

universal without an adequate cause. God has commanded us to be provident as well as hopeful. He has granted us his truth, but he has committed to men, the means of its promulgation ; and whether it shall exert a permanent influence and penetrate the remotest corners no less than populous cities—whether it shall be left to every gale of public opinion to refresh or to blast it, (and who can tell what gales may blow,)—whether it shall be but a partial and accidental thing, lighting here or lighting there, as men may be able or inclined to entertain it, is evidently a matter for the determination of human counsel.

In Scotland, religion has long exerted a mighty influence. It guarded her national enactments, and her courts of justice, and filled with light and love the dwellings of her children. It is an *acknowledged*, or as it is called, an *established* power ; and when but of late days, a blast began to rage at the door of the Church of Scotland, and a spirit of change, covetous of new things, disturbed the serenity of her peace, and applied as Scotsmen are fond of doing, general principles of policy and law, to show the ill foundation upon which her pillars were built, what did she do ? She appealed not only to the laws which gave her her position in the land, but condescended at once in a manly and fearless manner, upon the very principles which her enemies had taken up to pierce her sides with. She demonstrated their fallacy to the general conviction of the state, and pointing them afresh with the clearest light, obtained a triumph worth the existence of 300 years. And why should this be deemed impossible here ?—why impossible ? not because men have the nature of men, not because it contravenes any law surely of our human constitution : but, if not possible, it is because our indolence and weakness are judicial, because we are entangled with prejudices about forms, idols of the tribe, as Lord Bacon would designate them, and cannot suffer our thoughts to run beyond the narrow enclosure of our own practice, because men have no serious and settled intention of understanding the truth and following it honestly. This is a question of the greatest practical moment, and therefore it is not multiplying needless controversies. All others are comparatively trifling, and receive magnitude and extension only from the dimness of our eyes and the mists which so changeful an atmosphere has gathered around us. In the heart of every good and God-fearing man, the consideration of this ought to be paramount, and he who should give it an effectual