

condition. Contemplating these things, who can look upon this *twenty-third* chapter with complacency? If it had not been there, would the Church of Scotland have submitted to the wicked and revolutionary act of Queen, Anne anent patronage? Would the feuds of Burgher and Anti-Burgher New Light and Old Light, Cameronian or Covenanter ever have disfigured the page of our protestant Church history? Would we have had to wage that fierce and relentless seven years controversy on the voluntary question, the wounds of which are not yet healed? Would we now, but for the misbegotten chapter, have had the "ten years conflict," with its final explosion of '43 to lament? Or, would the Scotch presbyterian family be separated as at this day into three hostile camps, each conflicting with the other both at home and abroad? No, we believe that these things would have had no existence if this unfortunate *Article* had never been hatched in the polemical brain of the seventeenth century. This is the root of bitterness, whose branches have cast a deadly night shade over the Churches, and which refuse to be torn up or cut down, that a clearance may be effected for the growth of the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Perhaps some of our respected readers will be thinking, if not saying, that we are writing rank blasphemy against the time-honored and immaculate Westminster Standards; and will tell us that these reverend and revered Symbols should meet with more politeness and respect at the hands of the *Canadian Presbyterian*. But, asking pardon of any tender Presbyterian whose feelings we may have hurt, let us say in defence that we have only been expressing those feelings which a quiet and philosophic meditation on the causes of things ecclesiastical have engendered.

We are not, let it be observed, saying anything good or bad of the chapter itself, but are only noting that it has been the occasion, if not the cause, of a world of mischief in this our presbyterian Church. Of course we will not dispute with those who, learned in the dry-as-dust histories of the past three hundred years, will tell us that there are other causes from which the evils deplored have sprung. Granting much, if not all, that they may say, we must still assert that this article of the Church's faith anent civil Governments and her relation to them has been the fruitful cause of nine-tenths of the internal, if not also of the external calamities with which she has been afflicted. We might illustrate this point by a long array of historical facts, but we deem it sufficient to call the attention of the thoughtful and intelligent to it, that they may suck from it such lessons of wisdom as the present times demand.

Much, it is true, may be said in defence of this imperial chapter. It may, for example, be alleged that the Church is bound to testify for the supremacy of Christ in the governments of the world—that the duty of the civil magistrate is a doctrine of scripture and as such should be inscribed in her sacred symbols,—that the Church as the teacher of the world, should, among other things, testify what the King of kings requireth at the hands of the State;—that while the Church should according to its statutes submit herself as part of the civil society to the "powers that be," "rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," yet she should on the other hand distinctly declare what the world or the State should do for and on behalf of the Church or the true religion. All these statements appear perfectly reasonable. No christian man will in the *abstract* take any exception to them. Again it may be urged in defence, that the protestant Churches have all, more or less, credenda concerning the duties of the civil magistrate, and that the fathers of Westminster in this, as in most other matters, followed the example of the ancients and acted in harmony with the universal protestant consciousness of the age in which they lived. Had we been in their place we should probably have joined in their labours, and acquiesced in their canons and decrees. All this is true.