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MINUTES AND REPORT

OF THE

FIRST ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

CANADA BAPTIST UNION,

HELD AT TORONTO JULY 26, 1844.

Montreal:

PRINTED BY ROLLO CAMPBELL.

1844.

MINUTES AND REPORT
Canada Baptist Union.

The first general meeting of this very useful and promising Association was held on Wednesday the 26th of June in the Baptist Chapel, March Street, Toronto. The interest felt in its objects and proceedings drew together delegates from various churches favourable to the design. An appropriate Sermon on Religious Liberty, as preparatory to the business of the day, was delivered the preceding evening by Mr. F. BOSWORTH, of the Baptist College, Montreal.

The following ministers and other members of the denomination, delegates from the various churches after specified, or otherwise members of the Union, were present.

Ministers.

N. Bosworth, Woodstock Church
 J. Winterbatham, Brantford Church
 John Girwood, Montreal Church
 F. Bosworth, do.
 John Edwards, Smithtown Church,
 Peterboro'
 A. Cleghorn, St. Catharines Church
 George Silver, Beamsville Church
 John Gilmour, Peterboro'
 John Oakley, Bronte
 Israel Marsh, Whitby Church
 Samuel Tapscott, Hope Church
 James Mitchell, York Township
 Thomas Gostick, Pickering Church
 Washington Christie, Toronto
 R. A. Fyfe, Montreal
 J. B. Vrooman, Queenston

Robert Boyd, Brockville Church
 Robert Dick, Lanark Church
 Alex. Lorimer, Montreal

Delegates, not Ministers.

David Buchan, Paris
 James Thomson, Laprairie
 Hugh Norman, Newmarket
 William Hall, Toronto
 D. Maitland, do.
 Benjamin M. Clark, Pickering
 T. Lonsdale, Montreal
 Ezekiel Gooderham, York Township
 Jacob Kitchen, Beamsville
 Jonathan Wolverton, do.
 William Miller, Markham
 Jacob Miller, do.
 James Edwards, Smithtown

The President of the Union, Mr. N. BOSWORTH, was called to the Chair, and the meeting was opened with prayer by Mr. Tapscott, after which letters were read from the following churches, viz. St. Catharines, Simcoe, Smithtown, Whitby, Yonge Street, Hope, Bloomfield, Markham, and Lanark. Letters had been previously received from the Brockville, Woolwich, Pickering, and Bosanquet churches.

The Secretary, D. Buchan, then read the Report prepared by the Executive Committee, of their proceedings during the past year.

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REPORT.

In presenting their first Annual Report, your Committee are happy to commence by congratulating you on the degree of success which has attended your efforts to engage the churches and members of the denomination, to which we have the honor to belong, in the work which has called us together on this occasion. Our success has, indeed, been but partial; yet it has upon the whole been sufficient to encourage our hopes, and prompt us to persevere in the course we have begun. And what great undertaking ever attained its utmost elevation in so short a time as we have been engaged in ours? Some difficulties were to be overcome—a variety of objections to be met and removed—before any progress could be made in the execution of the plan we had in view. And, even now, many misconceptions are entertained, and surmises thrown out against our objects and proceedings. It will be our duty to meet these in the kindest spirit, and to deal with them in the most calm and friendly manner.

In the latter part of the year 1842, several ministers and members of Baptist churches, in their occasional or incidental interviews, frequently mentioned to each other the desirableness of uniting the different sections of our denomination more closely together, so as to secure more frequency of intercourse, and greater harmony of operation among the numerous bodies holding our sentiments. With the increase of communication, the conviction appeared not only to gather strength, but also to take possession of other minds. At length, early in the year 1843, a few friends met together to consider the matter more seriously, to discuss the propriety of attempting a general Union, and to consult upon a plan for accomplishing this desirable purpose.

The result of this small meeting was the appointment of another more numerous, which assembled in the neighbourhood of Paris on the 19th of June last year, when the Union was formed, an

Executive Committee appointed, and measures taken for the preparation and publication of the principles and rules. The first meeting of the Executive Committee was held at Brantford on the 12th of September, when a draft of the Constitution was reported by the Sub-Committee appointed to prepare it; and, after discussion and amendment, agreed to and ordered to be printed. Two forms of Petition to the Legislature on the subject of College Reform—one from the Executive Committee, and the other designed for recommendation to individual churches—were adopted; and a Circular ordered to be sent, in conjunction with the Constitution and account of the proceedings, to all persons likely to co-operate in the measure.

The Circular, as is generally the case in movements of a similar character, met with various reception from the different persons to whom it was sent. By some it was approved, by others it was passed over without notice, and some few declined, for the present, to act upon its invitation. From some of the former class your Secretary has received very kind and encouraging letters, a few extracts from which will be heard with interest by the meeting.

From Mr. Boyd, Pastor of the *Brockville* church—"A Baptist church has lately been formed in this town under my preaching, of which I have now become pastor . . . We have seen the regulations of the Canada Baptist Union of which we very much approve; and last night the church resolved to join the Union, and requested me to write you expressing their adherence to it. They have also resolved to send me to represent them at the meeting of the Union to be held in Toronto on the 26th June."

From Mr. Sim, Pastor of the *Woolwich* Church—"Dear Brethren in Christ, Your effort to promote the union and fellowship of our denomination throughout the Province, is one of such interest that I should wonder at those who say they love the Redeemer's cause, and yet refuse a hearty co-operation . . . 'Union is strength.' Let the Baptists know it. Let them unite their efforts. Let them seize the precious moment for strengthening the churches—for disseminating light—for truth is on their side already."

From Mr. Gostick, Pastor of the *Pickering* Church—"Having learned with much pleasure that it is intended to hold a meeting in Toronto on the 26th inst., in order to promote the objects of the Baptist Union, I beg leave to forward a concise statement of the views entertained on the subject by a small band of Christian friends with whom I stand connected in this neighbourhood. [After a detail of the rise and present condition of the church, Mr. Gostick adds] Soliciting an interest in the fervent prayers and kind sympathies of their brethren, they have requested me to transmit to you a copy of their resolution passed at the last church meeting,

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The Resolution is as follows:—"Resolved, that as a Church we consider the objects contemplated by the proposed Union, to be of immense importance. We rejoice in the success which has attended the efforts of our brethren, and desire to the utmost of our ability to co-operate with them."

From the *Simcoe* church—"It was with pleasure that we received your Circular, containing the welcome news of the formation of the Canada Baptist Union. It has excited in our minds the liveliest feelings of gratitude and joy. . . . We pray that great prosperity and great usefulness may attend your new institution, and for the abundant blessing of the Lord to be poured out on this land. Be assured of our cordial support in your important work. . . . We invite the next annual meeting to Simcoe."

