

I.

THE THESES OF ERASTUS
AND THE
SCOTTISH CHURCH ESTABLISHMENT.*

1844.

1. DOCTOR LEE, the minister of one of the parishes of Edinburgh, has given to the world, in a very convenient form, a new translation of the 'Theses of Erastus' concerning excommunication, and has prefixed to them a short treatise of his own. This he has written apparently with a double view: firstly, that of inducing a more mitigated opinion of the man and of his principles, although he expressly states that it is not his object to defend them; † secondly and chiefly, that of showing that, whether the ill-odour of his name be merited or otherwise, it is unjust to characterise *ad invidiam*, by an epithet derived from it, the Established Church of Scotland. And it is but fair that we should introduce the observations which follow, by an acknowledgment that Dr. Lee has expressed his own sentiments with clearness and ability, and in a temper perfectly unexceptionable.

* Published in the *Foreign and Colonial Quarterly Review*, 1844. Dr. Lee's volume appeared in that year, and in Edinburgh.

† P. 19.

2. It may indeed be said, by persons having in their view that very singular picture which the present ecclesiastical state of Scotland presents, that asperity would be most inexcusable on the part of those who are in the position of Dr. Lee, with reference to the persons who were lately their masters in the General Assembly, and who are now cast down from their legal vantage ground, and deprived of their former professional emoluments, by their secession from the establishment. This is true; but those who know the great degree of crudity and harshness with which religious controversy is pursued in Scotland,* will still think Dr. Lee entitled to honour for his having set a good example, and his having refused to follow bad ones.

3. There are, however, certain circumstances that tend to irritation, in the view of the case, as between the existing Scottish Establishment and the late Secession, that would naturally be taken by the members of the first-named body. The party who have left it have formally assumed the title of "The Free Church of Scotland"; and they frequently or habitually, if not formally, apply to that religious society, which they have quitted, the almost contemptuous appellation of the "Residuary Establishment." Now amidst the divisions of Christendom it has rarely happened, that titles, in themselves conveying a reproach or slur, have been fastened upon any particular section. Human malevolence finds a sufficient scope in the invidious and oblique application of appellatives good in their first intention. And anything that tends to the introduction of the practice of calling names, and especially of embodying vituperation in popular phrases meant

* [Not so now.—W. E. G., 1878.]

for permanent use, should be discountenanced, as we think, by sober-minded and christian-minded men.

4. But let us examine also the superscription, which the seceding party has assumed for its own use. They are, in the first place, a Church. Well, as it is allowed, by something analogous to the comity of nations,* to each individual among us to call himself a Christian, if he pleases; and, as others are generally content to apply to each man the name he selects for himself, we see no real extension of this licence in a like discretion assumed by bodies of religionists, to term themselves Churches if they think fit. There may come a time when that motley catalogue will be riddled and sifted with some severity. If, however, words are things as well as counters, they are also counters as well as things: and we are content to use the currency we find established in a country, without inquiring into the title by which the ruler, whose image and name it bears, occupies the throne. Let thus much therefore pass. But they are also the *Free Church*. Some may think that this epithet was meant to convey an ugly insinuation against opponents; but it was natural, and as we conceive fair, for a body of persons making a great effort and a magnificent sacrifice, to describe their cause by a somewhat pungent and stirring symbol, and we are not to go out of our way to impute an ill-natured motive. This however is not all. They are the Free

* The Unitarians have been allowed, and perhaps wisely allowed, to appropriate a name which, in the view of the Church, has no relation whatever to their system, as it indicates simply their holding a doctrine which is, as we should say, much more definitely and rigidly held by their opponents. Were it our business to choose a designation for them, we should say, that "Anti-Trinitarian" would be far more just. This case indicates forcibly the extent, to which the principle of comity with reference to names has been carried.

Church of Scotland. Now the episcopal communion of that country, representing as it does the only apostolical succession which belongs to it, is denominated by the most rigid of its writers no more than the Church *in* Scotland. The other form of speech is conventionally allowed to indicate what is national, what is recognised by the nation in its corporate capacity, and therefore what is legal. We might not, however, hold for ourselves that the State is a church-maker as the Earl of Warwick was a kingmaker; and we are not surprised that the Free Church, parting with civil authority upon uneasy terms, should have bestowed on it this farewell buffet. But there is a more serious question, of an ecclesiastical nature, behind, in connection with this title.

