

our nation has been peculiarly favoured. Although, all do not hold the same views on every point of ecclesiastical polity, yet there has been a general agreement on all the great questions of Christian "doctrine and discipline," that has been peculiarly favourable to the development of the Scottish religious character. With few exceptions, all are agreed on fundamental truths. Their differences have respect to minor points not essential to salvation; although in our opinion many of them are of vast importance to the social happiness of the people, and the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world.

But while we regard the general harmony that prevails in Scotland in respect to the great doctrines of the Gospel, and mode of worship, as peculiarly favourable to the peace and prosperity of the community, we mean especially and particularly by the Church in the Land, those ecclesiastical institutions "established by law," because, "being founded on the word of God, and agreeable thereto," which, with a perfectly free spirit of toleration, have brought the truths of God's word to bear upon the sentiments and actions of the community in a most effective way, and done more than anything else as an instrument in God's hands, to cherish that noble and elevated spirit of piety, which has distinguished the nation—a piety, which, without such a stable fostering element would never have existed, and we fear, would not be long maintained.

Brethren! we make no vain boast when we affirm that the Fathers of the Reformation were energetic God-fearing men, and in God's hands were chosen instruments for working out the civil and religious liberties of the nation. There was nothing to which these great men devoted themselves, with such calm, persevering earnestness, as to secure to themselves and posterity the invaluable blessing of a church, intertwined with the very frame work of the civil constitution, and bound—solemnly and legally bound—to have the pure doctrines of God's word preached in simplicity and truth to the people—that benefits so precious as the stated dispensation of word and ordinances, of spiritual comfort and consolation, and the "godly upbringing of children"—benefits which concern the whole nation—should not depend on the capricious fluctuations of popular favour, or be repressed or corrupted by a dominant power, whether that power be wielded by the Monarch, or the mob-driven Demagogue. They determined that the Church in the Land should be the church of the nation; that while