From the *Smithtown* church—"Having taken into consideration the objects contemplated by the union of the churches of the same faith and order, in this province, and believing these to be conducive to the prosperity of evangelical religion, we, at our last church meeting, unanimously resolved to connect ourselves as a church, with the Canada Baptist Union, agreeably to its published regulations."

From the *Whitby* church—"Believing as we do, that union is strength, we rejoice at the occurrence of any thing calculated to cultivate or secure this inestimable blessing to our denomination in Canada. Nothing gives us more pain than to witness the spirit of division among Christians, more especially among our own people. We consider it our duty to cultivate union between the different denominations as far as we can without a sacrifice of our religious principles; and we think that those holding or believing the same fundamental doctrine, should not suffer differences on minor points to separate them. How painful the thought, that our strength must be paralyzed by those unhappy jealousies which draw the separating line between those who are brethren, and make them afraid of each other. May the Lord grant that this withering and chilling spirit may flee before the spirit of brotherly love. . . . What a blessing it would be, if all the Baptists in Canada would lay aside jealousies, and concentrate all their strength. What a powerful army they would constitute. We hail the formation of this friendly Union, as a means which, we hope, with the blessing of God, may bring us into a more intimate acquaintance with each other; and, while each church is left to manage its own affairs, let us unitedly engage in the high and holy work of evangelizing the world; and also, if necessary, to watch over our religious privileges. Until this is the case, the Baptists in Canada cannot arise in all their strength. In fact, until they will unite their energies, their strength cannot be known."

From the *Yonge-street* church—"Believing that it is the privilege as well as the duty of Christians to be united in the bonds of peace, and in righteousness of life, and that they should strive to-

gether for the things that make for peace, and for those things whereby one may edify another; and believing also, that union is power, we feel it incumbent upon us to request admission into your Union, and to crave an interest in your prayers, and the benefit of your counsels, and any other assistance that you may deem necessary to render us, which may in any way promote the cause of our blessed Redeemer in this part of his moral vineyard."

From the *Hope* church—"As we regard the union of our churches to be conducive, in a high degree, to the promotion of a spirit of love and harmony through our entire brotherhood, and securing a more vigorous and efficient co-operation in the advancement of the kingdom of our Redeemer in this extensive province, we hail its formation with joy and thankfulness. As we believe *the truth*, in the same proportion shall we cherish the views, imbibed the principles, and imitate the virtues which adorned the character of our exalted Saviour. If there be one subject on which his benevolent heart is more intensely concerned than another, it is the love and union of his followers, and the healing influence which that love and union are adapted to exert over the putrescent mass of the earth's inhabitants. . . . How important in his estimation must be the *oneness* of his disciples, when, in the immediate view of all that was overwhelming, in the awful scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, he so fervently prayed that they all might be one, 'as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.' . . . In the absence of these principles, little internal prosperity can be enjoyed, and no bold and aggressive efforts made upon the gigantic and distinctive delusions of the day in which we live. As in a cord every thread both receives to itself, and communicates to each and to all additional strength, so must each church thus united both secure and bestow that mutual sympathy, and succour, and efficiency which all need, but which none can realize in a state of distance and alienation. Under the influence of these views, we apply for admission into the Union."

The other letters were of similar import.

Animated by these and other expressions of confidence and support, your committee look forward to the time when the principles and object of the Union being better understood and appreciated, many who now hesitate about joining it, will see it their duty to come forward in its support.

In some quarters a suspicion has arisen and obtained a wide circulation, that the Union will probably infringe upon the independence of the churches in connection with it, and assume a dominant influence over their concerns. Your Committee cannot but feel surprised at the existence of such an apprehension, inasmuch as they have disclaimed, again and again, in language the most express and positive, any such power, or any such desire of

interference; and to the constitution of such power to be assumed or suggested free in the management of the Union as before.

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interference; and would now remark, in addition, that, according to the constitution of the Union, it would be impossible for any such power to be exercised, even if any should be so unwise as to assume or suggest it. Every church, therefore, will remain as free in the management of its own affairs, after it has joined the Union as before.

It appears to your Committee quite unnecessary to dwell at any length upon the advantages of such a Union as we have commenced, since these have been pointed out in the statements already before the public; they trust, however, that every member of the Union will avail himself of all suitable opportunities to make known its principles and design, and to engage other individuals and churches to unite themselves with it. The slightest observation will convince any one that, as Baptists, we lose much of that influence which we might otherwise exert upon the general community, by the detached and insulated position which we have too long maintained, and the want of that harmony in great and important movements in which, above all other denominations, it may be feared we are deficient, and which it is most incumbent upon us hereafter to cultivate and display.

The consideration that our distinguishing tenet, though legitimately drawn, as we believe from the oracles of God, is viewed with extreme jealousy and dislike by some of other denominations of Christians, ought to urge us to closer compact, that we may present to the world, in a more inviting form, and with greater power of conviction, "one" important "and neglected truth."

If other reasons were wanting, the advantage of having a standing committee to watch over all public proceedings affecting our religious liberties, and to resort, promptly and at once, to such measures as special occasions may require, will be sufficient, in the mind of every considerate Baptist, not only to justify the formation of the Union, but also to establish its importance and utility.

During the first year of the existence of the Union, it was not to be expected that many statistical returns would be made of the numbers and state of the several churches belonging to it; but the importance of possessing and arranging such returns is so great and obvious, that your committee would earnestly recommend every church to make such a return to the Corresponding Secretary before the next general meeting.

In carrying on the operations of the Union, expenses will

necessarily be incurred for postage, and for printing notices, Circulars, and reports; your Committee would, therefore, recommend to all the churches in connection with the Union to contribute each a few dollars annually towards defraying such expenses. From the Treasurer's report it appears that the sum of £1 12s. 8d. was contributed last year, of which £1 7s. 8d. was immediately expended for printing, &c.

Upon a review of the proceedings of the past year, your Committee feel encouraged to hope that the Union will ultimately, though it may be slowly, commend itself to the good will and concurrence of the greater part, if not the whole, of the Baptist body in this province. The Baptist Union in England has now existed more than thirty years; but for more than half that time it was comparatively little known and supported among the churches in Britain. It was, however, gradually working its way, and diffusing its principles; and now it comprehends by far the greater number of churches in the land—more than one thousand out of about thirteen hundred—and is yearly receiving accessions to its strength. On various occasions it has rendered very efficient services to the cause of Religious Liberty in England. We have no reason, therefore, to despair; but rather, to "thank God and take courage."

