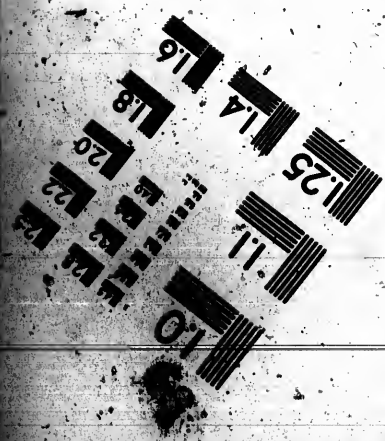
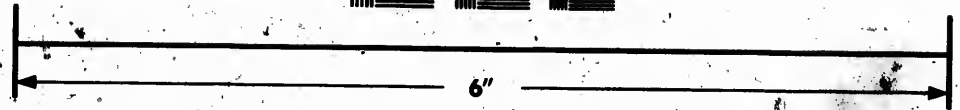
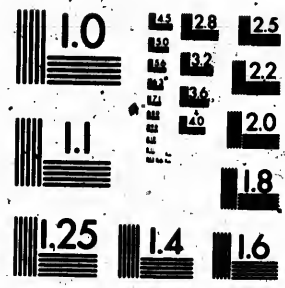


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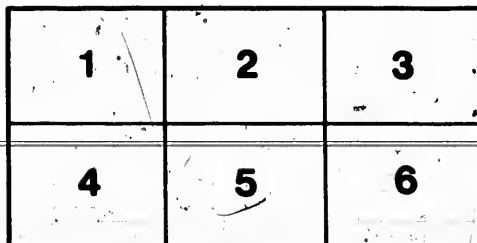
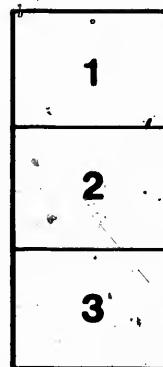
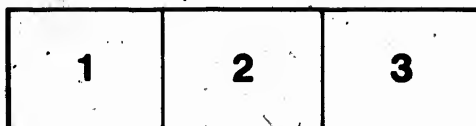
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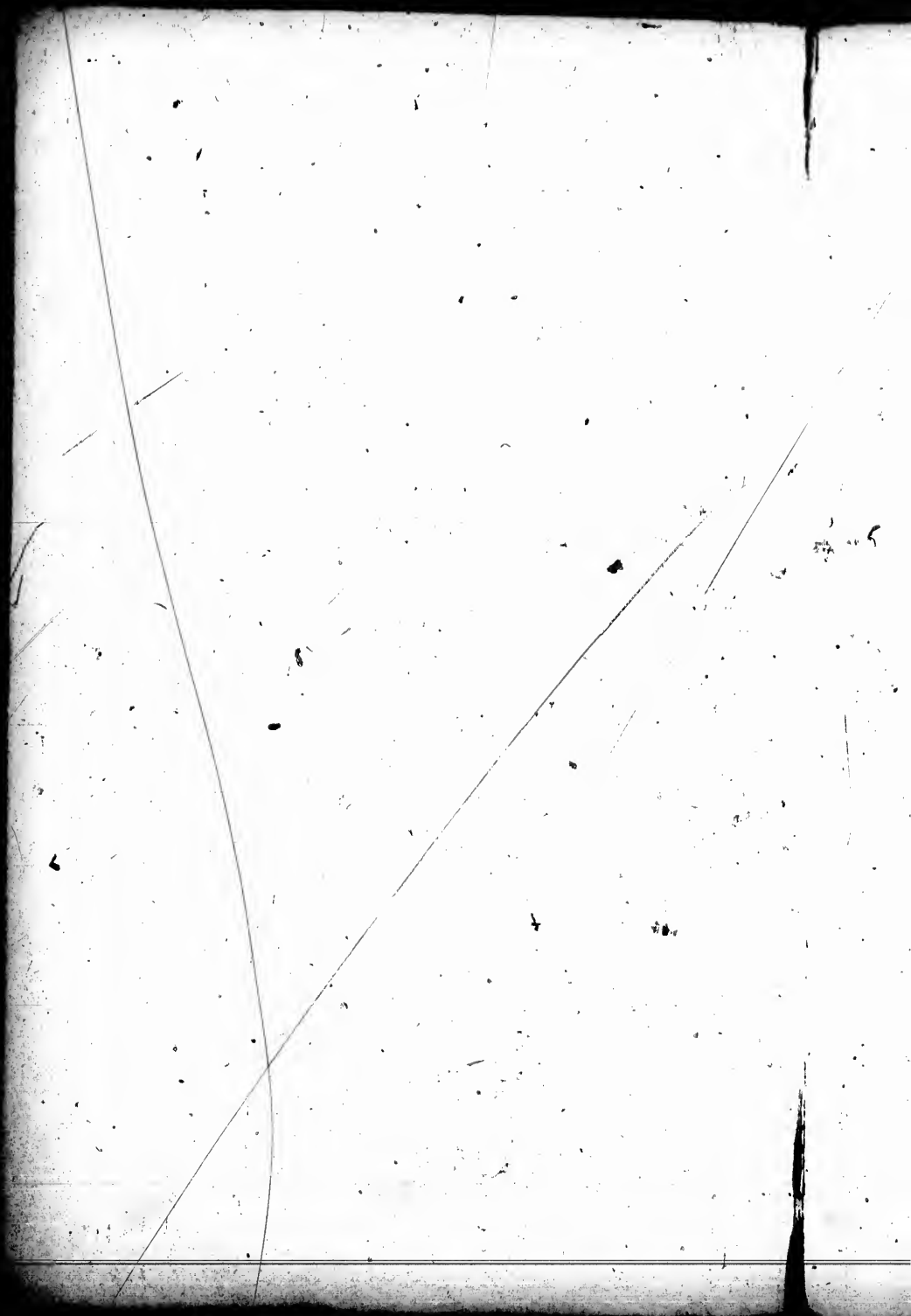
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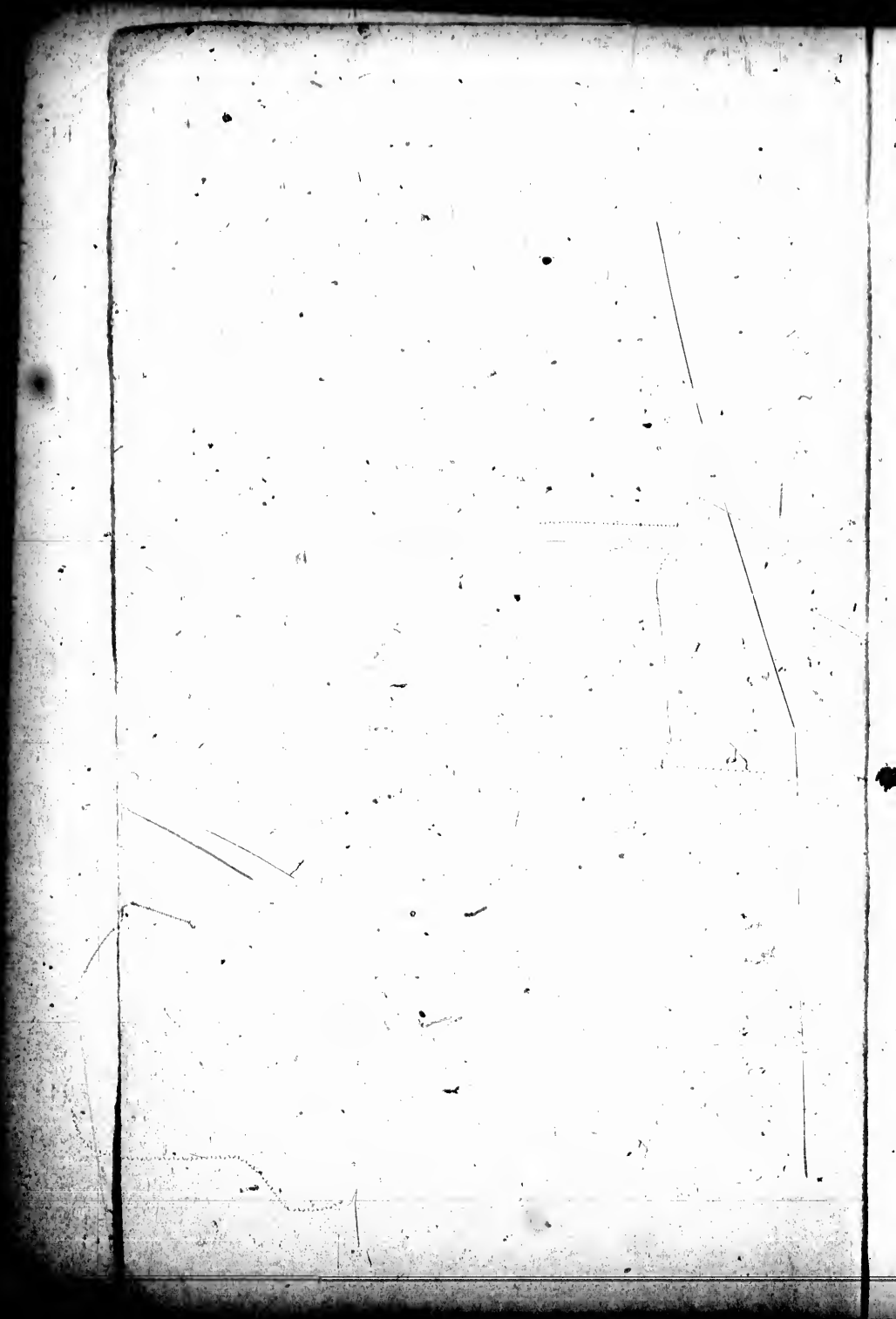
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TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.