5. The seceders of 1843 were, beyond all dispute, a minority of the body which they left.* If we look to the parochial ministers, who alone are legally qualified to elect and sit in the Assembly, we find that they were less than three hundred out of about nine hundred; if we look to officiating ministers of all descriptions, their number rises to between four and five hundred, but then the total from which they are subtracted is between eleven and twelve hundred, and the portion not concurring in their movement must have been seven hundred, more or less. Yet the larger number are, forsooth, the Residuary Establishment, but the smaller number are the Church of Scotland. Doubtless it is open to them to reply, that the majority are wrong and the minority right; and that, as the minority have retained essential principles which the majority have abandoned,

* [In the "Free" Assembly's Pastoral Address of 1845, the seceders of 1843 are declared to be "an undoubted majority of the ministers and elders chosen, according to the laws of the Church." The Free ministers did not all depart at once.—W. E. G., 1878.]

the majority have in virtue and effect abdicated, and their opponents are the true and genuine corporation. But this is the universal and comprehensive apology of disorganisation in every form: it is a principle that goes to the utter destruction of every church, every legislature, every association of human beings in the world; under its cover every discontented fraction of a body may renounce it, and having renounced it, may claim its prerogatives. And there is a law of retribution applicable to such processes: for again, and in its turn, every fraction of that fraction may claim and exercise the privilege which the fraction of the first order put in force against the integer: and so in never-ending series, until we arrive at the unit, and there are as many "Churches of Scotland" as individuals professing Presbyterianism in it.

6. Most of all is it singular, that this extraordinary assumption should have occurred in a country, where the parity of all ministers is a fundamental principle. For if one doctor of the High Church party be worth two or three, or even only one and a half doctors of the Moderate party,* is it not clear that this parity as an engine of government means not what it seems to mean, and becomes merely an instrument for pulling down a definite and limited power in order to leave room for an indefinite and unofficial and irresponsible power in its stead? But in fact the lessons of the past are returning upon us. Two hundred years ago, within this same Kirk of Scotland, in the days of the Resolutions and Protesters, the latter, being a minority, protested, as we find, against the General

* We use the well-known phraseology, that distinguished those who have seceded from those who remain so long as both were comprehended within the Establishment.

Assembly of their own Kirk, on the ground that, "since all Protestants rejected the pretence of infallibility, the major part of the Church might fall into errors, in which case the lesser number could not be bound to submit to them." And the answer was, that "this was the destroying of presbytery, if the lesser number did not submit to the greater; it was a sort of prelacy if it was pretended that votes ought rather to be weighed than counted: parity was the essence of their constitution: and in this all people saw they had clearly the better of the argument."* Of course, no reasonable objection can be taken to the firmest assertion by the free seceders of their possessing the genuine titles of the Presbyterian Kirk: but it is a rude measure to embody that pretension in a formal appellation, in the teeth of the spirit at least of public law. No doubt the Romanists of England consider themselves to possess exclusively the apostolical prerogatives of the Church; but they do not take upon themselves to require to be called by others, that which nevertheless they believe themselves to be.

While this claim to continue the identity of the true Scottish Kirk in their own body, is one of the principal weapons used against the national establishment by its antagonists, another is to be found in the constantly reiterated charge of Erastianism. It is by way of defence against assaults of this latter kind, that Dr. Lee has republished the Theses of Erastus, and his own view of them.

7. The main propositions of Erastus, as they are represented by Dr. Lee in his Preface, and as they may be gathered from the Theses, are these:—

* Burnet's 'Own Time,' B. I.

(1). The minor excommunication, or exclusion from sacraments, is justly applicable to the ignorant, to heretics, and to apostates; but not to those of evil life.

(2). All that is commonly termed immorality ought to be punished by the civil magistrate, provided he be a Christian.

(3). As the Christian sacraments are intrinsically the same with their Jewish forerunners, admission to them should be similarly regulated; but persons were not excluded under the Mosaic law for immorality. They were excluded for uncleanness: that however was not an act but a state, and not moral but ceremonial.

(4). There is no authority for excommunication from the precepts or practice of the New Testament.

(5). The Jewish constitution is the proper model of a Christian state.

"In the whole treatise," says Dr. Lee,* "there is not one word of those questions which have distracted the Church of Scotland of late years; nor is it easy to say which of the two parties, who opposed each other in that Church, had less sympathy with the peculiar opinions of the learned and acute Heidelberg doctor. It is true, one of these parties charged the other habitually with Erastianism, which charge was as habitually denied, neither stopping to ask what Erastianism truly was: but each having an idea of its own regarding the thing, and both agreeing in holding that, whatever it might be, Erastianism was at least some very foul and dangerous heresy."

And further—

"So that Erastianism is a controversy, not between those who hold lower and those who maintain higher notions of ecclesiastical power in relation to the state or civil authority, but rather between those who entertain different views regarding the terms of admission to the sacraments."†

* P. xxx.

† P. xxxii.

8. In this view of Erastianism the Scottish Establishment, as the Doctor argues, is not a whit more Erastian than her rival, which he denominates, very inoffensively, "The Protesting Church."*

He admits, however, that the views of Erastus concerning the church power of the civil magistrate in this particular case, of admission to the sacraments or of the punishment of immorality, may appear to involve the general principle known as Erastianism; and that many expressions of Erastus *seem* to affirm that doctrine without qualification.