Your Committee, in conclusion, would say to this meeting, and to all their Baptist brethren through the land,

"Arise! let us no more contend, or blame each other;

let us rather cultivate a more intimate acquaintance with each other, and cherish a spirit of respect, and courtesy, and harmony among ourselves. In this way we may hope, and shall ultimately be able, to exert as a body a more powerful influence upon public sentiment, and mould it more and more to a fair and calm and rational investigation of our principles, and thus prepare the way for their more extensive adoption and prevalence; a consequence which, however desired by us all,—as long as our present divisions are continued, we shall hope and look for in vain. But let us anticipate better things; let us look for brighter days; let us invoke the spirit of unity and love; then "GOD, EVEN OUR OWN GOD, SHALL BLESS US," and cause the "LIGHT OF HIS COUNTENANCE TO SHINE UPON US."

It having been arranged by the Executive Committee on the preceding evening that the resolutions prepared by them should be brought forward by the Secretary without the

necessity of a resolutions were discussed, and were passed follows:—

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necessity of a formal moving and seconding of each, the said resolutions were read by him one by one, and having been discussed, and in some instances slightly amended, they were passed unanimously by the meeting. They are as follows :—

1. That the Report now read be adopted by this meeting, and circulated under the direction of the Executive Committee.
2. That being fully persuaded of the beneficial influence and tendency of the Union thus formed, in promoting the harmony and strength of the churches in the denomination, we pledge ourselves to use every effort in our power towards its support and extension.
3. That this meeting is desirous of expressing in the most cordial manner its brotherly affection towards the Baptist Union in England, and will feel honored and happy in being able to co-operate with that Society in promoting the interests of the denomination ; and through that medium, the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in the world.
4. That the right of every man to the enjoyment and exercise of complete Religious Liberty, is a principle we hold to be unquestionable ;—that it ought to be maintained, inculcated, and unfolded on every suitable occasion, and that Mr. F. Bosworth be requested to furnish a copy of the Discourse he delivered last evening, to be printed at the expense of the Union.
5. That the University of King's College being originally intended for the general benefit of the youth of this Colony, ought to be equally open to all classes of her Majesty's subjects without distinction ; and that the following Petition founded on this conviction, be presented to the Legislature from this Union, signed by the Chairman and Secretaries, praying that the Institution may be established on such a basis, as to secure this important object.

*Unto the Honourable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of
Canada in Provincial Parliament Assembled.*

THE PETITION OF THE CANADA BAPTIST UNION,
Humbly Sheweth,

That the denomination of Christians called Baptists has ever been foremost in maintaining the principle that, man not being responsible to man for his belief, civil governments have no right to distinguish between different religious sects, by giving to one a privilege, or imposing upon another a disability ;—that each member of the civil community, of whatever faith, is entitled to an equal share in the benefits conferred by Government upon the people ; and that the exhibition of favouritism to any one, or even a plurality of sects, to the exclusion of others, instead of advancing the interests of religion, encourages religious dissention,—promotes political discontent,—places a premium upon hypocrisy,—and is a direct violation of the rights of conscience.

That your Petitioners are under the necessity of again representing to your Honorable House, that the great principles of Re-

ligious Liberty which they thus hold, have been grievously violated in the manner in which the Episcopalian sect of Christians have been allowed to divert a large portion of the funds set apart for the education of the youth of the Province, from their original purpose, and to obtain an undue influence in the distribution of the benefits and management of the affairs of the University of King's College at Toronto.

The circumstances in which that Institution is placed have been so often brought before your Honorable House,—and the injustice and impolicy of allowing its charter to remain in its present condition, have been so ably demonstrated, that it is unnecessary for your Petitioners to enter into particulars. Your Petitioners, in common with a great majority of the inhabitants of Canada, are desirous of seeing the public Educational Institutions entirely freed from the preponderating influence of any denomination of Christians, and put upon such a footing as to insure perfect equality to persons of all religious sects, not only in the enjoyment of their educational privileges, but in the supply of their various chairs of learning, and the management of their general affairs.

Your Petitioners would further beg leave, most respectfully, yet firmly, to assure your Honorable House that they cannot be satisfied with partial measures in a matter where Religious Liberty is involved; and that they will continue their appeals to your Honorable House, until perfect Religious Equality is established in the management of the public Institutions of the Province.

May it therefore please your Honorable House to take the premises into your early and serious consideration, and so to alter and amend the charter, and regulate the management of the University of King's College, as to meet the wishes of your Petitioners.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

6. That all State provision for the support of the gospel is inimical to its principles and spirit, and ought therefore to be abandoned.

7. That Slavery being in our view utterly inconsistent with the spirit of the gospel, we cordially sympathise with our brethren all over the world, who are exerting themselves for its abolition.

8. That the churches forming this Union make an annual collection, or otherwise contribute towards the expenses necessarily incurred in carrying on its operations, and that these contributions be transmitted to the Treasurer with the least possible delay.

9. That the following persons be the Office Bearers and Executive Committee for the year ensuing, viz:—

Chairman.

N. BOSWORTH, F.R.A.S., Minister of Woodstock Church.

Corresponding Secretary.

J. WINTERBOTHAM, Minister of Brantford Church.

Recording Secretary.

DAVID BUCHAN, Dumfries, near Paris.

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WALTER EWING BUCHAN, Dumfries, near Paris.

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| A. Burtch, Woodstock | T. Pillworth | } Brantford |
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| W. Rees, Minister of Simcoe Church | W. Mayle | } Minister of Hamilton Ch. |
| J. Winch, Simcoe | A. Booker, Minister of Beamsville Ch. | |
| J. McConnell, Minister of first Townsend Church | G. Silver, Minister of Beamsville Ch. | } Minister of Blenheim Church |
| J. Barber, Townsend | D. Wolverton, Beamsville | |
| W. H. Landon, Min. of Tuscarora Ch. | E. Topping, Minister of Blenheim Church | |

10. That the next general meeting be held at Simcoe, on such day, in the summer of 1845, as the Executive Committee may see proper to appoint.

After these Resolutions passed by the Executive Committee had been passed, the following business was transacted.

It was moved by Mr. John Edwards, seconded by Mr. Girdwood, and unanimously resolved,—That we regard it as a Christian duty to render obedience to the Government under which it is our privilege to live, in all things which do not interfere with the rights of conscience.

