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HOW OUGHT THE CLERGY RESERVE QUESTION TO BE SETTLED?

BY DR. JOHN RAE, OF HAMILTON.

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If the state require its citizens to know and feel the great truths of religion, then must it assume that these truths are taught them. But some one again says—it is needless for the state to take this office on itself, because, though it might be its duty, were it not otherwise discharged, yet it is very certain, it will be effectually discharged by the *voluntary principle*. Could we persuade ourselves that this so named principle would indeed discharge, as well as the state, those functions which it is the duty of the state to see performed, we acknowledge, that it were a matter of indifference, whether the Government were an actor or an onlooker. But before we can assent to the propriety of the state, in this matter, becoming a mere spectator, we must be well assured that this principle will indeed perform the duty in every particular. Now, after looking into the matter with some care, we confess we cannot satisfy ourselves that such will be the case. On the contrary, it seems to us that there is a fallacy at the very bot-

tom of the representation, that any so named principle is efficient only as it belies its name, and nearly in proportion as it is not voluntary, and that besides there seem to be defects in the churches, that arise from its operation, which we have reason to fear will one day produce serious evils.

There seems to us a fallacy at the very bottom of the matter, because we have neither seen nor heard, nor read, nor, unless the age of miracles were to return, can we form a conception of any body of men uniting to form themselves into a religious community, of their own mere motion, without some impelling cause from without. Let us take a case, the most resembling real voluntaryism that can occur. Say that, in some quarter of the world, there exists a community having no knowledge of any thing deserving the name of religion—heathens, we shall say—but, who would embrace religion, if worthily presented to them. It is clear that this mere disposition on their part will effect nothing. There must be a miracle, or there must be some human means, to bring religion before them. Say that what is wanting is completed by the arrival of a missionary or missionaries among them, of talent, and intent, and zeal, commensurate to the enterprise, whose labours result in these men forming themselves into