He observes, that Erastus binds the civil magistrate to follow the Word of God in the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs, and therefore that he holds, instead of denying, the headship of Christ: and, consequently, that the Establishment of Scotland, if it be proved to agree with Erastus, is thereby proved in like manner not to deny but, on the contrary, to hold it. And as Erastus likewise maintains that the Jewish constitution should be taken for a model, and that the excellence of a Christian system in church matters should be measured by its approximation to it, Dr. Lee thinks that he is not chargeable with leaving to the magistrate an undefined and capricious discretion.

Finally, he considers that if the ordinary interpretation of the language of Erastus be the correct, as it is the obvious, one, then to affirm that the magistrate holds the same relation to religious as to civil affairs, is the peculiarity or error † of his doctrine.

9. This doctrine, it appears to Dr. Lee, did not excite any great alarm among the reformers generally at the time of its promulgation, ‡ although the author in his own

* P. xlii.

€ † P. xlvii.

‡ P. l.

Preface declares that the magistrate had tried * "to wring the 'Theses' out of the hands of the students," and that the authorities of the university endeavoured to silence him as an intruder into the province of theology. And † a person whom he considered to be one of his dearest friends, took the book from him "loathingly," and would not read it. Nay, Dr. Lee himself says, in the earlier part of his Preface, ‡ "It was not till the year 1589, six years after the death of its author, that the book was published. The indignation which the opinions maintained in it had occasioned, seems to have rendered the publication dangerous, as both the printer's name and the place are suppressed on the title page of the original edition, and fictitious names substituted."

10. Dr. Lee, however, considers that the reformers, except those of Geneva, hold sentiments akin to those of Erastus. Among these he includes "many of the greatest English divines." § He considers that their idea of the union of Church and State || was that of a single subject contemplated in two aspects or relations, and this he conceives to be the relation of the monarch of England to its Church. He then travels into a most dubious and slippery argument on the subject of ecclesiastical injunctions, intimating, though not declaring an opinion, that, in all questions not of the class termed indifferent, the individual is to be the judge between conflicting commands of the Church and the State; for, he says, "if the former prescribe one doctrine and the latter another, and if he be satisfied that the command of the latter is from God and the former not, it is his duty to obey the latter and to

* P. 10.

† P. 8.

‡ P. xvii.

§ P. liii.

|| P. liv.

reject the former."* But we apprehend that this author by no means clears up the matter in debate between the spiritual and the civil powers by making the individual the final arbiter between them. The whole question at issue is, which of the two powers shall have authority to lay down the law for individuals; and neither the one nor the other will thank Dr. Lee for his discovery that the private person is to settle the matter by following whichever he thinks fit.

11. It appears to us that Doctor Lee has taken much pains in vain, if he expects to convince the world, either by his arguments, or by the perusal of the writings of Erastus, that the idea hitherto commonly received of his opinions has been an erroneous one. He evidently sets out with a desire to satisfy his reader and himself, that the judgment of Erastus is given only on a by-point, and not on the subject of church power at large. But he is too candid to accomplish his own wish, and he breaks down in the effort, for he admits, and it is indeed very plain, that Erastus taught that one and the same moving power governed and prompted, of right, both the State and the Church; and that the diversities of administration, in the one by chancellors and chamberlains and secretaries, in the other by bishops or presbyteries, as the case might be, belonged merely to that general principle of the division of labour, which distributes for convenience into many separate employments the common processes of industry. If so, the world has been right, and not wrong, in describing that system, which absorbs church power into state power, by the name of Erastianism. It may be true that many use the phrase as they use the phrases of

* P. lvii.

Toryism and Whiggism, without inquiring whether there is a precise conformity between the views of those political schools respective'y and the Irish freebooters, or the Scottish drivers of corn-carts, who said "whiggam" to their horses. But, although perhaps without knowing it, they are, as it turns out, accurate enough.

12. We differ, therefore, very widely from Dr. Lee in his opinion, that Erastianism is a controversy not between different theories of ecclesiastical power, but between different theories of the qualifications requisite for access to the holy sacraments. It is true that the occasion of the promulgation of the system was the question, whether immorality ought to disqualify for such access: but that question is determined by principles cutting very deep, and of very broad and comprehensive application. Erastus says it should not disqualify: but why? Mainly because, 1st, he finds no authority for it in his model system,—the theocracy of the Old Testament, wherein, as he thinks, the whole supreme ecclesiastical power lay with the same person who was also the civil ruler; and because, 2ndly, he likewise thinks, that the civil ruler himself may appropriately supply the place of repulsion from sacraments by the infliction of positive penalties for sin.