It was moved by Mr. Buchan, seconded by Mr. J. Edwards, and unanimously resolved,—That in consequence of the impositions which have, on various occasions, been practised by persons seeking aid professedly for religious or benevolent purposes, it is inexpedient for the members of the Baptist denomination in this Province to contribute on such occasions, unless the person soliciting assistance shall produce a certificate as to the propriety of his application, from the Executive Committee of this Union, or from the office-bearers of the respective associations, within whose bounds he may be at the time; and that this Union would recommend to the different associations in the Province, the propriety of appointing Sub-Committees to examine and reject, or certify their approval of such applications.

Moved by Mr. Winterbotham, seconded by Mr. Tapscott, and unanimously resolved,—That a respectful Petition be presented to the Legislature from this Union, praying that a law may be passed to secure to Western Canada, a Registration of births and deaths, as is the case in other parts of the British Empire, and that the Executive Committee be instructed to prepare and forward the same, signed by the Chairman.

On the motion of Mr. WINTERBOTHAM, the thanks of the meeting were given by acclamation to the President for his conduct in the Chair; after which the Chair was vacated, and the meeting of the Union declared to be at an end.

The spirit of unity, brotherly love, and active zeal, which distinguished all the proceedings of the Union, warrants us in entertaining the hope that this Association, in its future operations, will be productive of incalculable benefit to the cause of pure religion, to the maintenance of Religious Liberty, and to our stability and success as a denomination. "United we stand, divided we fall."

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, near Paris.

A DISCOURSE.

"Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty."—Gal. v. 13.

Much ignorance prevails respecting the subject of Religious Liberty, not merely amongst its decided opponents, but also amongst those whose outward connexion with its professed adherents should induce them to be better acquainted with its principles, and more fully persuaded of its scriptural character and vastly important practical results.

Many, it is to be feared, even among ourselves, have no other warrant for entertaining the vague opinions which they hold on this subject, than that derived from the example of their forefathers. Such persons know not the *why* or the *wherefore* of their belief. They can neither state their views with any perspicuity, nor can they defend them with any success. Hence it becomes our duty, on all suitable occasions, to direct the attention of our people to this subject, which, if not of primary and vital importance, is of sufficient consequence to merit more careful study than it at present receives amongst us.

But a want of acquaintance with the principles of Religious Liberty is not confined to those who are ostensibly its advocates, or to members of our own denomination. It more fully distinguishes the great mass of those who reject its aims, and deny the right of its enjoyment. From such,

misrepresentations the most unaccountable, and charges the most unfounded, continually proceed. These must be exposed and met.

With, then, the two-fold design of endeavoring, however imperfectly, to instruct our brethren, and of making such explicit statements as may tend in some measure to remove misconceptions on the part of our adversaries, we proceed to the consideration of the topic proposed for this occasion, namely,—THE PRINCIPLES OF RELIGIOUS LIBERTY. While thus engaged, we shall, we trust, be guilty of no inattention to the claims of Christian courtesy and love, not forgetting at the same time, that, in the language of Bishop Burnet, “whatever moderation or charity we owe to men’s *persons*, we owe none at all to their *errors*, or to that frame which is founded on or sustained by them.”

Without further preliminary observations, our attention will now be directed to a brief and explicit statement of our views,—to the reasons which lead us to entertain them,—and to the motives which should urge us to be strenuous in their maintenance and dissemination.

I. *It will be proper to give a concise and explicit statement of our views on the subject before us.* These are all founded upon the simple propositions, *that conscience must be free from all outward and coercive restraints, and that it is the inalienable right of every man, though deeply responsible to God, to think and act for himself in all matters of a religious nature, without the interference or compulsory intervention of any human authority whatever.* With the expression of these truths we should content ourselves while dwelling on this part of our subject, were it not that they, however much they may commend themselves “to every man’s conscience in the sight of God,” have been thought to militate against the performance of our duty as subjects, the unity of the church, the purity of its doctrines, the suppression of error, and that concentration of individual and collective effort which is essential to all great undertakings. That the rights of conscience and of private judgment, far from being productive of these disastrous effects, directly

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and to a contrary result, it will be our duty, with brevity,
 to prove, by which means our views will be unfolded.

Recognizing the principle that *civil* and *ecclesiastical*
 governments occupy totally distinct departments, we do not
 feel, while holding the sentiments expressed above, that the
 charge of disloyalty so frequently and indeed industriously
 preferred against us, can in the least degree be substantiated.
 It is asserted that we are disaffected, and why? Merely
 because we do not recognize the right of the civil power to
 interfere in matters purely spiritual. But we affirm that
 there is no necessary connexion between disobedience to an
 earthly sovereign, and conscientious allegiance to the king
 of kings; between the assertion of our rights as responsible
 beings, and as Christians, and the abuse of our privileges
 and disobedience to our lawful sovereign as subjects of a
 political community. We cannot conceive that a tenacious

adherence to the commands of God, with respect to our
 duty to Him, has any tendency whatever to weaken the re-
 quirements which he has addressed to us as subjects. We
 have yet to learn that the most conscientious are, as a matter
 of course, the most disloyal, and that those who are the least
 so, are pre-eminently distinguished for their patriotism and
 their obedience "to the powers that be."

Nay, more, we maintain that the voluntary, unbought,
 high-minded obedience of those who hold the principles we
 avow, and who, while they render to God the things that
 are His, are as much disposed subordinately thereto, to offer
 to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, gives more stability
 to the throne, and more manly dignity and constitutional
 liberty to the people, than that of those whose intimate con-
 nexion with the State, and whose support being derived
 therefrom, must necessarily subject them to many impu-
 tations.

Does history bear us out in these remarks? We think
 it does. Even under proscriptions, fines, penalties, and
 imprisonment, the consistent advocates of Religious Liberty
 have not been unfaithful to their duty as subjects. When
 the Test Act was passed in 1672, the Nonconformists of that
 day, through Alderman Love as their representative, gene-

rously sacrificed their own privileges, and subjected themselves to much subsequent suffering, in order to free the nation from the joint effects of Popery and arbitrary rule. During the rebellions of 1715 and 1745, a striking instance of their attachment to the reigning family of Hanover, was given in the organizing and supporting of two regiments for the defence of the crown; for which instances of loyalty an act of indemnity had to be passed in the House of Commons in order to free these faithful subjects from a legal process. (1)

It may be said, notwithstanding, that since the union of Church and State is so intimate in the Fatherland, the inculcation of principles opposed to that connexion necessarily involves us in the charge of disloyalty. To this we reply, that the laws of the land recognize our right to the maintenance and dissemination of our views. Besides, if allegiance be necessarily connected with membership in the Establishment of the Church of England, it must follow, as necessarily, that all dissidents from that faith are defective in their loyalty,—that almost the entire British Empire, including of course its dependencies, lies under the ban of rebellion, or at least of disaffection. But who will affirm this? Nay, more, it implies that the government in rendering any countenance or support whatever to the maintenance of Presbyterianism, Popery, Mohammedanism, Boodhism, or indeed any form of religious worship, not Episcopalian, is guilty of not only conniving at disloyalty, but of actually fostering it. Let but this principle be held, and we shall be required in order to prove our loyalty, to be Mohammedans in Turkey, Boodhists in China, Fetish worshippers in Ashantee. In a word, we shall be obliged to offer up our consciences at the shrine of civil government, and regulate our faith, not by the word of the living God, but by acts of parliament, and by the mandates of official authority.