TRACT No. 4.

On the Voluntary Principle.

BY THE AUTHOR OF TRACTS Nos. 1, 2, 3.

"Common experience shows us, that the understanding and the heart are totally different in a season of passion, and a season of quiet; that "there" are periods when anger and error are epidemical,—when the wisest men forget the plainest rules,—when it is necessary to call them back loudly and firmly to first elements."—SYDNEY SMITH.

THESE TRACTS ARE EARNESTLY RECOMMENDED TO THE PERUSAL OF THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND IRELAND BY THE AUTHOR.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

Montreal:

PRINTED BY JOHN LOVELL, ST. NICHOLAS STREET.
1854.

P R E F A C E .

WHEN a religious subject is thrust into the arena of political strife, it becomes every man to be doubly cautious how he acts or thinks respecting it. We are well aware that "*Religion must have its politics;*" but when party feeling, or sectarian bitterness prescribe *the politics*, then every religious man should be on his guard. In such cases we are in danger of learning our principles from the intriguing politician, instead of from the sober teaching of the Word of God. The subject, which we propose to review in this Tract, is "*The Voluntary Principle*,"—this being the idol before which it is intended that *the Christianity of the Province shall fall prostrate*. We shall briefly examine this principle, and see what it has to recommend it. In doing so, we hope to speak *plainly and truthfully*, as *the time demands*.

Perth, C. W., Sept. 29, 1854.



THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLE.

A PEEP AT HOME.

It was towards evening, and in the study of the Rev. —, two clergymen of ability and influence were discussing a principle which they had both adopted in the heat of controversy; they had gone with the current, charmed with the popularity of a principle which led the multitude. Clergymen are prone to err, as well as other people; though we must hope their errors are more from the *head* than the *heart*. The error I allude to at present is only from the head, but as it may lead to the most deplorable results, it becomes every man to examine for himself, to free his mind from the clamour of faction and party; and, in these days of novelty and experiment, to admit no principle as sound, unless it has stood the test of experience and scriptural precedent. The two clergymen whom I have introduced to the reader had espoused the principle of "voluntaryism" exactly five years previous to the conversation in the study. On this occasion they met by mutual agreement, to discuss the subject from *experience* of its working. A change had come over the spirit of one

of them, and thus he expressed himself: "Whatever
 "is worth having, is worth supporting; and whatever
 "is worth supporting, should have the best method
 "adopted to secure that support. Now, religion is the
 "most excellent of all excellent things, and requires a
 "certain annual outlay, in order to secure both church
 "and minister from the neglect and indifference of the
 "world. But, should we have adopted, through haste
 "or animosity, a wrong principle in securing a support
 "for religion, then the sooner we lay it aside the better."

While the speaker waited for a reply to this observation, his wife entered the study, and presented him with a bill that had just been left at the door, at the bottom of which was written "To be settled as soon as possible."

"Mary," said the excellent man, "with all our frugality and parsimony, I have received within the last few days other bills similar to this; but I have no means whatever to meet these demands. My mind is considerably distressed on this subject; indeed, even my reading hours are interfered with; and I have lately begun to think" (turning to his friend) "our great principle will not work. It must be wrong! If our debts are *compulsory*, surely *the means* we depend on to liquidate them should be so too."

"Oh! do not say so," said his wife; "what could be more in accordance with the Gospel, than that all who preach the Gospel should cast themselves on God's people for support; He will move their hearts voluntarily to give, remembering 'the labourer is worthy of his hire.'"

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“True, Mary,” interrupted her husband; “but, recollect, *all* we preach to are not God’s people in *reality*, neither are their hearts moved by His influence to give of their substance. Few, comparatively, are thus affected,—*few* are free from that covetousness which interferes with *our* voluntarism; but, *were all* influenced, so as to be ‘God’s people’ in reality, *then* voluntary support would, indeed, be sufficient.”

“But,” said his wife, “you have already declared your decision,—you have some time taken your stand, and now you cannot change. What will the world say?”

“Alas! Mary,” said her husband, “this is the ruin of many. When convinced of an error, they are unwilling to renounce it, through fear of the world. Obstinacy is a ruling principle of our poor hearts, and as ‘the world’ seems to approve of it, so must we. But ‘the world,’ in either case, will have something to say. If I remain as I am, depending on the uncertain support of voluntarism, then the world will point at me, when in poverty and debt; and if I conscientiously abandon a principle which, after a fair trial, I find erroneous, the world will then say, ‘he changed his views for want of money!’”

If the reader can fancy a well-built manse, exhibiting much of the style of modern architecture, situated not many miles from the City of ———, he then will have before him the identical house where the scene which I have described took place. This building was erected at a considerable expense, when, a few years ago, hands

and hearts were quite alive with the *fresh impulse* of "voluntaryism." Novelty and outward opposition added new vigour to the movement, and then schism, feeling that the eye of *the world* was upon it, not only bore with losses and crosses, but, greedy of praise and popularity, erected costly manses and churches for their ministers, in order to eclipse those erected by "State Provision."

These were the motives that built-up voluntaryism *then*, and gave it such a charm, and, as long as these charms continued, unthinking proselytes were made to the cause. But, there was something to be done which the world could *not see*; the occupants of these manses were to be *permanently* provided for; in accomplishing this task, the world's praise could not be secured; the impelling motive was therefore lost, and now the poor occupants of these buildings afford a lesson of splendid poverty; they can only furnish one-half of the buildings, and are obliged to shut up the other half; the wind, mournfully rushing through the key holes of the vacant rooms, reminds them of Jerusalem's desolation, or of "the house divided against the house." We could have told "the voluntaries," had they only consulted ~~my~~ that went before them, that it is much easier to build churches, and erect costly parsonages, than to secure a *permanent* supply for their ministers. In erecting a church, or building a manse, voluntaryism is quite at home, its caprices are pandered to, and the novelty of the undertaking supplies sufficient motive; but, in supporting a minister, there is something permanent and constant, something that

whispers of compulsion, and, by its regularity of application deprives voluntaryism of its impelling motive: the world sees not the extent of the offering, and novelty *loses its charms by repetition.*

If there is any country under Heaven, which might be expected to afford a fair trial for "pure voluntaryism," it surely ought to be the country which has recently sent forth champions in its defence; there, the land was christianized, and each congregation had sufficient of "God's people" (one would think) to respond fully to the principle. Scotland has enjoyed the sunshine of the Reformation, and for generations has brought up her children in the principles of Holy Scripture. Beneath the fostering care of the State Provision afforded to the country, the Established Church of Scotland has attained to its present efficiency, and procured for herself an imperishable record; but, the present generation, (a portion of them at least) being more keen sighted than their fathers, saw (or supposed they saw) a greivous evil in receiving any assistance from the State: this they accounted "bondage," and "gathering" *the christian fruits,* of people brought up and sustained by "State Provision," together into their schism, spoke as confidently of success, as *if it had nourished and brought up the parent.* We heard how the parent was praised one week, as "the most excellent of the earth," "the glory of Scotland!" but, the next week, it was regarded as "in worse than heathen darkness," and as "the plague spot of the country,"—and why? not because the opponents saw any *fundamental error in doctrine* or in discipline, but merely because the way in which "pounds, shillings, and pence" were received, did not please!

