

frayed out of the funds of the nation, into which all men of every opinion contribute—they are almoners upon the bounty of the nation—and this is the source of their present apparent success. But it will ultimately prove the source of suffering and weakness, as it is a complete departure from the Law of Christ, in reference to the establishment and extension of his kingdom among men. One of the chief characteristics of the United Presbyterian Church, both in Scotland and Canada, and which distinguishes her from other Presbyterian Churches, is, her decided avowal of the principle usually called Voluntaryism; i. e. the support and extension of the religion of Christ, solely by the freewill offerings of the people of God. The United Presbyterian Church holds that there is the clearest evidence in the Scriptures of both the Old and New Testament, that this is the mind of the Lord Jesus-Christ respecting this matter. To do anything that would lead to the violation of this law, which Christ has so clearly made known, would be a palpable act of disobedience, and a manifest want of faith and sincerity. And no action of the United Presbyterian Church, either in Scotland or Canada, can be pointed to by the most virulent enemy of Voluntaryism, as a breach of this law. But while we hold with all sincerity, and with a conscience void of offence, that the Gospel ordinances are to be supported and extended only by the freewill offerings of God's people, we do not hesitate to avow that they are under most solemn obligations to give of their means for this cause; "not of constraint, but willingly, not from necessity, but of a ready mind." And this all the members of our congregations should know. They should also know that this obligation does not rest exclusively on the wealthy, or even on those who have sufficient to raise them above poverty, but even on the poor, if they are not dependants on the bounty of others. You may as well suppose that a Christian would seek exemption from the performance of any other moral duty—from worshipping God in spirit and in truth—from living soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world—as from this duty. It is a duty under which every person comes, when he becomes a Christian; and if he does not perform this duty as God enables him, he is to that extent living in open disobedience to the will of God. The mind of Christ as revealed in the word in respect to this duty may be briefly summed up in the following topics: 1. All should give. 2. All should give freely. 2. All should give as God prospers them.

But how far is this law of Christ's house obeyed? and by whom is it obeyed? These are enquiries that can be answered only by individual members of congregations; to God they are responsible, and he knows, and they know, whether they have a conscience void of offence in this matter. But, while avoiding all censorious judgments, the truth may be told, and the truth will hurt none but those who put themselves in opposition to it. And we rejoice to bear this testimony, that there are not a few connected with the United Presbyterian Church, who do their duty willingly—they are good and conscientious voluntaries—they know and do their duty cheerfully, whether they are in poverty or affluence—they regard the support of the ordinances of the Gospel, not only as a duty, but as a privilege and honour—and they are always punctual and liberal, according to their means. When you come into their society, you feel as in a region of light, life, and love; they have received the Gospel freely and bountifully, and they give freely and bountifully. You may freely appeal to their sympathies for the poor, or to their love for God's cause, knowing that these principles exist in them, and your appeal will not be in vain. Their very presence is a blessing in the Church, for their conscientious performance of duty has constrained others to something like compliance with the law of Christ.

While their conduct is based upon the law of Christ—and they act because he has commanded—yet they can find a reason for their conduct, and a strong reproof for those who neglect their duty, in the social constitution of the congregations of the faithful. They reason thus: the members and adherents of each congregation may be viewed as associated for a special purpose, well understood, and openly or tacitly acknowledged by all the members of the association, viz: the support of religious ordinances among themselves, and the extension of them to others destitute of them. In reference to the first object of their association they hold that, if the society should be viewed in no other light than a civil association, having only a worldly and temporal object in view—even in such an association, it is supposed and implied, that every member

should do what he can for its support and success. If it be regarded as a mutual benefit to be associated, then each member is bound, according to his ability, to sustain and extend the cause for which he is united. The whole conduct of such persons correspond with their professed belief in, and attachment to, the Scripture rule for supporting the Gospel.

We may have something to say to another class of voluntaries in our next communication D.

SERMON, BY REV. R. TORRANCE, GUELPH.

[We give now about the half of the Sermon; it will be concluded next month. Last spring the Wellington Presbytery resolved to bring the subject of Voluntaryism before the notice of their congregations. Mr. Torrance was appointed to prepare a discourse on the subject, to be delivered in the several churches in the course of visiting. Each of the congregations passed a resolution, after its delivery, that Mr. Torrance give the manuscript for publication; but owing to varied engagements, the author has been unable to transcribe it till the present time. We have set our resolution against the admission of sermons into the Magazine—for of these there would be no end—but as the subject is out of the ordinary course of sermons, as well as to oblige the congregations in that Presbytery, we depart from our rule.]

"Take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's."—Jer. v. 10.

At the time to which these words refer, gross corruption and immorality prevailed among the Jews, and, in consequence of this, their national glory had departed, and they were about to be visited with signal chastisements. Injustice was practised and insincerity abounded. The people were wayward in their evil courses, and would not be corrected: the poor and the great were alike implicated in transgression: lewdness was wrought and spiritual adultery was committed by their children. Because of these things their civil interests had suffered—their prosperity had declined. Having lost their excellency as a Church, they could not expect, according to the principles of their constitution, to retain their glory as a nation—having forsaken the worship of their covenant God, would he not remove the fear of them, and the dread of them, from the neighbouring people?—having dishonoured his name, would he not make them a by-word and a reproach? No more shall his arm be made bare in their behalf, seeing that they have so long grieved him with their idolatries and abominations. As they would not be reclaimed from their courses of backsliding, by the gentle admonitions, the stern reproofs, or the affectionate remonstrances of prophets, whom the Lord had raised up and sent to them, they will be delivered into the hands of an enemy that will have no mercy upon them, and be grievously punished because they have grievously provoked. A foe from the north has been commissioned to destroy. From a distant land does God call the ministers of his vengeance. The Chaldean army is to prepare for the battle and the siege. Jerusalem shall be razed to its foundations. Princes and nobles, and all pleasant vessels, shall be carried away to Babylon. By these judgments would the Lord be avenged on a nation that had insulted his majesty, corrupted his worship, and polluted his courts—that had broken the covenant under whose provisions they were entered, when the sign and seal of circumcision were administered—that were lewd and depraved, from the rich to the poor, from the peasant to the noble. Strong may be the position of their metropolis, but it shall not stand. Numerous may be its fortifications, increasing the probabilities that it shall hold out against the besiegers, but God has appointed them to overthrow these fortifications, and he will help them in the work. The wall of defence may be complete at every part, but God musters his forces round about it, and encourages them to the assault—"Go ye up upon her walls and destroy; but make not a full end: take away her battlements, for they are not the Lord's."

External defences will not avail when the necessity exists for internal reformation. To trust in the former, when no respect is paid to the latter, is to adopt a course which will certainly end in disappointment and vexation. Jerusalem's battlements shall not save the city so long as injustice and oppression are in her streets, insolence towards God among her inhabitants, rejection of his word and departure from his worship.—Yet how prone are men to multiply defences of their own invention, and neglect the true means of safety! So had it been with the Jews:—hav-