Moreover, if the charge of disaffection could be substantiated on this ground, we should gladly bear it, since precisely the same charge might be brought against our Lord himself and his disciples, and since his gospel requires us,

in matters of this cannot be Gladly, no time been of our beloved and in defence attached to th ancestors, in brethren, who deserve to be according to Hu tributed all it Nor do we f have any more strongly inc development o mote disaffect contrary, it ap arise of Chris enjoyment of r that we read n externals,—of and opinion wi articles, canoni constitute the b unity of the br founded on an s and work of Ch on the authority union in heaven t thinketh no ev at the basis of al be seen that the the disallowance union, must nee ately requisite uniformity wher former, if strictly of the latter. It

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Gladly, notwithstanding the slights which have from time
to time been cast upon us, do we gather around the throne
of our beloved Sovereign, in support of her lawful rights,
and in defence of her honour; and most strongly are we
attached to that Constitution, to which our Nonconforming
ancestors, in common with those of our Congregational
brethren, whose noble efforts in defence of Religious Liberty
deserve to be held in perpetual remembrance, have, ac-
cording to Hume, no partial authority in this matter, *con-*
tributed all its freedom.

Nor do we feel that our principles, as heretofore stated,
have any more tendency to destroy that unity which Christ
so strongly inculcates, and which is so necessary to the full
development of the religion of Jesus, than they have to pro-
mote disaffection towards the civil government. On the
contrary, it appears to us that the only ground for the ex-
ercise of Christian union, is to be found in the perfect
enjoyment of religious freedom. Let it never be forgotten
that we read not in Scripture of a mere bare uniformity in
externals,—of the vast importance of a similarity of feeling
and opinion with reference to liturgies, Athanasian creeds,
articles, canonicals, orders, pluralities, &c., which help to
constitute the boasted oneness of our Establishment. The
unity of the brotherhood lies far deeper than this. It is
founded on an agreement of opinion respecting the person
and work of Christ, on a cordial reception of his atonement,
on the authority of his injunctions, on the hope of an eternal
union in heaven, and on the exercise of that charity which
"thinketh no evil," and that mutual forbearance which lies
at the basis of all Religious Liberty. Now it will readily
be seen that the allowance of private judgment to all, and
the disallowance of civil interference, instead of marring this
union, must necessarily strengthen it, and is indeed abso-
lutely requisite to its full development. There may be
uniformity where there is no Christian unity. Indeed the
former, if strictly insisted upon, is necessarily destructive
of the latter. It becomes an idol which usurps the place of

God, a Moloch to whom must be cast the tender sensibilities of our nature, and the holy charities of our religion. It calls into play the coercive authority of the secular power—that sword, the use of which Christ rejected,—and discards the united influence of persuasion, argument, example, and love. It commands instead of entreats, it anathematizes and punishes instead of using the more potent and heavenly weapons of the Spirit. And can such an uniformity, superficial, cold, and cruel, be that which Christ inculcates? The principles of our holy religion, the feelings of humanity, and the testimony of history alike negative the idea. Besides, the religion of Jesus is expressly adapted to our condition as social beings; but the duties and the privileges of the social compact are invaded when coercion is employed, they are basely surrendered when force is slavishly submitted to. To love as *brethren*, we must trust each other as brethren, as immortals, equal in the sight of God as respects responsibility and eternal duration. We must be as desirous that others should enjoy full liberty of conscience, as that we ourselves should do so; and we must, while conscientiously holding our opinions in the sight of God, disclaim for ourselves any assumption of infallibility whatever, and gather around the grand, the fundamental, the saving truths of the gospel of grace.

But it may be asked, will not this allowance of the rights of conscience lead to much laxity of practice, and much division of opinion? We fearlessly assert that it will not produce these evils to such an extent, and that it will not invest them with such pernicious influences, as must necessarily be the case with any system of religion which disallows this right, and gladly entwines itself around the civil power, and which, while it punishes the conscientious, bestows a premium upon the hypocrite. While we affirm that no man has any authority to dictate to us what things are to be believed, and what to be done in matters of a spiritual nature, we at the same time consider ourselves amenable to Him who searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men. We sever man from his connexion with his fellows, in order that we may make him feel his solemn, his

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at the tender sensibilities of our religion. In the rejection of the secular power, and the discarding of argument, example, and authority, it anathematizes and condemns the most potent and heavenly influence. Is there a uniformity, superadded to our condition as the privileges of the church is employed, they slavishly submitted to each other as brethren, God as respects respect must be as desirous that conscience, as that we while conscientiously disclaim for ourselves, and gather the saving truths of the

allowance of the rights of conscience, and much to assert that it will not and that it will not, as must necessarily which disallows the civil power, licentious, bestows a we affirm that no what things are to tters of a spiritual selves amenable to the reins of the connexion with his feel his solemn, his

careful responsibility to his God. We turn his gaze from mortals whose breath is in their nostrils, and fix it on that being who is his creator, preserver, lawgiver, and judge. And is this more designed to produce licentiousness in morals, than the working of those systems that shift human responsibility, if not altogether, yet in some degree, on those who minister at the national altar,—who invest the ordinances of the church with saving power, and in many instances scorn the idea that a change of heart is requisite in order to enter heaven,—who attach great importance to the resuscitated puerilities of by-gone years,—and who widen the circumference of the church until it is bounded only by the geographical limits of the nation? “The liberty, indeed, for which we plead, is not licentiousness:—in thinking and acting for ourselves, we claim no power to think or act differently from the prescriptions and directions of the word of God, and especially of the New Testament. For though the great God himself does not force our faith and obedience, or deny us the liberty of choosing for ourselves, yet certainly we can have no right or interest to choose otherwise than as he prescribes, or to reject what he enjoins.”