13. It can scarcely be necessary to argue at any length, that in giving to the magistrate the whole cognisance of moral offences, Erastus is making over that which (in its proper form) most strictly appertains to the Church. The substance of Christianity is, after all, comprehended in the title of a book of Scougall's; it is 'The Life of God in the Soul of Man': and dogma, as apart from this, is its outwork and its fence, or else its intellectual expression. While erroneous and heretical tenets belong to the latter province, moral offences, the "works of the flesh" (in the

largest sense), are the antagonists to be encountered in the former; and as *they* are ultimately at the root and source of all heresy, to leave to the Church a controul over opinion, and to deny a controul over life, would be dooming her for ever to be confined to cleansing the outside of the cup and of the platter, and to leave it inwardly full of all uncleanness. Let it once be established and avowed as a formal principle, that the Church is to take no account of individual conduct, but simply to proclaim in the abstract what is true and right, and in effect nothing will remain worthy either of being conceded or of being refused by her to the State. So that even if Erastus had confined himself strictly to the discussion on the sacraments, we should have found the whole substance of what is charged on him to be his due.

14. But, in his Preface, Erastus states more explicitly that to which in the 'Theses' he seems more timidly to approximate:—

"It is necessary that that Church is most worthily and wisely ordered, which cometh nearest to the constitution of the Jewish Church. But in this, matters were so ordered by God, that we find not anywhere two diverse judicatories concerning manners, the one politic, and the other ecclesiastic. What, then, hindereth that the Church now also, on whom the most mercifu' God hath bestowed a Christian magistrate, should be less content with *one government*?"*

And this notion is more formally developed in a passage which Dr. Lee quotes in a note from the *Confirmatio Thesium*, and which closes with these very intelligible words—

"Eodem modo non est alius magistratus qui res profanas curat, ab eo qui res scholasticas vel sacras disponit. Res quidem inter se differunt, at non differt similiter harum dispensatio et moderatio."†

* P. iv.

† P. xlviii.

15. The ecclesiastical controversies of Scotland have always, from the time of the Reformation, been carried on with a peculiar obstinacy and fury ; but at the same time with a sincerity of purpose that has made them respectable in themselves, and, on account of their rigid and precise development of the principles or notions involved in them, interesting to the rest of the world. The very last scene of the drama is one of the most remarkable. The Establishment of that country has been abandoned by the men who claim exclusively to inherit the spirit and views of its founders, because they hold to these positions as fundamental in the constitution of a Church : first, that consent, or at the least the absence of dissent on the part of a congregation, is essential to the formation of the pastoral relation ; and secondly, that the sentences of ecclesiastical judicatories in matters held by themselves to be of their own proper cognisance, are binding, and must be maintained against the civil power.

16. On the other hand, those who remain in the Scottish Establishment maintain that, whatever scope and latitude be allowed for objections to a presentee by the people, and however unrestricted be the choice of the presbytery in assigning reasons for his disallowance, yet no simple act of volition on the part either of the one or the other, shall be allowed to defeat the privilege of the patron, and to annul the civil right which accrues to the person in whose favour that privilege of nomination has been exercised. In short, the one party claimed a power of black-balling for the flock ; the other refused it, but were willing to concede everything short of it. Thus the issue is reduced to a very fine, we do not therefore say, to an unreal or fanciful one. Under the Presbyterian system, presentation is generally exercised in favour of licentiates ; and their

ordination, or rather admission into the ministry, must take place after presentation and before the benefice can be acquired. By what authority, it may be asked, do they discharge ministerial functions when all is completed? A question not easy to answer. But the Non-intrusionists would say that the real authority lies with those whose simple act of will must, unless causes of objection can be substantiated, take effect in their appointment—that is to say with the patron, who represents the principle of civil power, or the State. He, that is bound to render reasons for his act, is not supreme.

17. We are not, however, about to enter into the question, whether the Church Establishment of Scotland at present conforms to the doctrine of Erastus; but we think Dr. Lee's plea is irrelevant when he contends that, because Erastus has not written upon the ordination or admission of ministers, *therefore* his system cannot be involved in the controversy. Erastus teaches that there is but one governing power. If, then, it were true that the Kirk of Scotland allowed the supremacy of the State in the admission of ministers, that surely would be essential and pure Erastianism. And this without entering into the second of the two controverted questions, namely, whether the Kirk, as it is now constituted, maintains at all a judicial power distinct from that of the State. Before the secession, and when the party now ejected were the majority of the General Assembly, that body deposed the members of the Presbytery of Strathbogie, in Aberdeenshire, for acting upon the law of the land in opposition to the law of the kirk. The sentence of deposition was declared null by the Court of Session; it was disregarded and disobeyed by the party in the Assembly, who were then a minority and are now ascendant; and it was reversed immediately after the

secession had taken place. It is, we think, to be wished that Dr. Lee, in repelling the charge of Erastianism, had acquainted us what are the principles of the judicial power of the Church, as they are now held in the Scottish Establishment.