The promoters of this scheme professed great enlightenment, civilization, and christianity: we could have asked them, *where* they obtained all these excellent gifts of God? was it when they were in "the heathen darkness of the parent?" when receiving "the accursed thing," "State Provision?" If we were inclined to be inquisitive, we might ask *many questions* of this nature, but we have sufficient evidence of their error without any enquiry.

Before we speak of the Voluntary Principle in reference to this county, we must complete our "peep at home." Let us *first* mark its working *there*,—does it work? Voluntaryism would require a rich country, the people should be advanced in the knowledge and practice of Christianity, and should be in love with the principle, *before* we could expect success. Well, at home, in its "own country," it had surely all this,—all things were in its favor; how then does it work? In answering this question, we must only admit such evidence as comes from voluntaries themselves, as this surely will be unsuspecting, and as none others can know fully the working of the principle but themselves. So we shall introduce the reader to a letter which recently appeared in the organ of "The Free Church" Edinburgh Witness." The writer thus proceeds:—
 "The more I reflect upon the subject, the more deeply
 "am I convinced of the necessity of something being
 "done immediately, to avert the many dangers which
 "threaten the welfare, if not the very *existence*, of our
 "beloved Church, in consequence of the uncertain
 "fluctuating and altogether inadequate stipend paid

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"to our ministers, not only last year, but every year
"since the disruption!" This is a telling sentence; it
whispers the needlessness of the "disruption," as well
as the *failure* of all the *fine promises* of voluntarism.
Again,—it proceeds:—"It can be proved that the
"health of many of our estimable ministers in the
"country is breaking down, and they are becoming
"unfit for the discharge of the duties required of them;
"and no wonder! Without means to give a proper
"education to their children;—indeed, I feel a great
"delicacy in attempting to describe the painful pri-
"vations to which these good men, their wives, and
"their families must evidently submit: fancy them
"shut up in one, or perhaps two of their apartments
"which is all he has yet been able to furnish,—of a
"manse, the external appearance of which gives not
"the slightest indication of the painful privations
"of the occupants, called upon to pay various taxes:
"is it any thing else than might have been expected,
"that the health of these worthy men should give
"way under such an accumulation of anxieties?"
This evidence is true, unsuspecting—given by a friend
and follower.—Let voluntaries, then, beware of conse-
quences: they may bring such miseries on their
ministers as may shorten their days; they may teach a
lesson, not easily to be eradicated from a nation—a
lesson of ingratitude towards their best guides and
friends; and they may stand guilty before God of short-
ening the days of Heaven's ambassadors! So far, for
the failure of voluntarism in its "own dear land:"
now, let us see how it holds its ground as a PRINCIPLE.

In describing its further wretchedness, the same writer thus appeals to his brethren:—"Deacons of the Free Church! the much honoured and much valued fellow labourers in the Lord's vineyard, permit me most respectfully to press more earnestly than ever upon all our people the paramount claims of the Sustentation Fund of our Church, as the one which, above all others, like the Sheaf in Joseph's dream, should stand in the centre, while all the other schemes of our Church standing round her should bow their heads, and make obeisance to her,—this is the place which I claim for the Sustentation Fund of the Free Church of Scotland!" On reading this sentence, "knowing" the assumptions of *pure* voluntaries, we cried out in amazement, "What! Voluntaryism adopting a *Fund*! Aye! and a fund, too, from whence the writer, further on in his appeal, would claim for each minister "150 pounds! or 200! or 250 pounds per annum!" Has even a generation passed, since we were told, "Religion should be free!" Ministers should freely give, as they receive! "God will take care of them." "*Funds* are *detrimental!*" and *shew a want of faith!*" All these arguments have had *their day*; a few years poverty have brought these champions to their senses,—they *now have a Fund!*—and "all things else must do obeisance to this Fund!" Aye! verily, we believe it—both ministers and people! and through fear that this "Sustentation Fund" should be under the influence of voluntaryism, a *fixed* stipend is advocated for the minister, 150, or 200, or 250 pounds guaranteed therefrom.

But finally, how is it proposed to raise this "Sustentation Fund?"—the writer further observes, "My Lords and Gentlemen! permit me, the humblest in rank and talent of your number, to beseech you to raise your powerful voice in behalf of our ministers, and that without delay!" He appeals to "the Lords and Gentlemen" to raise their powerful voice!—"this is a gentle hint, that they should do it in the most powerful manner, and in the place of power, "the Rulers of the world," after all, are appealed to,—their assistance would be received by the consistent voluntaries: a few years ago, they spurned these said "Lords and Gentlemen;" now, the ship sinking! they would invoke their aid! alas! for Voluntarism! for the sake of your champions we could have wished you to have lived a little longer, but you are too pure for earth, you have come to a premature end in the very cradle of your existence. The cap is ready, put it on the criminal, and let us whisper in his ear,—your "disruption" was needless,—your sin exhibits its consequence even in this life. Starving ministers,—and people not able to act up to their professions!!

But, should it be asked, what have we to say to this? How can it affect us, whether these voluntaries prosper or perish? We do not admit their principle, we have prospered and increased, and enjoyed God's blessing, while using the support providentially furnished by the State, and the benefits thereby accruing to Christianity have been acknowledged by the best and wisest. The great Chalmers thus writes on this subject:—"There are many who look with an evil eye to the

"endowments of the English Church, and to the indolence of her dignitaries, but to that Church the theological literature of our nation stands indebted for her best acquisitions; neither can we grudge her the wealth of all her endowments, when we think how well, under her venerable auspices the battles of orthodoxy have been fought, that, in this holy warfare, they are her sons, and her soldiers, who have been ever foremost in the field, ready at all times to face the threatening mischief, and, by the might of their ponderous erudition, to overbear it." Such testimony from the prince of divines, in these latter days, may well overbalance any assertions or petty jealousies from our voluntaries. But, although we feel and know our position *invulnerable*, yet, be it remembered, a clamorous party have crossed the waters, offshoots from "the disruption" at home, carrying, as their gospel, to Canada, this new doctrine, and, although voluntaries, yet they are determined to use *compulsion* in enforcing their doctrine: they find the Church of England prospering and extending her ministrations; this they might bear; but "the Kirk," the Church that brought them up "*in darkness*," they owe her a grudge, and feel desirous to teach her a little of "the voluntary." How do they proceed? they approach "the Lords and Gentlemen," the temporal rulers! a power they denounced as voluntaries *at home*, and whose interference in Church matters was deemed the heaviest curse, the most fearful of all bondage! yet this *very power* they seek here, they importune it to interfere in the management of other churches, to plunder their property! thus, instead of

teaching our "Senators wisdom," they teach them sacrilege. The hue and cry is raised, and the new sect, glorying in the *name* of freedom, seeks to teach the Province Christianity and the blessings of voluntaryism. But how do they seek to teach us? Is it by the *pure and elevating voice of the pulpit*? Is it by *any of those hallowed means which scripture authorises in teaching the sinful*? Is it by the Church not "of this world?" No! BUT BY THE WORLD! by its rulers, its periodicals, its demagogues, some of whom, had they been taught the meaning of honesty, justice, and sacrilege, never would have lent themselves as instruments to such an unrighteous cause.

Now, with respect to the voluntary principle, we regard it as a subsidiary, as an assistance to more permanent support. In this light our church has ever followed and taught it, but, as an *exclusive* support, we utterly deny its adequacy, and in this view all are in reality agreed, even the voluntaries themselves, *though they do not confess it*. If our opponents were consistent, they should have *no existing fund*, no "Sustentation Fund," no matter how that fund is procured, whether from the State or from themselves; *any fund* for religious support in existence amongst them, will prove that they fear the *purely* voluntary system as much as we do, and that, to guard its deficiencies, THEY REQUIRE A FUND. But, will it be said "we dislike any fund from the State; "it may restrict our operations, and control our churches?" Even here too, we can shew, that no improvement is made in this respect by the adoption of voluntaryism,—so called,—and that the State may be just as