Nay, far from encouraging laxity of practice in the maintenance of our principles, we divest error, its most fertile source, of the only power it can wield in its defence by propagation, since we utterly deny the right of disseminating tenets by compulsion, and demand that every thing of a religious nature should be presented to the mind, and be judged by its respective merits.

And, as regards diversity of opinion, who that knows anything of the history of Establishments, or of the workings of the human mind, will be hood-winked by the assertion that similarity in externals necessarily prevents difference in opinion! that ministers clothed in the same habiliments, must, as a matter of course, agree in the same views, and that those reciting the same liturgy, and subscribing the same articles, know no diversity of sentiment in matters of doctrine and practice. The folly of such assertions is seen in the fact, that they are made by men whose ignorance of the first principles of religion should render their opinion of no value;

and it has also been strikingly manifested of late, in that schism which threatens to shake the Establishment of our Fatherland to the centre. True it is that uniformity, based upon coercion, and supported by ignorance, has frequently excited a benumbing influence on the human mind, and left captive its energies. But this worst of all results has always been diversified by energetic remonstrances, determined resistance, and sad dissention. And so much has this been the case, that the most fearful displays of schismatic hatred have ever been given by those professedly Christian churches that have arrogated to themselves the sole glory of uniformity, and the sole authority derived from Apostolical Succession. (3)

Nor do the principles we hold prevent us from uniting in associations, and otherwise combining our efforts, when the cause of truth can be advanced by these means. Our views on this subject coincide exactly with those put forth in the Declaration issued by the Elders and Messengers of the Congregational churches assembled in the Savoy, 1658, which are thus expressed:—"In cases of difficulties or differences it is deemed according to the mind of Christ that many churches holding intercourse together, do by their messengers meet in a synod or council, to consider and give their advice in or about that matter of difficulty, &c. Howbeit those synods so assembled, are not entrusted with any church power, properly so called, or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures or to impose their determination on the churches and officers."

Thus by upholding the liberty of conscience, we assert the solemn and inalienable rights of man,—we recognize the high claims of God,—we rob error of the only weapons she can successfully employ,—we supply the only sure ground for the exercise of Christian unity,—and at the same time we do not exclude ourselves from that assemblage of counsellors in which there is wisdom, and that union of efforts which is essential to enlarged success.

II. *It now becomes our duty to advert to some of the reasons which lead us to entertain the views we have ad-*

ifested of late, in the *ence, and to desire their dissemination. One reason is*
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 news we have ad- this matter, no human legislature," says the Episcopalian

Daubeny, "has any liberty to grant." We, therefore, when insisting on our privileges, do not assume the attitude of suppliants, but demand universal and impartial "freedom to worship God," feeling that one man's conscience is as much to be respected as another's.

Will it be said that, though this should be allowed, yet as every man has not the same ability to form a correct judgment, this ought in such cases to be formed for him by persons more experienced and better instructed! Let it, however, be remembered, that the *right to choose* is one thing, and the *wisdom to choose aright* another. The former cannot be alienated, whatever man may think, or say, or do; the latter can and may be helped and improved. For this very purpose the Christian ministry was instituted, and the pastors of the church appointed, not that they might compel men outwardly to believe by the arm of power, but that they might "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine," and thus win souls to Christ.

May not heresy, it may be asked, be put down by compulsion? Does not the maintenance of error destroy the right of private judgment? Certainly not. In the language of the celebrated Chrysostom, we declare, that "Christians have no right to suppress error by external power; they may employ for the salvation of men, only persuasion, reason, and love."

Another reason is derived from the character of religion itself. Christianity is *personal* in its character and claims. It is that business which lies between God and the soul. To every man it unfolds the credentials of its heavenly origin, makes known its claims, declares its denunciations, and proclaims its rewards; and from each it requires a cordial and immediate reception. It consequently admits not of any transaction by *deputies*, or any discharge of its duties, or shifting of its claims, by *proxy*. Descent will not avail in this matter. "Every one of us must give account of himself to God." "The care, therefore, of every man's soul," says Locke, "belongs to himself."

Again, religion requires *voluntary* submission and obedience. Now this must be the result of conviction, not

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coercion; of choice, not of compulsion. To assert the contrary will be to utter a contradiction in terms—a palpable absurdity. But that which is voluntary *must* arise from the exercise of the right of private judgment. It requires for its very existence a freedom as unfettered as the air we breathe.

The worship which God requires is also *spiritual*. Did religion consist in mere externals, compulsion, in order to produce uniformity, might be less blameworthy than it is; but since Christianity takes its seat in the heart, and claims authority over all the inner man, such coercion must be rejected. "They that worship God *must* worship him in spirit and in truth." This is right, nay, it is essential. But can there be any sincere, spiritual worship without the exercise of that freedom which God has given us, and which we advocate and demand? Will the authoritative command of another, enforced though it be by penalties and fines, implant the seeds of piety in the breasts of any? Will force make men believe? If so, Charlemagne was both right and successful in driving the Saxons to baptism at the point of the sword, and the followers of Mohammed, in offering to the vanquished, the Koran or death.

Religion also is essentially a development of the principle of love. But how can this be exercised, by those whose dearest rights are invaded, and whose holiest feelings are outraged, *towards* the inflictors of this wrong. We need not ask how these persecutors themselves can have any affection for their victims. *Mutual forbearance lies at the basis of love.*

A third reason can be deduced from the declarations of Scripture, and the example of Christ and his Apostles. The principles of Religious Liberty were plainly taught by our Lord and his Apostles, in defiance even of the commands and threats of the Jewish Sanhedrim. Jesus continually proclaimed the doctrine of man's accountability. He plainly asserted that each should receive according to the deeds done in the body; that if men perished, they would be guilty of losing their own souls. He required that each man should do as he would be done by; a rule which at once involves

the principles we have been advocating. And when arraigned at the bar of Pilate, his celebrated reply to the procurator's query, "my kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight," is conclusive with respect to the matter in hand. Let it be observed, too, that the Great Teacher paid much respect to the principles of our nature, and never sought to propagate his doctrines by force, but by instruction, persuasion, and love. Nor were the Apostles of our Lord behind their master in speaking on this point. On one occasion, when threats of force were used to induce them to forego the preaching of the gospel, they heroically exclaimed, "we ought to obey God rather than man." "Let every man," says Paul in writing to the Galatians, "prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another; for every man shall bear his own burden." So careful was he upon this matter, that he would have "every one fully persuaded in his own mind." "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy," says James; "who art thou that judgest another?"