18. He declares, indeed,* that ecclesiastical jurisdiction has an existence and a province apart from that which is civil; but he does not state its limits or its nature. And he admits that—

“Some few acts, and these too done in a time of great excitement and keen controversy, and in the midst of difficulty and perplexity, may, by the ingenuity of hostile criticism, be construed into a practical acknowledgment of something like the doctrine held by Erastus, or by some one else, whom some other person, knowing little of the matter, called an Erastian.”

A liberal, and even a dangerous admission. But at all events, it seems to us most clear, in opposition to Dr. Lee, both that the principles of Erastus are what they have commonly been supposed, and likewise that they are not irrelevant to the matters lately at issue in Scotland. And we apprehend the effect of the publication now before us, although intended to impair that conviction, will be to confirm it.

19. It is ominous, with respect to the future fortunes of the Scottish Establishment, that Dr. Lee, who represents—and as we should think favourably represents—the spirit of that important body, seems to entertain a lurking unavowed design of recommending Erastus and his principles to favour. For example, he says,† “Erastus was not an atheist, nor even an infidel; he was neither an open

* P. lix.

† P. xv.

enemy of the gospel, nor the most flagitious of mortals, but a man, whom good and great men pronounced great and good."

It is true that good and great men may be mistaken; and Dr. Lee does not absolutely countersign their testimonial; but he indicates a desire, which should attract the more notice because the mode, in which the expression of it is *subintroduced*, seems to denote a repression of his own full meaning in deference to the public opinion of Scotland. When he speaks of "the real peculiarity, or *heresy if you will*, which has rendered Erastus famous,"* it is evident which of the two appellations he himself prefers. Again, we find he mentions "*the peculiarity or error in the doctrine of Erastus*";† and at length he summons up his courage to denounce "the virulence of those little venomous creatures, who, in his own age, ventured to malign the *illustrious* physician;"‡ so that one would say, whatever be the case with the Scottish Establishment, there are grave suspicions of Dr. Lee. For, as we have never heard that the medical prescriptions of Erastus were particularly good, we must presume that his theology is that which has won for him this decisive epithet.

20. But before quitting this matter, we must in fairness observe, that, of the charges of Erastianism which may be made against the Established Church of Scotland, perhaps the most formidable is one which applies with equal force to the Free or Protestant Church; for it is founded upon the language of the Westminster Confession, the symbol of Christian belief in use among both alike. We pass over another very curious question concerning the extraordinary manner in which the Assembly, that composed

* P. xxxvii.

† P. xlvii.

‡ P. li.

that Confession, was appointed and controlled by the Parliament; and simply call attention to the language in which the function of the civil magistrate, with regard to religion, is declared in the third clause of the twenty-third chapter.

“The civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word and sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven; yet he hath authority, and it is his duty, to take order that unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented or reformed, and all the ordinances of God duly settled, administered, and observed: for the better effecting whereof he hath power to call synods, to be present at them, and to provide that whatsoever is transacted in them be according to the mind of God.”

* 21. It is quite true that there is also a declaration in the twenty-fifth chapter, that—

“There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ.”

And in the thirtieth chapter, of “Church Censures” it is expressly declared that—

“The Lord Jesus, as king and head of His Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of church officers, distinct from the civil magistrate.”

But no other function of this “distinct” government is set forth than that in relation to censures. The duties of synods, in which, according to the Presbyterian system, laymen have votes of equal weight with ministers, are explained in the thirty-first chapter, and they are—

(1). Ministerially to determine controversies of faith and cases of conscience.

(2). To set down rules and directions for the better

ordering of the public worship of God and government of his church :

- (3). To receive complaints in cases of maladministration, and authoritatively to determine the same :

The right of meeting in synod without the authority of the prince, is confined to the case in which he is an "open enemy of the Church."

22. Now compare these somewhat guarded and meagre prerogatives with those accorded to the civil magistrate. They are to make provision—

- (1). To preserve unity and peace in the Church :
- (2). To keep the truth of God pure and entire :
- (3). To suppress all blasphemies and heresies :
- (4). To prevent or reform all corruptions and abuses in worship or discipline :
- (5). That all the ordinances of God be duly settled, administered, and observed :
he is also
- (6). To call synods and attend them :
and finally he is
- (7). *To provide that everything done in them be according to the mind of God.*