good a paymaster as others. How many instances like the following have we all read of?—An active and exemplary minister is appointed to a congregation, he has a certain stipend promised him from the people, there are in the congregation a few rich families or a rich deacon, the burden of the minister's salary falls chiefly on these, the prominence this gives to "the few" is felt by both minister and people; at length, an occasion offers to shew the dangers of such paymasters, the minister preaches, for instance, on the love of God in Christ, he is somewhat astray, however, either in magnifying this love, or in diminishing it, whether right or wrong, it does not please "the prominent few," the paymasters; the minister is warned, he does not heed their remonstrance, a few sabbaths more tell the whole tale,—the doors are closed! and we might post up the placard outside, "the beauties of voluntaryism!" Now, in such cases, we ask, which is the most unholy paymaster? the State, or the few? the State would not impose such a burden, there is assuredly more of the inquisition about "the deacon" and "the few," than ever the State could manifest. Or, again; suppose, in the instance adduced, which may often happen, the minister yields; he fears the consequence of losing the support of the orthodox few: then we have the Church and minister pandering to the few, in "bondage of her own children!" This exceeds any abuse from the State. We do not for a moment say, that the State may not act injuriously towards the Church, and abuse its power; we admit it may, and has; but we maintain, that, as *power must exist somewhere*, the State is just as likely to use it

with discretion and justice, as the "orthodox few," and, we believe, we have *greater proofs* on our side, that the State will, and can so act, than any which our opponents can offer. The Churches of England and Scotland, for instance, have existed as at present for many generations; their faith has not been interfered with by the State; their creeds, their confessions, their articles, are the same through each age, and so far from the State interfering with these, it has been, on the contrary, their greatest defence and guardian. But can voluntarism furnish proofs like these? can it prove its faithfulness to its charge during many generations, as the Churches which they suppose to be in "bondage of State provision?" what sect has ever been a nation's instructor? what bulwarks have all our voluntaries thrown up against the vice and infidelity of a nation? what monuments of their work could they bequeath to posterity, were they now about to give up their account?

It would be difficult to shew, in any *one instance*, wherein "the voluntaries" obtain a single advantage over their opponents. Even in the *appointment* of a minister to a congregation, just as improper an appointment may be sanctioned by the congregation as by the State. How many instances might we recall to our own memory when an appointment was made under the most favourable circumstances, when the applicant went through his ordeal in the most flourishing manner when the audience were captivated by an exhibition of the powers of eloquence, required as a qualification for a call." How popular the appointment! "never was there a man like him!" But, a few short years, perhaps more as I told

a different tale; the preacher had his sermons ready for the occasion, he delivered them "memoriter"—not from the heart; and, instead of being the delight and comfort of the congregation, he becomes their scourge and curse, to the disgrace not only of the congregation, but even of Christianity itself, and strange to say, that without going farther than 25 miles from the locality in which I now write, an instance of very recent date, similar to what I describe, might be adduced, and yet voluntaryism glories in the face of such instances, as if it were immaculate, as if its evils were unknown to any but themselves! We are well aware of the abuses of patronage, or the hereditament right of presentation to a church or benefice, but we are also aware of the evils arising from this right vested in voluntaries, and in view of the evils on *both* sides, we are satisfied that the presentation vested in the people from the voluntary system, is just as liable to intrigue and abuse, and therefore we cannot but regard the present movement, and the fine speeches that are made respecting its imaginary results, as anything better than a restless desire of over-heated missionaries, to throw off the evils incident to their condition in this life,—evils *which cannot be avoided*, but should be borne with in the spirit of prayer and submission.

But, so far, we have spoken of voluntaryism as a *principle*,—we have seen how, by the existence of a fund or funds, *where* with to pay their ministers, and the nomination of a *certain* salary, no matter how it is secured, if only a salary be promised as *certain*, and *warranted*,—that the whole principle of volun-

taryism is forfeited; moreover, we have shown how the vexed abuses from patronage are just as rife under the working of the system as elsewhere. Now, let us consider, whether there is *consistency* in the *working* of the principle,—whether our “pure voluntaries” are satisfied with the support they receive, and whether it is sufficient.

*In the working of the system, *we should see no compulsion* whatever; but can this be said of our voluntaries? If a Church is to be built, or a minister's salary is deficient, or improvements to be carried out, what plans do they adopt? Do they trust to their principle? No! assuredly not,—they are well aware, as we are, of its inadequacy! and, therefore, we hear of “Bazaars!” “Soirees!” to which “the public,” (not their “dear brethren, the voluntaries,” but “the public”)

* “*We should see no compulsion.*”—Instances of this compulsion accidentally come before us,—recently, when visiting in a neighbouring parish, we called at the house of a school master, who, in the course of conversation, observed, that, amongst his pupils, he had a young man, who was preparing for “the Free (!) church ministry.” We begged of the school master to sound his pupil on the subject of voluntarism, and to ask him, whether he had sufficient confidence in such a system for support? Imagine our amazement when this candidate for “freedom (!)” assured the school master, that “he had no fears on that subject,” since the system adopted was,—for, “*twelve Freeholders, honest and good, to enter into a bond for the payment of the minister's salary;*” at the same time, giving as an instance, the neighbouring Free (!) Church minister, who was thus secured. On hearing this, our feelings may be better imagined than described, for, however erroneous we may think the followers of any principle, yet we can respect them, if they conscientiously follow what they profess, but we know of no feeling, save unmitigated disgust, when, *Pharisaic pretensions*, are convicted of such barefaced inconsistency.

are respectfully invited.—Nay, even *compulsion* is used:—for instance, when a bazaar or tea party for the object contemplated is announced, we read as follows:—“*Grand Soiree!*”—“The public are respectfully informed, that a Soiree will come off in the Free Church (or Methodist, or wherever our voluntaries fall short,)—the proceedings will be enlivened by a “band of music!” This extract *is taken* from one of our *local* Newspapers, and is similar to all notices of the kind. Let us, then, attend to it for a few moments—first—they invite “the public”—that is, other assistance besides their own,—and, through fear of “the voluntary feelings” of the public, not being sufficiently imbued with their principle, they name a *compulsory fee* for entrance! “1s. 3d.” *is demanded!*—what now becomes of the principle? It comes to naught—*practically*, and the “State Churches,” with all their “bondage,” have the advantage—the voluntaries take their 1s. 3d. from a public, for aught they know, *non-religious*; “the State Churches” receive theirs, from a government *PROFESSEDLY* Christian. But, again, “the public” must be amused,—Christianity will not attract the *assistance* required; something to see or hear must be procured for “the public,”—a “band of music!” is in readiness! Oh! angelic voluntaries! after all your vauntings you are more *wordly* than your opponents; *you* have songs!—the world’s praise!—and the world’s music! resounding in buildings set apart for the solemn worship of Almighty God, buildings meant only to resound to the Creator’s praise; and, moreover, “cakes” and “tea” inside of a church! the world’s feastings! Were

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Saint Paul to visit the scene, he would say, as of old,
 "What! have ye not houses *to eat and drink* in, or
 despise ye the Church* of God!" Cor. xi. 22. But,
 this evil will *not stop here*; it engenders a *contempt for*
sacred things, and, hence, we are not surprised to find
 that people, who are thus taught to violate the sanctity
 of their own places of worship, should deny the existence
 of such a sin as *sacrilege*. In Walker's dictionary, we
 find, that "sacrilegious" is "to violate things sacred,"
 this, we conceive, is literally done, by the exhibition of
 "a Soiree" *INSIDE* of a church!—while the *deed* of
 sacrilege, according to the same author, is "to ap-
 propriate to one's self, what is *devoted to religion*:" this
 sin is probably *soon* to be perpetrated, in depriving reli-
 gion of its support,—in the alienation of its property to
 common or "*secular* purposes."

We are not surprised at the *ignorance* of those who
 seek to commit this sin, notwithstanding all their pro-
 fessions of enlightenment, for, they who trifle on such
 subjects, always are sent a delusion or blindness; thus,

* The same feeling which Saint Paul manifests in the sen-
 tence referred to, may be gathered from our Lord's conduct.
 When he entered the temple, he not only cleansed it from the
 more open acts of desecration, but St. Mark tell us "he would
 not suffer *that any man should carry any vessel through the temple*,"
 and then gives as his reason, "My house shall be called of *all*
nations the house of prayer." Are we to learn nothing from this
 transaction! Is there no lesson, for "all *nations*" here!—"The
 house of prayer" should be kept sacred from *secular* or com-
 mon transactions, in order to secure the respect of "all nations."
 The master *felt* so, and the master *taught* so, and this is
 sufficient for our Church, notwithstanding the different teaching
 and practise now fearlessly and unblushingly countenanced by
enlightened schismatists.

the people of the Jews, though committing this sin of sacrilege, *knew it not*; they were led *by one step to another*, till they were not aware of their error, and the prophet is sent to remonstrate, "Will a man rob God? yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee?"