The fourth and last reason we shall mention is derived from the testimony of history. It has ever been found that with the allowance of the liberty of conscience, the efficiency of religion has been increased; while with its proscription, abuses have crept into the church, and ignorance, ambition, and sensuality have abounded. Long before the time of Constantine, the freedom of the human mind, so much enjoyed in the Apostolic age, had been shackled by the prevalence of superstitious views, so universally disseminated as to have the force of law; and by the usurpations of the hierarchy, who in very early times departed most widely from that simple humility which led the Apostles to desire to be servants of all, the helpers of the joys of the brethren. With the introduction of civil authority within the precinct of the Christian church—an introduction by the way, which of itself affords an instance of the degeneracy of pure religion at the time,—a great increase of power was brought to bear upon matters ecclesiastical, which being strengthened by every successive grant, and rendered more arrogant by every

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 consciences of all, and endeavoured to rule with unrelenting
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 vital godliness? What spectacle did Christendom then
 present? Uniformity indeed was visible; but it was the
 uniformity of death, the oneness which distinguishes a
 putrified mass, the sameness of the trackless desert. A dark-
 ness that might be felt brooded over the land, and a blood-
 guiltiness and licentiousness, that blushed not, stalked
 abroad; while those whose duty it was to lead men to
 Christ, were themselves the vilest of the vile. (4)

This state of things was indeed changed for the better at
 the period of the Reformation, but how? By the exertions
 of men who dared to think for themselves, and who arose in
 the majesty of truth and the consciousness of God's aid to
 assert the rights of freedom, to publish far and wide man's
 accountability, his sin and remedy.

Nor was the disallowance of the liberty of conscience less
 destructive to the rights of humanity, than to the purity
 of religious faith. Tens of thousands from among the Do-
 natists, Paulicians, Waldenses, Huguenots, Covenanters,
 and Puritans, have been inhumanly put to death for not
 surrendering their consciences to proud aspirants, and for
 not bowing down to the idols set up by interested and ambi-
 tious prelates. And why was this? Because men tamely sur-
 rendered the liberty with which God had invested them, and
 allowed themselves to be duped by the basest of earth's sons.
 Let but the principles of Religious Liberty be universally
 disseminated, and continually acted upon, and persecution
 will no longer write its deeds of blood on the pages of this
 world's history, and bigotry will "hide her diminished head."
 When! oh when! will the past teach earthly potentates
 that they have no jurisdiction over the conscience, and when
 will the watchmen upon Zion's walls, seeing eye to eye,
 prosecute their labour of love in peace!

In drawing this discourse to a close, we shall endeavour—

III. *To urge upon our friends the necessity, especially in
 the present age, of being actively and intelligently engaged*

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in disseminating the principles we have been considering. We might content ourselves with recapitulating with brevity the reasons which induce us to embrace the views we hold; but while these are, we trust, remembered, it would seem better, as more appropriate to the occasion which convenes us, to advert to the strenuous efforts made by our Baptist forefathers to bestow on their descendants that boon which we desire to possess and transmit, that we may, bearing in mind their virtues, be induced to catch their spirit, and emulate their deeds.

The members of our denomination have always been the strenuous advocates of Religious Freedom. This is seen no less strikingly in the case of the Italian dissidents, the Paulicians, and the Vaudois, than in subsequent ages. (5)

Without, however, referring to the Continental Baptists, we shall confine our attention to the exertions of our brethren in England and America.

Dr. Some, who, in the year 1589, wrote against the Puritans, charges them with being like the English Anabaptists, as he improperly and ignorantly calls them, in asserting "that the civil power had no right to make and impose ecclesiastical laws." The celebrated Calamy, when preaching Oct. 22, 1644, before the House of Commons, uses the following language: "You are the Anabaptists, and 'tis you that hold that all religions are to be tolerated." The addresses which were offered by the Baptists to the Stuart family, and the statements of their principles by them put forth from time to time, contain most explicit avowals of their unwavering regard for freedom of conscience. In a pamphlet published in the year 1615 by our brethren, the following passage occurs: "Earthly authority belongs to earthly kings; but spiritual authority belongeth to the spiritual king, who is king of kings." In a petition presented to James I., after asserting their willingness to obey the law in all civil matters, the Baptists continued, "but further than this we cannot go, because God is the *Lord of men's consciences*, and the *only Lawgiver in matters of religion.*" These statements might be greatly multiplied, but enough has been said for our purpose. (6)

This regard to the Atlantic. admirable avowal to intrude his to obtain the profes all religious lib or support any And when, in Islanders to ass answer was, " principles on w liberty of consc The Baptists of Religious L England States. Establishment— conscience. Actions like t Keech, Kiffin, emblazoned on t hearts of all nob or forgotten till t and until its esti And let it be r renuously defer they have never College in the U that "all membe l, free, absol ence." "The one opportunity o they have so form the world. Not a has ever been pass come to support variable contrast midst of them, u spect of the worl maxim, that a

This regard for liberty of conscience found its way across the Atlantic. In the laws of Rhode Island, the following admirable avowal is made: "To suffer the civil magistrate to intrude his powers into the field of opinion, and to restrain the profession or propagation of principles, destroys all religious liberty. No man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship or ministry whatever." And when, in 1656, the adjoining colonies urged the Rhode Islanders to assist them in crushing the Quakers, the noble answer was, "we shall strictly adhere to the *fundamental principles* on which the colony was first founded—namely, *liberty of conscience in religious concerns*." (7)

The Baptists too did much in establishing the principles of Religious Liberty in Georgia, Virginia, and the New England States, and in freeing them from the incubus of an Establishment—that legalised infringement on the rights of conscience.

Actions like these, performed by such men as Bunyan, Keech, Kiffin, Jessy, Roger Williams, and others, are emblazoned on the pages of history, and enshrined in the hearts of all noble and disinterested men, not to be effaced or forgotten till the world be dead to all that is of good report, and until its estimate of actions is so false as to be valueless.

And let it be remembered that while Baptists have most strenuously defended the principles we have been advocating, they have never violated them. The charter of their noblest College in the United States, Brown University, provides that "all members of the Institution shall *for ever enjoy full, free, absolute, and uninterrupted liberty of conscience*." "They have had," it has been well said, "but one opportunity of forming a system of civil government, and they have so formed it as to create an era in the history of the world. Not a law infringing on the liberty of conscience has ever been passed by the Legislature of Rhode Island,—none to support religion. In this respect, she forms an enviable contrast with her sisters. She stands out in the midst of them, unstained with the blood of heretics,—an object of the world's wonder and admiration,—giving to the old maxim, that all 'sects will persecute if they have the

power, a triumphant, though alas! a solitary refutation. They have, in fact, ever felt and acted upon the truth so tersely, yet strongly expressed by Napoleon:—"My dominion ends where the empire of conscience begins."