23. It has been frequently urged against the Church of England that she has an Erastian tinge ; but any one who reads the Oath of supremacy together with the thirty-seventh Article of that Church, will be surprised at their jejuneness, in comparison with the extraordinary document which we have quoted, and which would afford Erastus, we suspect, a richer banquet, if he were alive to enjoy it, than is commonly to be met with in the pastures of Christendom. To maintain order indeed, and to suppress blasphemy and heresy, are offices having some intelligible relation to the civil power. So the power of

convoking synods is an ancient and recognised prerogative. Nor is it difficult to understand that the essential conditions of civil society may require an universal controul, or veto, on the part of the State over the proceedings of an ally so formidable as a national church; but, in the Westminster Confession, not only controlling, but if words have any meaning, moving and actuating power is assigned to the magistrate in the largest terms; the custody of the truth, the regulation of ordinances, that is to say, of sacraments, together with other particulars of worship and discipline, are his; and, as if to plant his power in the very centre and seat of life, it is to be his duty to provide that all which a synod does is not only compatible with the exigencies of civil society, but "according to the mind of God!" What else, besides the instrumental and the practical parts of their function, has constituted the duty of the Apostles and of their successors in the ministry from their time to our own? Oh! what a day of triumph for the subtle tacticians of the long parliament, for the Erastian lawyers, Selden and Whitlocke, when they found that they had thus overreached even the long-headed children of the North, and laid the yoke upon the neck of those who had but just before pushed so far the doctrine of the freedom of the Church, as to claim that their Protestant pulpits should be endowed with an unlimited privilege of speech, and that no matter uttered in them should be subjected to the cognisance of the civil power.

24. In 1643, the Scottish Presbyterians obtained the accession of the Parliamentarians of England to their league and covenant. In 1650, they suffered the ignominious defeat of Dunbar: in 1651, they were governed by English commissioners, fortresses were built, and an

army of eighteen thousand English soldiers quartered upon the country;* the officers of that army, whom they had denounced as sectaries (with respect to whom they had already declared in 1647, "yea, we cannot but look on the dangers of the true reformed religion in this island as greater now than before"), occupied their pulpits, and out-preached their ministers. Finally, in 1652, the Assembly itself was extinguished.

25. The comparison, which the Westminster Confession suggests, of its own exaggerated doctrine with that of the Anglican articles respecting the supremacy, leads naturally to some remarks upon the opinion of Dr. Lee, that among the advocates of Erastianism are to be counted "many of the greatest English divines, at the Reformation and after it." Dr. Lee has probably intended this more in the way of honour than of aspersion: but is it true? Which of the greatest English divines, either at the Reformation or after it, held the opinion of Erastus, which formed the foundation of an Erastian system,—that church power was no other than one particular department of state power? Archbishop Cranmer is the man upon whom, probably, with the nearest approach to truth, this doctrine could be fixed: but, if applied to him, it must refer only to a particular portion of his life, namely under the reign of Henry VIII.; and there is ample evidence that in his later and more mature years, he clearly held the doctrine of the succession, which is in itself an emphatic contradiction of Erastus. But it is more material to observe, that even if Cranmer was led, at a period when the tide ran so high against the papal and in favour of the regal supremacy, to the temporary adoption of so extrava-

* Guthrie's 'Hist. of Scotland,' vol. i. p. 53.

gant a view, yet it remained an individual opinion ; and was never adopted even among the violent assumptions of that reign and time, as the standard of public policy. A remarkable proof of this is to be found even in those episcopal Commissions which were taken out by Cranmer himself, by Gardiner and Bonner, and the Bishops in general, under Henry VIII., by which their jurisdiction was declared to flow from the crown ; because express words were inserted in them to recognise a distinct and separate power in them, founded upon Holy Scripture.

26. Perhaps Dr. Lee, when he penned the sentence to which reference has been made, had Hooker in his mind. The doctrine of that great writer was, that in the circumstances of England, the Church and the Commonwealth were "personally one society," which society was termed a Commonwealth as living under secular law, and a Church as living under the spiritual law of Christ. Just so, a state and a chess club would be personally one society,* if all the members of the one were members of the other. That is to say, the aggregation of persons is the same in both cases ; but the form or structure into which they are combined, its powers and attributes, may be entirely distinct and independent. But in point of fact, the best proof that Hooker was a believer in church power, and therefore that Dr. Lee's assertion can derive no support from his venerable name, is his view of the episcopal office.† "It was," says he, "ordained of God." ‡ "The first bishops in the Church of Christ were his blessed Apostles." "The Apostles were the first which had such authority, and all others who have it after them in orderly sort are their lawful successors . . . their successors, if

* Eccl. Pol. B. VIII. 1.

† VII. 1.

