

from the 78th Psalm was constantly in their mouths and in their writings, and to this day it continues to occupy a prominent place in the teaching of their descendants of every denomination: "For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children, that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." If these words cannot be said to have been written by the Church of Scotland in the hearts and souls of the people, yet has she written them upon their door posts; nay bound them as signs upon their hands, and as frontlets between their eyes, so that, go where they will, they have them for a testimony, and not altogether in vain. For into whatever quarter of the world the Scottish family is transported, there goes this testimony along with it, and very generally also the reading of the Bible, and the teaching of the Catechism. That regard for the Sabbath, reverence for the word of God, respect for the ordinances of religion, and sense of responsibility for the educating of their children and teaching them the fear of God, which, with fewer exceptions than might have been expected, cleaves to all sober minded Scotchmen, may come far short of that faith working by love which is the fulfilling of the law of Christ, yet is it to us always a very affecting proof of the spirit of wisdom and power, and of a sound mind which were granted to the founders of our National Church. Few Christians indeed will dispute that the attempt to bring all their countrymen, their kinsmen according to the flesh, to the knowledge of Christ, and to the obedience of faith, was a work becoming them both as Christians and as Scotchmen, and that the establishment of a church and school in every parish was a measure wisely calculated for accomplishing their end. It must be allowed too that the scheme they adopted for educating and supporting the ministry has, through many generations, produced an adequate supply of men sufficiently well-educated for all the ordinary purposes of the ministerial office. It is true that something more than learning, whether sacred or profane, is required in a minister of the Gospel. He needs to possess something more than gifts of understanding and gifts of utterance, however highly cultivated, something more and something different from all that the most perfect system of theological or other education can bestow. It is no just objection to the Scottish system of preparing and supporting the ministry, that it has failed to make *all* its ministers pious and zealous for God—workmen that in no respect need to be ashamed; for this no system of preparing or selecting a ministry has ever attained. But it has been objected to this system that it was compulsory, and opposed to the free spirit of the Gospel.

To us it seems that those, who were to furnish the means for the support of this system, did so as much of their own free-will and consent, as men employ on most occasions. We need not ask what power did compel, but we may ask what power was there in Scotland, at the Reformation, that could have compelled the Nobles and other Landed Proprietors in the Country, and the Provosts and Burghers of the Towns, to take upon themselves the support of the ministry, had they been unwilling to do so, and if these parties had not taken it upon themselves, who else could have done so? Though the advocates of the modern Voluntary System sometimes speak of it as if it were an eternal truth clearly taught in the Scriptures, to us it is barely conceivable that such a system might possibly have occurred to the mind of some good man in the days of the Scottish Reformers. Had any such proposed to Knox a scheme resembling what is now called the Voluntary System, by way of excellence, we think he would have characterised it as a "Devout Imagination," as his own scheme is said to have been characterised by some of the courtiers of that day, who thought it too liberal in its provision for the clergy. Only think how he must have looked if any pious man had said to him, "You are doing very wrong in endeavouring to persuade these noblemen and others to burden their estate for the support of the ministry; every man should support his own minister." "Doubtless," he might have answered, "doubtless, every man ought who can, and something more too; but only those can give who have, and if these men do not support the ministry, no ministry can be supported, and if there be no support, there will be no ministry." Suppose the pious man, full of his devout imagination, had gone on to say, "It is not simply to your endeavouring to persuade the landed proprietors to take upon them the support of education and the ministry that I object, for, as you say, they are the only persons in the country who can do it; but, why seek to make them bind their lands permanently, why not be content with their paying this year, and trust to their doing the same next? Would it not at least be sufficient that they should bind their lands for their own or the minister's life, why bind their heirs and successors for all time coming?" To which we cannot conceive the Reformer replying other wise than, "This may be very devout, but it is a vain dream, a mere imagination; there is no chance in this way of establishing and maintaining what I wish to see established and maintained,—a Church and a School, with a schoolmaster and minister, in every parish in Scotland." Had every heir upon coming to his inheritance been at liberty to give or to withhold the minister's stipend, Church and State would certainly have been spared all disputes about a law of patronage. But it is also only too likely that the landed proprietors would have left their poor dependents, in the same state of educational and ministerial destitu-

tion, as that in which the wealthy merchants and manufacturers of towns have suffered their poor workmen to remain, whom no state law compels them to support, and to whom the great law of Christian love has not yet constrained them to do, in this matter, that which is meet and right. Strange, we think, must be that Christian Scotchman's delusion, who does not see that the greatest blessing wherewith God has blessed his country, was the establishing of her National Church. Nor can we bring ourselves to believe, that those who secured to so many the means of learning to read the Bible in the School, and of hearing it preached in the Church, even though this were done by a law of man's enacting, are not more acceptable unto God, than those who plead liberty and the voluntary principle, as meaning a right to do less than was done by their fathers under the law.

MISCELLANEOUS.

CHAPEL-HILL, NIGG, ROSS-SHIRE.—On Thursday, the 10th ultimo, the Rev. John B. Munro was inducted to the pastoral charge of this congregation. The members of the Presbytery of Elgin present were, the Rev. Alex. Munro and the Rev. James Scott, of Inverness; the Rev. John White, of Boghale; the Rev. John Bisset, of Nairn, and the Rev. Robert Ferrier, of Tain. The services were commenced by the Rev. Alex. Munro, who preached in Gaelic from 2 Cor. iv., 1; and concluded the induction services by an address to the people. The Rev. James Scott preached the English sermon from Ephes. iv., 1. The Rev. Mr. White put the questions of the formula, the Rev. Mr. Bisset offered the admission prayer, and the Rev. Mr. Ferrier addressed the minister. All the services of the day were able and interesting. Although the weather was cold and inclement, and the season a busy one, the church was filled by a most attentive and deeply interested audience. The collection at the door amounted to £12 12s. 1d. It was indeed a refreshing season to many, and we trust it may prove the prelude of a long period of spiritual prosperity. It was particularly gratifying to witness the warmth and unanimity which pervaded the members of the congregation, as especially manifested by the alacrity with which they testified their adherence to the call given by them to Mr. Munro. He has now for upwards of a year, amidst serious difficulties, arising from the state of his health, been officiating to the people of his charge with great acceptance and success. Under his ministration the congregation has, to an extent beyond expectation, recovered from the languishing and dispirited state into which it had fallen during a long vacancy, and if a kind Providence vouchsafe to this talented preacher the requisite measure of health, there is every prospect that the congregation will soon be in a very efficient and flourishing condition. He succeeds his late excellent father, who for upwards of forty-six years fulfilled an able and laborious ministry in this congregation, and it is our earnest prayer that the son may be long spared, with equal honour to himself and advantage to his people, to discharge the duties of his sacred calling. [Mr. Munro and his congregation belong to the United Secession Church.]