In glancing at those periodicals in the province, which trumpet forth the praises of voluntarism, and advocate sacrilegious measures in order to compel all to follow them, we find one unblushing * champion in the field, who seeks to raise himself to political importance by this principle; and so confident is he in his position, that he invites even the Clergy of the Church of England, and all others whom he supposes as ignorant as himself in Church affairs, to cast themselves for support on this voluntarism: well! let us see the facts which are published in order to win our confidence and approbation. We find the proceedings of "the Free Church Synod" thus reported in "the Gospel Tribune;" the salaries of 13 ministers are given, and from the list we shall select a few, as a specimen:—"Markham £80, Madoc £75, Saltfleet £84, South Gower £80, Owen Sound £70, Spencerville £68, St. Therese £43, Osnabruck £30!" Now, we ask any one to consider the prices of labour and provisions, and then look at these salaries, and let him tell us what he thinks of voluntarism? If the minister is *not* to be "a hewer of wood, and drawer of water," he must have a servant man, and if he is to fulfil the office of Missi-

* The Editor of the "Globe."

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onary—which the *country requires*—then, he must have a horse; well! what will the wages and board of a servant man cost? as well as the expenses of a horse, during the year, at the present price? We answer, without fear of contradiction, *from experience*, these will cost not less than £65, per annum! now, deduct this sum from the *highest* salary adduced, and what has the minister and his family left to live on? Such *facts* need no comment, but must have the effect on every serious and well disciplined mind, of exciting pity, and commiseration for those unfortunate individuals, who allow sectarian animosity and party feeling to warp their better judgment.

In considering the Government of a Christian country adopting such measures as voluntaryism proposes, we have a sad spectacle presented to the mind; for, who are the main stay and support of all that is valuable in a Christian community? Who? we ask, *if the Clergy are not?* To whom is the government of a Christian country indebted for much of its good order and morality, if not to the Clergy? Aye, and we may assert without fear of contradiction, that the Clergy are far more useful to the government, than all the officials they employ, either in jails, prisons, or court houses. When a government, therefore, turns adrift the Clergy for support elsewhere, it will treat its best and truest supporters with the basest ingratitude. It will appear to the world, as not caring for, or valuing, the labours of those who are forming their subjects for the highest and holiest aims; and will teach a lesson which the Sceptic and the Infidel will not fail to turn to their

own advantage, viz:—"all things else are deserving of a permanent and certain support, save *religion!*"

There are, moreover, many services of a "secular" nature, which the Clergy, frequently render to the Government, and society. If a doubt is entertained respecting the character of an individual who seeks an office or employment, the Clergy are appealed to. If statistical information is required on points affecting the general welfare of the community, the Clergy are appealed to;—indeed, they are even compelled to draw out annual lists of marriages, births, or burials;—and all these offices they are willing to fulfil, but they expect, at least, gratitude in return, and think it fair that they should be protected in their rights, as other men.

There are quite sufficient evidences before us, that the Government of this country are not indulgent towards the Clergy, without any necessity of perpetrating the further act of spoliation of their property. Sufficient evidence, that no mitigation with respect to taxation will be adopted towards the Clergy, when even the small stipend that they receive from a *charitable society at home*, is taxed! and the only ceremony for which the Clergy receive any fee, even *there* the Government is *beforehand*, and exacts its dues. How frequently! on marrying a poor couple, does the Clergyman, on asking for *his* fee, hear this excuse:—"Sir! we are too poor to pay *your* charge, the License has cost us £1 10s., and we cannot afford any more!" this case frequently happens, but whenever it does, we cannot help remarking, how *liberal* the Government! first, to drain our poor people, and then send us beg-

ging from their *voluntary feelings!* To be consistent in our teaching, we should practise what we preach. The Government may soon *teach us*; Oh!—The *voluntaries* cannot teach us their principle to be “the Gospel,” but the Government *will help them!*—thus, the law is going to teach us the Gospel!—well, if the law is to be consistent in its teaching, let us see what it must do: it must not tax the Clergyman; no “*compulsion*” towards him!—he should be free of every road in Canada, his income should not be taxed, and VOLUNTARY GRANTS should be made to him whenever he falls into difficulties, or needs to build a church. All this, and more too, is but little to expect from a Government that seeks to deprive religion of its support, on the plea that “voluntarism” is sufficient.

But we do not expect *this practice*, though we do *the teaching*; we see quite sufficient to convince us, that the Clergy will be proscribed, if possible; that their profession will be totally prostrate, through fear of ignorance and vice receiving any check: the demon of infidelity is in all this, and the misfortune is, that *people professedly Christian* are following its evil teaching.

We are prepared to hear of a sect, following any dangerous and ruinous principle, and pertinaciously adhering to it, the more they are warned and opposed; but, it sorely puzzles our experience to find—or even to read of—the Government of a country, containing (as one should suppose) “the collective wisdom of our colony!” sanctioning a measure advocated by men of overheated imagination, goaded on by the surges of

religious discord and strife. When the Government* of a Christian country, casts religion upon the voluntary support of the people, it ceases from that moment to legislate for the subject as *he is*, for what is the nature of the subject? Is it not to value most the things he sees and feels? Is he not moved and excited almost exclusively by present temporal goods? But, religion † has no charms to draw forth these feelings. If the subject regard religion at all, it is with indifference, and, *most generally*, with dislike. *Such is man as we find him*, and, therefore, the Government should so

* Since writing the above, the act of spoliation has been perpetrated. As a *further* proof of the contempt for all religion in the spoliation, we would mention the following fact. In order to apply the funds thus seized on, to other purposes than religion, a Bill was introduced, thus headed—"for the *better appropriation*! of the monies derived from the sale of the lands called Clergy Reserves." These monies "had been applied to the extension of religion in the Province,—*now*, they are to be *better appropriated*!" though for building bridges, railroads, &c., assuredly the perpetration of this awful deed is bad enough—but, to follow it up by such a triumph as this, manifests the height of blasphemy and impiety. "The hour of darkness" but *once, nationally* equalled this,—the deed of Calvary!

† Dr. Paley, with his usual force and clearness, alludes to this subject—"What surrounds us, (he writes,) is this world,—what addresses our senses and our passions, is this world,—what is at hand, what is in contact with us, what acts upon us, what we act upon, is this world. Religion, *therefore*, which strives with sense, strives for things absent,—that it may not be overborne, that it may not sink under these powerful causes, should have *every support* that can be given to it."—*Sermons on various subjects.*

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legislate for him. It should protect his chief good from an indifferent and inadequate support. It should see that, whatever is entrusted to an uncertain and capricious support, religion should not. But, we have the reverse of all this *now* taught us:—taxation, and compulsion are enforced to secure the rights and privileges, which man *naturally* values, and which, (if left to himself,) he will provide, while religion, for which he naturally cares little, is intrusted to his indifference and neglect! Had England learned this preposterous principle, who would have heard of the noble champions whose works now adorn the science of theology? How could she care for her millions of poor souls, or send out labourers in heathen lands or infant colonies? How could her "Kings and Queens be regarded as nursing fathers and mothers of the Church of God?" If they had proscribed religion and its ministers, and sent it begging for support amongst the careless and indifferent? We must not overlook either, the deleterious effects, which this injurious treatment towards religion and its ministers must have on the rising generation. What young man of independent mind will wish to consign himself to such a humiliating position? Or, what father will wish to educate his son, for an office which does not remunerate himself, and may consign his son to starvation and beggary? Let it not be said that these motives should not interfere in such a high matter, we think, under the reign of "voluntarism" they should, and, whether they should or not, *they will, THEY MUST*; for, the present state of society demands an expensive education: as society advances,

so much the more necessary will it be to raise the standard of education for candidates for the ministry, and the office, when entered on, in order to obtain for it the proper influence and respect must be secured in its position. So that, if *means* are *essential* to the due exercise of the office, it becomes the duty of the father, before he advises the son, and of the son, before he decides, to look well to the consequences, ere he entrusts his character and reputation to the whimsical and merciless feelings of voluntarism.

