

be on the alert to protect and rescue religious principles and rights, which are liable to be removed by ecclesiastical robbers. Our rulers do not wish the spirit of religion or religious liberty to be bowed down and crushed, by the measures employed to quell insurrection; and those that do wish it will find conscience indomitable, and the present British Government just. Deplorable, however, is it to see Ministers and Churches offering to "sell their birth-right for a mess of pottage," trying to seduce the authorities to purchase their blood-bought patrimony, by a few acres of wild land. The outburst of ecclesiastical servility, occasioned by my letter, shows a present imminent danger to religious liberty, that dearest right of man; so also does the attempted punishment of myself, for daring to act as a watchman of Zion, in the quartering of six militia men upon my family—the very means employed by the French Papists to break the spirit of the Protestant Clergy after the revocation of the edict of Nantes. However, I can once for all tell my uproarious abusers, lay and clerical, that with secular politics I will have nothing to do; but if they mean to prevent my maintaining the full rights of conscience, they must not resort to obloquy or annoyances, or clamor, or bribery—they must take my person.

The "Patriot" has drawn into his argument the whole question of national religious establishments—a ground upon which on any suitable occasion I shall be happy to break a friendly lance or two with him. Dr. Owen and Matthew Henry (whose words are said to be quoted,) were great and good men, but not oracular, inspired, or perfect men—they lived in times in which popery (which has always loved state-religions) had been imperfectly eradicated—and their attention was given to the greater doctrines of salvation, and not to what is the appropriate work of present attention, ecclesiastical reformations. Now we Congregationalists have not "a faith standing in the wisdom of men," though they be even such men as Owen and Henry. We consider it to be a duty of Kings and Rulers "to promote the public good both civil and religious, by all such means as are not subversive of public and private right"—but we consider, too, that national religious establishments are subversive of civil liberty and corrupting to religion, prevent public freedom and crush a private right of judgment. I am told "that a general mockery of religion and God has been quite as much the result of sectarian fanaticism as of state-religiousness." Well then, let us have neither the state-religiousness nor the sectarian fanaticism. This latter evil is a curse whether in an established sect or an unestablished. That much fanaticism was exhibited during the commonwealth is true, and so was much religion; and wherever a religious spirit is general and active there will be much that is spurious as well as much that is genuine, just as a trading community will contain many crafty speculators, and much liberty will be attended with some licentiousness. There are checks which nature and Providence soon bring to act upon fanaticism, and if instead of leaving it to those checks we employ an established church, we shall extinguish religion itself, with perhaps its counterfeit. David Hume, the Deist, advocated national religious establishments upon the ground that they checked excessive religion—and we know that any religion was with him excessive—When the Episcopal Church was re-established at the restoration it immediately brought in the lethargy in religion and licentiousness in morals, which disgraced the reign of Charles II. As for the French revolution—an established church had previously rendered religion despised and hated. The English dissenters are blamed for joining in political proceedings with infidels, &c. &c., but the