Brethren, Delegates and Messengers from our churches surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, ennobled by connexion with such distinguished men, of whom the world was not worthy, living in an age of momentous interest, and entrusted, in some degree, with the inculcation of the views we have been explaining and defending, prove not recreant to your trust, nor unmindful of your responsibility. Remember that Religious Liberty is the sole safeguard of your dearest and most sacred rights; and that it is only by its prevalence that the Church of Christ will be restored to her primitive purity and dignified position; that Antichrist whom the Lord will destroy with the brightness of his coming will be overthrown; and that the gospel will have free course and be glorified, enlarging its sphere of action, until the "kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ," and until ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of every nation, and kindred and clime, shall offer to the Most High the spontaneous adoration of the soul, and shall pour forth their free-will offerings, their exalted, their ceaseless Hosannahs, to Him who washed them from their sins in his blood, and who made them kings and priests unto God and his Father. Amen and Amen.

The following are the grounds upon which the impious and generally accepted views of our brethren

(1) The law of the land would ratify in a way detrimental to the public interest; and

"I cannot but be grieved that the 'honourable' House of Commons, where we were assembled on the 17th of 1715—but we were preparing to do this, let it be decreed by the Oxford decrees, common hangings, and the kingdom, and established," an attempt to restore the loyalty of the

(2) The churches of those who have professed their fidelity. Even rebellion.

(3) No sooner embraced, than the notorious conduct of the Catholics, Albigensians, and his confreres outraged the feelings of the historians! the historians! the historians! to betray the

(4) In the present state of the world, any unchristianity is disallowed in the point is as follows: *worship whatever religion you please, voluntarily, not by*

(5) At the time of the Reformation, with all its bloodshed, whom do you, dissenters, call the judge?

NOTES.

The following Notes are appended to this Discourse, in order that the important extracts they contain, taken from works not generally accessible to persons in this country, may be laid before our brethren throughout the Province.

(1) The language of Alderman Love was to the purport, "that he would rather go without his own desired liberty, than have it in a way destructive of the liberties of his country and the Protestant interest; that this was the sense of the main body of dissenters."

"I cannot omit taking notice," says Mr. Coade, "to the everlasting honour of the different denominations of dissenters, that there was scarce a man of them to be found at that critical period—1715—but what openly declared for the House of Hanover: and were preparing to venture their lives and fortunes in its defence." And this, let it be remembered, was at the very time when the Oxford decrees were, by order of the House of Lords, burnt by the common hangman, "because contrary to the constitution of this kingdom, and destructive to the Protestant succession as by law established," and when the High Church party were implicated in an attempt to restore an attainted prince. "I am fully convinced of the loyalty and zeal of the Protestant dissenters," said George I.

(2) The charge of Rebellion has ever been preferred against those who have endeavoured to restore Christianity to its pristine purity. Even Luther was styled by his enemies the "Trumpet of Rebellion."

(3) No sooner had Constantine nationalized the religion he had embraced, than persecution increased. Since which time the dictatorial conduct of Victor; the persecution of the Donatists, Bohemians, Albigenes, and others; and the draagooning of Claverhouse and his *confreeres*, have disgraced the very name of religion, and outraged the feelings of humanity. The history of the church is, alas! the history of a "compact between the priest and the magistrate, to betray the liberties of mankind, both civil and religious."

(4) In the purer ages of the early church, before she had contracted any unholy alliance with the state, force was in precept disallowed in the service of religion. Tertullian's language on this point is as follows:—"It is the natural civil right of every one to worship whatever he thinks proper. It is inconsistent with the nature of religion forcibly to propagate it, since it must be received voluntarily, not by coercion."

(5) At the time of the Reformation, the noble Baptist Andrew Rudith, with all the dignity of simple truth, exclaimed: "To whom do you, divines, all address yourselves in your disputations: who is the judge? I, for myself, most certainly: you for your-

self: a third for himself: and every individual of the human race for the same reason ought to enjoy the same liberty." The Transylvanian and Dutch Baptists were not less explicit on the subject of Religious Liberty. The opinions of the Waldenses were these, as stated by an opponent:—"Quod punire debeamus malefactores, et etiam quosdam occidere. Sed objiciunt, quia dictum est, non occides: Ex. xx, 13. O prevaricatores legis intendite legem... Nunquid non docetis homines at occidant, cum occisores, hypocritas, latrones, idolatras, docetis non punire? Heretici multos occidunt, licet ferro neminem tangant... Heretici mala verba seminantes, occidunt male persuadendo." Ebrardi contra Wald, cap. xv.

(6) In a Confession of Faith published about 1611, our brethren affirmed, "that the magistrate is not to meddle with religion or matters of conscience, nor to compel men to this or that form of religion; because Christ is the King and Lawgiver of the church and conscience."

The treatise published by the Baptists in 1615, entitled "Persecution for religion judged and condemned," &c. is an admirable and conclusive work. In the "Bloody Tenet" printed in 1644, our brethren maintained "that it was the will and command of God, that since the coming of his Son, a permission of the most Paganish, Turkish, or antichristian consciences and worship, be granted to all men of all nations." A Confession of Faith, published 1646, contains the following sentiment, "In case we find not the magistrate to favour us; yet we dare not suspend our practice."

In an address presented by the Baptists to Charles II, it is stated that since obedience is to be paid to Christ, and to Him only, in matters spiritual, "We do therefore humbly beseech your Majesty, that you would engage your royal word never to erect, nor suffer to be erected, any such tyrannical, popish, and anti-christian hierarchy (episcopal, presbyterian, or by what manner soever it be called,) as shall assume a power over, or impose a yoke upon, the consciences of others; but that every one of your Majesty's subjects may hereafter be at liberty to worship God in such a way, form, and manner, as shall appear to them to be agreeable to the mind and will of Christ, revealed in his word, according to that proportion, or measure of faith and knowledge, which they have received."

(7) The charter of Rhode Island, obtained from Charles II, contains the following important provision:—"No person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be in any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any difference in opinion in matters of religion, who do not actually disturb the civil peace of our said colony; but that all and every person and persons may, from time to time, and at all times hereafter, freely and fully have and enjoy his own and their own judgments and consciences in matters of religious concerns, throughout the tract of land hereafter mentioned."

It was expressly enacted that "all men may walk as their consciences persuade them, every one in the name of his God."