

been experienced. That feeling has given rise to resistance. I will not call it legitimate resistance, when the only constitutional interpreters of the law by which the Church was established, and by which its privileges were granted, and the terms fixed on which they were to be held and enjoyed. But this I will say, that it is conscientious resistance—resistance on principle, and for principle. The principles, as I have before said, are an advantage on such as were wont to be held and acted upon by the advocates and adherents of Established Churches. Or, if our brethren will not allow that they are all new, but insist on their having always been held, then circumstances must formerly have constrained their being kept in obedience, and other circumstances now have impressed the necessity and the duty of making a stand for them, and insisting upon their being held and followed as the principles dictated by an authority superior to that of either Court of Session or House of Lords, or any tribunal on earth. I am not vindicating them, then, as ministers of an Established Church, in adopting and attempting to follow out, in such a Church, principles at variance with those of every religious establishment that has ever been instituted by the legislature of any country; but I affirm, and right glad am I to see it, that they are acting consistently as ministers of Christ; that they are refusing to bow to Caesar in things that pertain to God, and to allow the law of the land to come between them and the law of their Divine Lord. They are, in this respect, taking up the only right ground. And, therefore, I regard the sacrifices which they have, in so large numbers, declared their determination to make, and the difficulties which they have resolved to encounter, as sacrifices made, and difficulties encountered, for the sake of principle. In these circumstances, I do demand for them sympathy. Sir, the prospect before them—before many of them—is not at all a joke. Some extravagant things which have been said by a few of them, indeed, are a joke. When they talk of martyrdom, and of their fears—and more than fears—of the revival against them, on the part of the government of the country, of old scenes of persecution, and of their having, perhaps, to resist even unto blood—we can smile at the rhodomontade, which we are apt to be tempted to regard as having rather more than enough in it of the *ad captandum vulgus*. Assuredly they may keep their minds very easy about the crown of martyrdom. There is little danger to any of them of their names being associated with those of Patrick Hamilton and George Wishart. But still it is not to be denied that it is a trial of principle, when, for the sake of it, men with wives and families consent to relinquish a certainty for an uncertainty, and to cast themselves, with all that are dear to them, upon Providence, in a way of which they have made no trial, and of which, to many of them, the issue is problematical. In these circumstances, without exaggerating, and supposing extreme cases, they are entitled to sympathy. They are exposing themselves to the certainty in those cases, and to risk in all, in a greater or less degree, of temporal privation for conscience' sake. And while, on this account, I claim for them the sympathy of fellow-Christians, I claim further for them, as the natural and appropriate expression of this sympathy, your

prayers for grace to help them in time of need. While I ask your prayers for them, in case they should be exposed to privation and trial, for comfort under all that their Divine Master may see fit to allot to them, I ask your prayers more especially for grace to them to enable them to be steadfast—to enable them to show the superiority of conscience to interest—of principle to calculations of consequences—to manifest, by an unflinchingly resolute adherence to the principles they have avowed, sincerity of attachment to Him who hath said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me," &c. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." It is not for their own sakes alone that I ask your prayers for them on this behalf, it is for the sake of the cause of true religion. In their case, principle—religious principle—is subjected, in the providence of God, to a testing process. I know not any one thing that would be a severer blow to the cause of religion than if these brethren, after all their public and solemn protestations, were to fail in the moment of decision. What a cause of reproach to the enemy! What a confirmation of the infidel, in his sneering allegation, that religion is all a farce. And if they who "minister and serve the altar" thus give way before temptation and allow the world to triumph over conscience and principle, what a deleterious example to the whole community of Christian professors, and what a miserable deduction ever after from the weight and influence of all their instructions and all their labours! O! pray for them—for their own sake, for the truth's sake, for Christ's, for the Church's, and for the world's sake, that they may be enabled, by the grace of God, to hold fast their integrity. For their own sake—for, if they do not, they forfeit cast and character beyond recovery; for the truth's sake, whose influence they would show to be so frail and feeble in opposition to all they have ever taught of its power; for Christ's sake, whom they would dishonour, and whose cause and interests they would betray; for the Church's sake (I mean of course the Church of Christ—the community of the faithful), on whose fair escutcheon they would affix an unworthy stain; and for the world's sake, in whose way they would cast a fearful stumbling-block. There are many other points of light in which existing circumstances might be contemplated. But I must forbear, tempting as, in some of these, the subject is. To one point alone shall I venture further to refer. It is the cheering, the delightful way in which they are now supplying us, Voluntaries, with "Proofs and Illustrations" of the soundness of our principles. Nothing can be finer. Formerly, there were no terms strong enough to characterise the feebleness, the inefficiency, the worthlessness, the drivelling pitifulness and god-for-nothingness, of the *Voluntary principle*. And now they can hardly find words strong enough to express their confidence in it. It is all in all. And not only are they lauding it in words. They are drawing it forth into exercise in a way that may well put to the blush its former vituperators and vilipenders. It is perfectly beautiful. They have no right to marvel that we poor Voluntaries should enjoy the scene.—Thousands, and tens of thousands, is this same pitiful and drivelling principle producing. We told them long ago, and it has been reitera-