

promoted by government or legislative interference. The reasons of this opinion are these—human government is of a nature totally foreign to religious principle which exists in the heart and affections, and there only, as to its governing power. The propagation of religious truth has been committed by the Author of Christianity solely to those who understand and love it, and never to any who hate it, are indifferent to it, or disobey it. All human governments and legislatures are composed, in part at least, of men who have no understanding of religious truth, its nature, operations, or motives, and who therefore, are necessarily precluded, by the nature of the thing, and by divine authority, from profaning it by their schemes and artifices.—Human governments and legislatures are constituted solely for the secular affairs of society, and have no claim to interfere with thought and conscience. Religion is a thing, which is one, true, and unalterable, and has in it no incongruities or incompatibilities. But never since the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Bill in England, have the legislature and government of that country been free from such religious differences, as to render them incompetent to legislate for a thing which is wholly free from incongruities.—This rule holds in full force in the colonies. The legislature of New South Wales cannot, therefore, promote religion by meddling with it. That legislature is composed of strong religious antagonisms, and therefore, any act which it unites to perform in favour of what it calls religion, will necessarily have the effect of imparting as much aid to what is wrong and untrue, as to what is right and true.* Besides all this, there is an irreligion about the characters of some members which necessarily incapacitates them from dealing with a subject with which they can have no real sympathy. And above all this, unless the legislature can produce a commission from the Author of religion, authorizing them to select, as the objects of patronage, the systems which they can afford to support, it is pure arrogance and unwarranted assumption to make any such distinctions. These reasons we hold to be irrefragable, and to nullify all grounds on which the present select committee may claim to bring up anything more than a merely negative report.

The next consideration is for the clergy themselves. We heartily wish they would repudiate a dependence, by which they are far more completely compromised and dishonoured than ever Paul was by tent-making, or John Bunyan by the manufacture of tag-laces. We will substantiate our statement. They profess to believe that the doctrines they teach are of all-controlling efficacy in prompting men to the fulfilment of every duty, and especially in inspiring them with a generosity and self-denial adequate to the propagation of the system they cling to. But if due credit were given to those doctrines, would not the confidence of the clergy in the efficacy of their own preaching, be such as to enable them to eschew a species of pecuniary support at variance with the supposition, that the people will do their duty? We maintain, then, that in looking for state-support, they do in effect tell the people that their doctrines are more theory than practice, that, in point of fact, they have some doubts whether these doctrines can be safely trusted. Why, then, do they preach those doctrines that are so little efficacious in their esteem? There seems to us a complete compromise here. One thing is quite certain— he who does not contribute according to his real ability, for the support and propagation of his religion, shows that it has little place in his heart; and the clergyman who is afraid to trust his people in that matter, betrays a mistrust either of the utility of his own services, or of the principles which he disseminates.

Nor do we conceive that the character of our government and legislature is morally such, that dependence upon it can be made to reflect honour upon the sacred character of the clergy, or can contribute anything to the furtherance of their designs. We are astonished that they do not perceive this. The money they

* One can scarcely help smiling at the language of Hooker (if, indeed, it be his) when he says:—"We hold that . . . there is not any man of the Church of England but the same man is also a member of the Commonwealth, nor any member of the Commonwealth which is not also of the Church of England, . . . as in a triangle-figure the base doth differ from the sides thereof, and yet one and the self-same line is both a base and also a side, a side simply, a base if it chance to be the bottom and underlye the rest." This was true of the Jewish Theocracy.—ED.