‡ VII. 4.

not in the largeness, surely in the kind of that episcopal function." Nor was this a succession merely by name and title, it was by inheriting a certain power. "For to succeed them is, after them, to have the episcopal kind of power which was first given to them."* Hooker indeed may have held the supremacy more strongly than most of our divines; but he held it to consist in certain defined and limited prerogatives;† and no person we think can desire a more emphatic test of anti-Erastianism, than the having defined episcopal power to be the *same power in kind, which was exercised by the blessed Apostles.*

27. But what shall we say of Erastus himself and of his system? Let no man think that the question has now, in the nineteenth century, become one of merely antiquarian speculation. To say nothing of a spirit akin to his, which is apt to prevail in some important classes of men, his doctrine in its extreme breadth has been revived by systematic writers and by men of eminence in our own day. The late Dr. Arnold, a man deserving on many grounds of very high praise, was avowedly Erastian, and considered the appointments to offices in the Church to correspond essentially with those to civil office. Rothe, a learned and philosophic German, has in a formal treatise argued that the Church is destined, according to the law of nature and of providence, to be absorbed in the State.‡ And these are men who think and reason, not only with honesty and power, but with pious intention. Dr. Arnold, whom as a countryman we may assume to be more familiarly known, was a man whose whole study was to elevate the tone of common life to a Christian standard. He sought

* Eccl. Pol. B. VII. 4.

† VIII. 1.

‡ See Rothe's 'Anfänge der Christlichen Kirche,' vol. i. part i.

as it were for an universal consecration of life. A part of this notion was the consecration of the State, not by contact with the Church, as Burke would have had it, but by a sort of fusion, in which the former would alone have retained a substantive existence, although one which, as he supposed, would be effectually coloured and imbued with sanctity by the latter.

28. If we scruple to call Erastianism *simpliciter* by the name of heresy, it will not be because we deem the term "peculiarity" a juster, or in any sense an adequate or proper description; but because we feel that that word "heresy" is an awful brand for the hand of one man to attach to the convictions of another; and that its use should be confined as far as possible to cases where the matter has been brought to judicial issue by competent ecclesiastical authority; and where, consequently, it does not seem to involve either individual presumption or uncharitableness. But we can scarcely doubt that Erastianism contains the seeds of a formal heresy; and that it is, even in its immature development, a serious and very threatening error, on no account to be dallied with or treated as of trifling importance. If the mission of the twelve, so solemnly conveyed by our Lord, and so authentically sealed by Him with the promise of perpetuity, is to be struck out of the scheme of His Gospel, His holy sacraments will not long survive (except as mere shows) that ministry to whose hands they were committed; and the loss of the true doctrine concerning them will naturally in its turn be followed by a general corruption and destruction of true Christian belief concerning the divine grace, of which they were appointed to be the especial channels and depositories.

29. It is not our part, nor our desire, to bestow censure

on a man who, for all we know, may have been the victim of unavoidable delusions, and who shows the signs of a candid and zealous inquirer after truth: But, for our own security and instruction, it is well to endeavour both to trace the origin and to mark the tendencies, of the opinions with which his name is associated.

When the continental Reformers rejected the papal supremacy, and when, whether blamably or otherwise, they broke the chain of the episcopal succession, they still maintained and taught a high sacramental doctrine. The Confession of Augsburg would, we think, be most offensive to an earnest-minded Presbyterian or even Lutheran of the present day, from the strength of its tone with reference to the eucharist, to baptism, and to absolution. So also Calvin taught a doctrine of the sacraments, which is at least very far above that of the continental Protestants, in general; and the Scottish Confession of 1560 did "utterly damn" those who regarded them as being only signs. In fact, the idea of an inherent power and sanctity, of a special gift and life in the sacraments, has become weaker and weaker in numerous parts of the Protestant world, from one generation to another; and many honest persons now treat the inculcation of it by the ministers of a Reformed Church, with that indignation which the treachery they suppose it to imply would demand.

30. An invisible but an indissoluble connection will also in the long run, we believe, be found to subsist between the tenets of the ministerial succession and of sacramental grace. The first will never be found without the second; the second will not long survive the extinction of the first. But again, ministerial succession is also, we apprehend, the only rational foundation of the doctrine of church power. For unless Church power came by a definite intel-

ligible charge, capable of delivery from man to man, how did it come? And if such power was not transmitted by our Lord through the Apostles, and those who were appointed to succeed them, what can be more natural,* than that we should look for the source and spring of ecclesiastical government to that next divinest symbol upon earth, the prerogative of Kings, or the power, in whatever form, by which civil and social order are sustained?

31. Erastus found himself in circumstances, where Church power was indeed still held more or less as a tenet, but where it had been severed from its trunk; from the Episcopate, through which it had been actually and historically derived to the men of his generation. But State power was a reality, and in its own sense a divine and sacred reality. Who can severely blame the man that preferred it to the other alternative, which he may have deemed to be, as it has since too sadly proved itself, a mere phantom and imitation of true ecclesiastical authority? His mind urged him forward towards reducing his own views to method and consistency, at a rate more rapid than happened to his contemporaries in general. Who is to judge between the man that is consistent in developing error, and the man whose inconsistency preserves to him fragments of truth, which by more of logical precision and boldness he would lose?