But, it is time to seek for Scriptural authority for this doctrine of voluntarism; for, after all, this must be our *main guide* in any matter affecting the interests of the Church of God. The only instance of *pure* voluntarism affording sufficient support, and practised *consistently*, we find mentioned in Acts ii. 32. The faith and unity of the congregation are thus described, "and the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them, that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things common:" there was a *universality* in feeling, godliness and faith in this congregation, which rendered voluntarism far different from any thing that has appeared on earth since; and *yet* this voluntarism might be abused,—imposition might be practised,—it was attempted,—the attempt, too, would have succeeded, were it not for the miraculous powers vested in the officers of the Church. However, on examining more closely this extraordinary instance of voluntarism, we find it was not too pure to *establish a fund—a common fund*—as a safety against any deficiency, and, *hence*, it

followed that "*none lacked among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things sold, and laid them at the Apostles' feet, and distribution (from the fund) was made to every man, as he had need:*" this fund existed for some time, and others were appointed instead of the Apostles to take charge of it, Acts vi. 1-7. A fund, therefore, to meet the wants and exigencies of the Church, did exist in the purest age of Christianity, and thus, the uncertainties and short-comings of *pure* voluntarism were obviated.

It was wise, prudent, and necessary, for the Infant Church to establish such a fund, although *no party*, now-a-days, adopts the method employed in raising the fund; the only question, then, which remains to be considered, is whether *such a fund should be raised from Believers or Unbelievers, from Heathens or Christians?* This, however, is a question that may be soon answered. We *all* agree that such a fund should not be sought *from Heathens*, and that *Christians should* support their own religion, and, if any fund is to be kept or set apart, or established, for the support of Christianity, believers in Christianity should be the persons to whom the Churches of God should look for that support. This *being admitted*, then we ask, Is not our country Christian? Does it not profess Christianity? Are not our rulers, both at home and here, to be regarded as Christian by PROFESSION?—Assuredly, they are.

If, then, a Christian country or government, set apart a fund for the maintenance of the Christian

religion, is not this adopting the principle, "*Christianity should support itself!*"—We do not advocate stithes, believing such a system not only impracticable, but without any warrant whatever from the teaching of Christ and his apostles: but, we say, it is the bounden duty of Christians, to have an *established fund*, (as the primitive Church,) for the support of religion, and if *any Christians in a country are responsible to God, more than others*, for the existence of this fund, it surely must be those whom Providence hath placed in such a high position, as to *legislate for Christians in temporal things*. So far, therefore, from our rulers being induced to alienate a fund which they find providentially existing, for the purposes alluded to, they should on the contrary, were such a fund not in existence, be **THE FIRST IN THE COUNTRY** to agitate for it, till it was procured.

If our voluntaries, who advocate the principle, that "*Christianity should support itself,*" were consistent in their position, they should prove that *the country is Heathen, and the rulers too!*" But, as they have not favoured us with any arguments of this kind, we would remind our voluntaries, that our country is **STILL** regarded as Christian, and our rulers likewise, and any provision made by them for the support of religion, may be just as hallowed and sacred, as any afforded by their deacons or people, and, as we have already seen "*the bondage,*" that arises in either case, may even be greater, and more detrimental to the faith, when the funds are raised by "*the elect*" of a congregation.

It is now time, that we speak of voluntarism as we have ever followed it, that is, as an auxiliary to an existing established fund. In this sense we admit, receive, and teach the principle, and much, both at home and a broad, has our Church accomplished by the voluntary offerings of her children.

That we should support religion, and consider ourselves as stewards of the temporal blessings which God has given us, is a principle which the members of our Church have not now to learn. It is an important part of the teaching of our Church; every collection we take up, and, especially, every communion we receive, reminds us of our duty in this respect, by the recital of the most appropriate sentences from Holy Scripture. There is no feeling of the soul which should be evoked in religion, but our Church endeavours to excite and call forth, and foremost among those feelings, is the free will, or voluntary offering to Almighty God of a part of our substance, and through fear, that in the giving of this part, covetousness might interfere, we are faithfully warned in the Prayer Book sentences selected from Scripture, that "he who giveth sparingly shall reap sparingly."

It is true, indeed, the way in which we work the principle might be improved on, and it was for this object, that the Church Society was established: that Society contemplates the various wants of the Church as a Missionary Church, and, adapting itself to the country, calls forth a periodical attention of our people to the wants of the Church. The time has at length arrived when the Parent Church tells us to learn to

depend upon ourselves, and, hence, every mission has now not only to respond to the Church Society claims, but also to guarantee a certain amount of salary to the Clergyman. Soon, we fear, the whole support will be demanded from the people, and then, the fearful miseries of *pure voluntarism* (or pure wretchedness) will be upon us. At present, however, only one-half is exacted of the people; some more efficient steps should be taken, than we see at present, to collect this portion of the minister's salary, which the people are, *or should be*, responsible for. Various plans might be devised infinitely preferable to what at present exists in this matter: in fact, at present, no plan exists—no one seems responsible—while the minister must suffer from any deficiency. When the office of Rural Dean was appointed, it was very generally supposed that foremost among the duties of said office, would be a yearly enquiry from each parish respecting this portion of the minister's salary, and in case of any deficiency in any parish, a vestry should be convened by order of the Dean for the purpose of making this debt a parochial debt, and forthwith to raise it either by private or public collection as the Dean should order: an investigation of this nature would soon rectify the present abuses and short-comings in the salaries of the Clergy, and would protect them from that humiliating position now, of necessity felt, of *collecting their own debts!* Now, although the office of Rural Dean might thus be rendered truly useful to our missions, and especially to *our poorer ones*; yet it is more than probable, no movement in this matter will engage the attention of our Deans; if so, we

must look to the Church Society, and perhaps this is the most legitimate quarter to look to; and why we should think the Society interested in such a grave matter, we shall state—for instance—neither is it an *imaginary* case—Where the Clergyman, with a large family, requires half his salary from a poor people, *there* the Church Society *demand*s that quarterly collections should be taken up in all Churches and stations, and likewise, that parochial associations should be formed, whereby each member of the Church is canvassed for a yearly subscription towards the Church Society. Where a people, the majority of whom are poor and struggling, have such frequent calls made upon them by the Church Society—“*quarterly*”—and “*yearly*”—as well as local improvements to attend to,—when the Clergyman comes to seek his portion of salary, he often hears such excuses as “we have given all we could afford this year, and cannot meet your demands!” This, be it remembered, is no imaginary statement; it is the state of the case as we find it, and if it should be said, “this is a poor specimen of liberality! we answer, “we admit it:” but let the Church Society suffer from the sad specimen, and not the poor laborious missionary. When the Society does *something* to rectify this state of things, then, perhaps, we may admit its claims more willingly. If the Society, for instance, took under its charge the *voluntary portion* of the missionary’s salary, and enacted such laws and regulations in each mission, as would protect the missionary from the present system, then all would be right. A proper arrangement might be entered into, whereby each parish

* would become responsible to the Church Society, for the transmission of its voluntary portion of salary, the Society would thus become, as it were, the treasurer, upon whom, at certain dates, the missionary would be entitled to draw. An instrumentality like this, if it were only put in motion, would not only work well, but would render the Society far more useful, and I may say *popular*, than it is now: thus *alone* it can expect to enlist the *full energy of the Clergy in its behalf*. We venture to speak plainly on this subject, because we feel confident that, as long as *the Society pays no attention to this matter*, it will fail to enlist that full energy of zeal and action among both Clergy and laity, which it needs, and which IT NEVER YET ENJOYED.

The evils—I may say horrors—which follow, from the present system of collecting the Clergyman's salary in our missions, are numberless, and must continue so, as long as no power *outside* our parishes take the matter in hand. Many who *now* subscribe to "the Clergyman's list," at the end of the year, change their minds; few ever feel that it is *not* to the Clergyman as an individual they subscribe, *but to their Church*, and the present system of collecting fosters this evil, so that we are teaching a principle ruinous to the Church. It is supposed to be a *personal* favour conferred on the Clergyman, a sort of a bidding for the talent and ability of the minister, just as we bid for the bone, and sinew, and wind of a race-horse. We had the misfortune more than once to be placed in this unpleasant and humiliating position. It was necessary to

