of several valuable religious works. His passive resistance to the odious church-rate, and his able exposition, in a popular volume of “the Power of the Civil Magistrate,” have already placed him in the vanguard of those benefactors of their species who are seeking, through good report and evil report, to work out the religious liberties of their country and the world. The following papers are published in the *Christian Examiner*, a London periodical recently established, and which, from the talent and the tone of its contents, bids fair to exert no inconsiderable influence on the great controversy now agitating betwixt the abettors of secular domination and spiritual independence.—ED. HARBINGER.]

PREFATORY NOTICE.—To the right resolution of the question respecting the propriety of the civil establishments of religion, few things are more obviously conducive than a correct knowledge of facts as to the working of the two systems of government—of which the one embraces and the other excludes the connexion of church and state. The tendency and effects of the first system are open to the observation of all, in this country and in other European states. The United States of America have been the field on which the second system has been most fully tested on a large scale. The result of the experiment has been most fully tested on a large scale. The result of the experiment has been appealed to both by the defenders and assailants of politico-ecclesiastical establishments. It has been thought that a few statements of the facts of the case, most of them made without any direct reference to

the much agitated question, might be of use to those who really wish to see the bearing which these facts have on that question. The following extracts have been made from the writings of men of very various opinions both in politics and religion—all of them credible witnesses of facts, and most of them, from their high intellectual and moral endowments, entitled to have their opinions calmly listened to and respectfully considered. The subject is a highly important one. The events of every new day are pressing it more on public consideration. At no distant day it must become a practical question, in this country. It is well to be prepared for that day. He only is fit for action whose mind is made up. These extracts are presented as helps to men honestly desirous of making up their minds, and our wish is, “*valeant quantum valere possint.*”

NO. I.—PRESBYTERIANS OF VIRGINIA, 1781.

“Human legislation ought to have human affairs alone for its concern. Legislators in free states possess delegated authority for the good of the community at large, in its political or civil capacity. The existence, preservation, and happiness of society should be their only object; and to this their public cases should be confined. Whatever is not materially connected with this lies not within their province in statesmen. The thoughts, the intentions, the faith, and the consciences of men, with their modes of worship, lie beyond their reach, and are to be referred to a higher and more penetrating tribunal. Their internal and spiritual matters cannot be measured by human rules, nor be amenable to human laws. It is the duty of every man for himself to take care of his immortal interests in a future state, where we are to account for our conduct as individuals; and it is by no means the business of a legislator to attend to this, for *there* governments and states, as collective bodies, shall no more be known. Religion, therefore, as a spiritual system, and its ministers, in a professional capacity, ought not to be under the direction of the state.”

This is an extract from a Memorial of the Presbytery of Hanover—to the Supreme Court of the Virginia Presbyterians—addressed by them to the Legislature of that state in 1781, deprecating a civil establishment of religion.

Of the truly noble part which the Virginia Presbyterians acted on that occasion, a full and most interesting account is given by Dr. Dunmore Lang, in his work on “Religion and Education in America,” (London, 1840,) a work giving a more satisfactory view of the whole subject of the establishment, and working of the Voluntary system in the United States, than is any where else to be met with.

NO. II.—GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA.

Act for establishing Religious Freedom, 1786.

The following Act of the General Assembly of Virginia, drawn up, we believe, by Jefferson, contains a very clear and condensed view