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exhibit our ware, before it was sold. Of such things we heard amongst dissenting congregations, but, in our church, *never, till recently*: well, we passed the ordeal! the bidding went *high* in one church, *low* in another, according to the notions of *the umpires!* Altogether, we came off favourably when compared with our predecessor; we felt, however, no way superior to him, only we had *novelty* on our side to recommend us, our predecessor had *worn* that out: all, however, goes well, till the day of payment, then one will say, "I only subscribed for a year;" another, (whose superfluities may cost him ten pounds a year,) will say, "I cannot afford to pay any thing;" another, "I did not like this, or that:" after a round of applications to such *pure* voluntaries we have to receive three lists as payment:—one list—"paid!"—amounts to one-fourth of the salary; the other list,—“to be paid when *convenient,*” and the last list consists of “excuses, and fault finding.” THIS IS VOLUNTARYISM! and, if this happens when we only seek *one-half* of our salary from the people, what will it be when we come to seek the *whole?* Let parents consider this well, before they entail such mental suffering (not to say bodily) upon their children,—before they educate their sons for an office which the law may not protect from scorn and indifference—an office, which, though the highest and most important on earth, yet may be rendered useless and *time serving,* by the wickedness of man. When a Christian land assumes this position towards the ministry of God, then it denies the doctrine laid down by our Lord, “the workman is worthy of his meat.” “The

house or city," (St. Matt. x. 11 to 15,) which assumes this position towards the ambassadors of God, is guilty of proscribing the ministry, and refusing the message; and the action of the ministry in such a case is, "depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet; verily, I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah, in the day of judgment than for that city." Let this passage be read, let it be considered; we do not write for scholars or subtle theologians, we mean our remarks for simple Bible-reading Christians; and we say, he who reads this passage will find *the same duty* laid down for "a city" as for "a house," in providing for the ministry. Here we find, that one of the chief marks of reception of our Lord's disciples, by "a house or city, was to extend to them their "meat as workmen." Is "the city" or nation to teach *one thing*, in this matter, and "the house" another? Is "the house" to receive, and "the city" to reject? The house to provide for the ministry, and "the city" to pillage from it? Nay; verily! *both house and city* should, (according to the passage,) *prove their reception* of the Gospel by providing "the workman's meat." Such is *the voluntarism, we teach*, and such is *not* the voluntarism of our *pure* voluntaries; they seek to be wiser than God, and to legislate for angels, not for man as he is, and as God regards him; they seek to bring our nation and our promising country, to an infidel rejection of the Gospel; they *promise* "freedom" as a reward for perpetrating such wickedness, but the word of God denounces wrath, "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for *that city*."

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In considering the working of voluntaryism in this country, it will appear evident that, if it prove inadequate, and insufficient in the home country, where it had every thing in its favour, it must of course prove a failure in a poor colony. In towns and cities it may work, where the people are numerous and independent, but, in our poorer settlements, there *it cannot work*: the people in our infant settlements have their poverty and wretchedness to struggle with, for a long period, and, if to their other claims we add that of the ministry, then we shall call upon them for what they cannot give, though willing; and the consequence will be, that at the very period, above all others, when a minister is needed to console the wretched, and to teach them resignation to their lot, to make a stand for religion while the settlement is new, then we shall be compelled to abandon them, until, perhaps, evil habits have gained the mastery, and the ground be preoccupied by infidelity and irreligion. These considerations, however, are all set aside by the present agitation.

Individuals who never had *one hour of experience in missionary work*, will now come forward to teach those who have grown old in Canadian Missions. *Even the politician*, whose ignorance of the spiritual destitution of the country must be notorious, will, notwithstanding, come forward to teach the people on this subject. We lately heard one of these worthies plead his cause, most *eloquently*; he happened to have just left his merchandize, and with his mind fully bent on "the pounds, shillings and pence," he stood forth as a candidate for the suffrages of the people! He offered religion for

railroads! A sort of merchandize which he found in the market, and thus he addressed his *enlightened* supporters:—"My friends! *we* have one common cause, —to pull down all state churches,—take away their property, and then one church will not outstrip another; when we get this property, then we can have railroads, or any thing else we wish. Religion, if worth anything, should support itself. I am for freedom, and I care not how I obtain it, provided I can obtain it. The country is now rich and prosperous; it can afford to build churches, and support ministers, and if it will not do this, *then it should not have them!*" On hearing such an orator as this, and especially on hearing of his *success* (for he was "*returned!*") I blushed for my adopted country, but I consoled myself with the hope, that we had now arrived at the end of the road—"a long one indeed, which has no turning!" This is the boasted enlightenment of the 19th century.—To laugh at what our forefathers trembled at;—to know in a moment, what we never took time to learn;—to speak confidently of what we never saw or experienced;—to rush onward, while caution would whisper to hesitate;—to deride all sacred things, be they churches or church property, or burial grounds: any feelings attached to such things, beyond what we would have for merchandize, is accounted "superstition" and "priestcraft!" If they have not yet arrived at that point where extremes meet, assuredly they cannot be far from it. We see the mind now strained; the door is too widely opened and when it swings back, then we shall see "the Pandora Box" of

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schism or dissent: other generations have seen it, but we, *not yet fully*. We have seen, however, the first fruits, aye! even more: the extreme of liberality which we *have seen* is now changed into bigotry; and that "Religious Toleration" which gave the hand of fellowship to *every shade* of error amongst the creedless, is now changed into insufferable intolerance. Where the Bible was supposed to be *too severe*, there now the law and the sword would be used: these and many more are the extremes, and when they meet, what shall we see? we shall see popery and dissent, *first*, politically joined; *that we do see!* but something more wonderful awaits us; preachers and ministers venerated with saint-like honours; church architecture! and "Clergymen!" prepared for their office by a University Education!" *a little while ago*, the only qualification was "a mouth speaking out of the abundance of the heart!" but *now!* "Puseyite qualifications" are the fashion! parchments, degrees, and "*man-sent operations!!*" The Church *now* has to whisper, to dissent, not to think *too much* of these things, but to think *soberly* and *moderately*. Oh! how thankful we ought to feel for our Church's faith and practice? We exhibit *the happy medium between two dangerous extremes*, popery and dissent! Let our motto as Church people ever be remembered—"In medio tutissimus ibis."* Let this motto more and more stamp our Bibles, our prayer-books, and our hearts. These are the days, and this the country, for us all to cling more closely to our Church's practice,

* See Note on "Via Media," at the end.

and *legitimate* teaching. We are indebted to our Church, under God, for whatever stability our nation possesses; and if the teaching of Laud or Pusey, for *the present*, misleads some, we know the Church's standards are *unchanged*, as when they came out of "the fires of Smithfield." We honour these standards as the voice of Scripture, uttered by "the glorious army of martyrs," and while, obeying these standards, we feel protected in our motto, "In medio tutissimus ibis." Before we conclude, we would offer a few remarks on voluntarism, in reference to our Church. There are many who belong to our Church in this country, but who, in consequence of never having contributed anything towards the Clergyman's support in the home country, or even in this, till lately, suppose that a hard lot has overtaken them in consequence of this new demand. Here, however, they are much mistaken; for the tithe or taxation, which they had to pay at home, though not *nominally* given to the Clergyman, yet much of it was in reality imposed in order to provide for the ministry. Instead, however, of such burthensome taxation being imposed here, there is only a small sum, and that too voluntarily, expected from each. Now, in giving this support there should be *liberality* and *punctuality* observed in the contribution. If our *first missionaries* taught our people this habit, we should not now experience the difficulties which we do in this matter; but as these missionaries were sent out, not by "the State," (as our opponents affirm,) but chiefly by a charitable society in the mother country, hence our people have not been indoctrinated in the principle of

supporting the ministry as much as we would wish. As the Home Societies have long since come to the decision of withdrawing their support from this province, and as they have already commenced to do so, we are now compelled to call upon our people for support; and we cannot but think that it is high time to make a beginning. Our people, however, are slow in learning this principle. We have known many of our farming population, who generally put by, to our knowledge, from one to two hundred pounds annually, and yet, to our amazement, we often find their names on the subscription list to the minister's support for "one pound!" and too often for "ten-shillings!" and after contributing such a mite, would look into the faces of their fellow churchmen with self-complacent satisfaction, as if they were worthy to be held forth as wonderful specimens of liberality. What! a man blessed of God, by sunshine and shower, protected by a good Providence from all the casualties that may happen from seed-time to harvest, with barns overflowing, and putting into his coffers one to two hundred pounds yearly!—such a man giving back to his God, the paltry sum of one pound!—One pound to the ministry, and perhaps twenty to his vices! Though the fields of such a man be fruitful, his soul must be barren, and he must be deceiving it with the soliloquy of the man in the parable, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." But the answer of God, like the writing of the unknown hand, spoils all,—“Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee.” Be wise, then, in time, Oh, ye covetous!

Your riches are but dross and dung in comparison to what we bring you,—we bring you a vessel freighted with heavenly merchandise, and were you to give yourselves, your houses, and your substance, you could not purchase anything we offer! Gifts, such as *we* bring, demand your *gratitude*, and the fruit of this gratitude is, *first*, “to give yourselves to the Lord,” and then, your substance; and, if you do this, then, we declare to you, on the authority of God, that even in this life you shall be gainers, “for every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.” Our holy religion, if *practiced* with that self-denial which *values Christ above all else*, confers “the promise of the life that is, as well as of that to come. *This is the voluntarism we want to see*; but we deny that it ever will be taught us by the *spoliation of our property, or by the political agitation of our pure voluntaries!* but by the *only agency which God has authorised to instil such principles*—BY THE PEACEFUL EXERCISE OF THE MINISTRY OF GOD.

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NOTE.—“THE VIA MEDIA,” OR MIDDLE WAY.

We regard our Church as the “Via Media” between two dangerous extremes—popery and dissent. We are aware that some sincere members of our Church dispute this position. One party maintains that there is *no* medium, and that popery and dissent are similar! Another party, on the contrary, supposes that dissent is the medium! Now, we feel certain that a very slight consideration will prove both these parties wrong, and that our Church is “The Via Media.” We ask then, in the first place, what is popery? A system of extreme doctrines. What is dissent? A system of *opposite doctrine*. Here surely there must be a medium, a place for truth. For instance, popery teaches absolution by the priest, *irrespective* of the fitness or unfitness of the recipient! dissent, aroused to indignation at such a doctrine, rushes to the other extreme, and denies *any* power in the minister; beyond that of a mere layman! Our Church, on the contrary, appeals to Scripture; her ministry fearlessly take the ground assigned to them as “ambassadors for God, who speak in His name and *stead*,” and to all who obey the conditions of the Gospel, we pronounce to such, “*being penitent*,” the forgiveness of sins. Such authority belongs not to laymen, it is intrusted to “the ministry of reconciliation.”—*See 2 Cor. v. 20; John xx. 23; Matt, xvi. 19.*

Again, popery teaches the “opus operatum” system of sacraments, insomuch, that grace is conferred alike on all by their reception: baptism secures salvation irrespective of conditions, and the Lord’s Supper becomes a charm, irrespective of the fitness or unfitness of the recipient! At this, dissent is horrified, rushes to the other extreme, *levels all sacraments*, and preaches exclusively of repentance and faith. Here the Church takes her ground again between these two dangerous extremes. She teaches, that repentance and faith, these mighty gifts, cannot be procured and strengthened without *all* the means, and that all

who look for salvation by Christ must honour these means. The water and the spirit are joined by our Saviour,—“ unless a man be born of water and the spirit.” Dissent would have the spirit *only*, and popery the water; but the happy medium is “ the water and the spirit.” “ What God has joined together let not man put asunder.” In the instruction of her people, popery believes that “ ignorance is bliss;” and accordingly, in the instruction of her youth, she would dole out scraps of superstition under the form of religion, and, if possible, would exclude any progress in sciences or literature. Dissent fires at this, rushes impetuously to the other extreme, and declares, that religion tramples the human mind, and hinders the progress of education! that the mind should have *no bias* from religion, but should be kept *free*! At once a war is waged against schools and universities, where the Bible assumed a prominence in instruction. Religious education is *then left* to chance, and “ secular education is the blessing!” Here again the Church takes her middle and Scriptural ground. She would remind popery, that religion *without* education produces superstition and priestcraft; and she would remind dissent, that education, *without* religion gives a crop of infidelity. Both of these dangers the Church protects us from, by establishing in all lands, schools and universities, where religion and education go hand in hand, and where the evils that might arise from the one, are counteracted by the salutary and restraining influence of the other. As a further instance of the battle between these two extremes, I would mention,—popery hangs its boasting and hopes upon unity. Although human tradition may not satisfy *some* of them, yet it is endured for the sake of unity. They would prefer to go to hell in unity, than to heaven by separation. Dissent sees this, and rushes headlong, as usual, to the other extreme, “ schism is a blessing!” “ unity a curse!”—a creature of the dark ages, to be dreaded!—a thing which strengthens popery, and *therefore* to be avoided! Our Church again takes the “ Via Media;” she pronounces unity a blessing, if it can be maintained *without sacrifice of fundamental truth*. She breathes after unity as the Saviour—“ Father, I will that they may be one;

even as we are one." Our Church, hating contention, and having selected Apostolic doctrine and discipline, as the primitive Churches taught, she gives no occasion for schism, and, as the Apostles, "marks those who cause divisions, and avoids them." Again, popery prays, exclusively with the missal; a form of prayer is gone through, and grace conferred by its repetition, the spirit need not accompany, the heart need not be engaged; if the mouth speaks, all is right! Dissent sees this awful extreme, and with fevered imagination wages a warfare against *all forms*,—"these are injurious to piety!" Thus, while popery prays *exclusively* with a form, dissent must pray *exclusively without one*! Both fatal extremes! Popery, by its extreme, builds up a castle of formality, and Dissent, by its extreme, a castle of enthusiasm! Here, again, our Church comes to our rescue, and places our feet on the "Via Media." She honours forms, if *Apostolic and Scriptural*, remembering that the Bible itself comes under this definition. She prays in a form, remembering the example of our Lord, who taught his disciples to do so, and composed a form for their use; and she follows the early infant church in the use of forms, as it would appear that the *first prayer* they ever offered up as, an *assembly*, was of *necessity* a form *previously* known by them,—*Acts* ii. 24, 30,—compared with the Second Psalm. In the use of forms, then, the Church would teach us to pray with the *understanding and the spirit*. Popery teaches prayer with the understanding, but not the spirit; and dissent teaches prayer with the spirit, but not the *understanding*. The Church's plan, being scriptural, is the only safe one, and is the middle path. Once more,—In the bosom of popery "all are safe!" there is "the kingdom of Heaven!" Saints and sinners have the same hopes, and assurances, and pardons. "What *difference* between *sinner and sinner* in the sight of Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity!" Dissent at once forges *its extreme*. On considering such blasphemy, they would at once separate "the clean from the unclean." A *perfect communion* THEY must have. Sinners must flee from the angels,—chaff from the wheat! Here again the Church takes the middle ground. She learns from the Saviour

that "both wheat and tares must grow together till the harvest,"—"pluck not up the tares, lest ye root up the wheat also." Let not man usurp the prerogative of God. Popery does so, in announcing *all* to be wheat, and safe. Dissent does so in distinguishing her saints. But the Church teaches, wait till "the harvest,"—"judge nothing before the time."

In the latter case, however, we have an instance of the extremes *meeting*, and some others might be adduced, such as when dissent pronounces the *immediate* pardon of a sinner on the *penitent bench*, it *meets* popery when pronouncing pardon in the confessional. Dissent, when it tells of its wonder-working, and sounds *its own praise*, *meets* popery in canonizing its saints, and practising "pious frauds." Dissent, when it finds a popular preacher, will hang its opinion upon his *individual opinion*, and thus *meets* popery in following a pope. Such instances, however, are *the exceptions* to the general rule; and even though here, we may have but *one extreme* to avoid, yet a *middle path* must be taken, as a channel may be dangerous, though it have only *one* treacherous coast.

But, notwithstanding these casual meetings of dissent and popery, still, there is quite sufficient left in dissent to pronounce it an extreme—an extreme, too, which holds its principles with the same pertinacity as popery; for instance,—to recapitulate:—

Popery gives to the ministry the power of God!

Dissent gives it no power!

Popery makes saviours of sacraments!

Dissent makes *nothing* of them!

Popery would worship bells, rags, and bones!

Dissent would have no higher feeling for churches, church property, or burial grounds, than for dwelling houses and merchandise!

Popery makes everything a form!

Dissent would have *no* form!

Popery makes marriage a sacrament!

Dissent would make it a *mere civil bargain*, and would banish prayer from its performance!

Popery would teach *the missal alone* in her universities !

Dissent would *banish even* the Bible therefrom !

Popery escapes Hell by unity !

Dissent gains Heaven by separation !

Many such instances might be adduced to prove the battle between these two extremes, but in looking *seriously* at them, we would maintain, that *superstition*, or popery, is one extreme, and *infidelity*, or dissent, is the other. There surely must be a place for truth amidst these two contending systems. Aye, verily ! *we believe it, this is "the Via Media,"*—the middle path,—where our Church has ever struggled, no way terrified by these two extremes, whether they *meet* or keep *separate*. There she stands, as a venerable matron, giving her lessons of experience to her children, watching over "the narrow path;" and, in viewing the frowning cliffs on either side, she teaches, "turn not to the *right* or *left*,"—

"IN *MEDIO TUTISSIMUS IBIS.*"