32. In the second Thesis, he declares that there is a twofold society of believers, one form of which is internal, while the other is visible and political. Now it seems

* [This apologetic argument, I think, will not hold. It would have been more natural, and more Christian, to trace the transmission of Church power in the body of believers at large, than to derive it from the State.—W. E. G., 1878.]

plain from other parts of the work, that Erastus differed from his contemporaries in general in his view of the nature of the privileges attaching to membership in the visible Church. Faith *only*, according to him, unites us with the internal and spiritual society; baptism simply with that which is visible.* The sacraments are incitements to piety.† The sacraments of the Old Testament were “in substance” the same as ours.‡ Ours differ from the sacraments of the old dispensation merely in the signs, and in their being retrospective.§ Again, he enumerates the ends of the Lord’s Supper,|| none of them importing that anything of a sacred nature is intrinsic to that most sacred rite. But if Germany, Holland, Switzerland, Scotland, with Protestant France and Dissenting England were polled, how many voices would now dissent from Erastus in the fundamental article of his doctrine on the sacraments, namely, that they convey privileges which are visible, but not those which are spiritual and internal? How many are there who would refuse to denounce as Popish, the opposite doctrine of an inward and spiritual grace, forming a *part* of a Christian sacrament?

33. Erastus, then, was in advance, as the phrase is, of his age: he perceived more clearly than his contemporaries, in its meaning and remoter effects, the unlinging of that ancient system, which firmly compacted and riveted together the doctrines of the succession by the Episcopate, of the conveyance of grace by the Sacraments, and of the real spiritual power of the Church. To those who had lost hold of the first, and were contented with that loss, the second and the third were unmeaning, and grew even

* Thesis IV.

† Thesis XI.

‡ Thesis XXIV.

§ Thesis XXXII.

|| Thesis XXXVII.

to be offensive anomalies: he felt the jar more rapidly and more acutely than others, and he realised for them in the sixteenth century, conclusions, to which they have been slowly approximating through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth. One of these, now fully elaborated and enthroned in what some would call, as if by a cruel mockery, the Protestant religion, is that Sacraments are signs, and signs only. The other, not yet having universal, or even perhaps general acceptance in a definite shape, but growing more and more mature, teaches that all Church power is the fiction of ambitious priests, and the yoke of fools and dreamers.

34. Erastus taught that sin was not a just cause of exclusion from communion. On the principles of the Bible, which made repentance a preliminary to Baptism, he was wrong; for the bearing of his argument would have been this; Sacraments are irritaments of faith, therefore baptise those who have it not, in order that they may be aroused to conceive it.* But was he not right on his own principle, with regard to Baptism? and is not that principle the root and heart of that which some call Protestantism and reformed religion? If it be the proper office, nay, as some say, the sole office, of Sacraments to remind, to exhort, to persuade, to provoke men to religion; if they be, in fact, the Word in another form, why should the immoral man be excluded from them more than he is excluded from sermons and exhortations? His need of the one, as well as of the other, is not only indisputable, but special.

35. Erastus† writes thus:—

“The ends, for which the Lord’s Supper was instituted, are these:

* See Thesis LXVI.

† Thesis XXXVII.

—that we should solemnly commemorate the Lord's death, and publicly render him thanks for our redemption; that we should be reminded, and by our presence should testify; that we have no food or drink that can give life, but Christ crucified, and his blood shed for us; that we should declare we are penitent for our past life; that we are thinking of a better; that we embrace the Christian doctrine; that we are members of Christ; that we belong to his Church, in which we should desire piously and purely to live henceforth, and to die."

Of course these ends would not imply that those, the hardness of whose impenitence remains entire, ought to come to the sacraments; but Erastus taught that such persons would not come; that the act of coming would betoken a desire; that there should be no rejection except self-rejection; and, as it were, that the first emotion of a right tendency rendered men proper subjects of the sacraments, as well and as much as of the word of exhortation. And here he follows up his purpose with an argument very formidable to his opponents:*

"I ask are the sacraments superior in authority or in dignity to the Word? Are they more useful or necessary? . . . Why then do we go about to exclude nobody from the Word, while from the sacraments, especially the Lord's table, we would exclude some, and that contrary to, or at least without, the express command of God?"

And again, in the concluding passage of the work:—

"It may happen that some spark may be kindled by the public preaching, which it may be not at all useless, but rather most beneficial, to cherish by every means not inconsistent with piety. And tell me, I pray, how it can be otherwise than absurd, and therefore impious, to debar from a solemn thanksgiving and commemoration of the death of the Lord, a person who declares that he feels his heart prompts him so to do?"†

* Thesis XXXVIII.

† Thesis LXXV.

36. Now, according to the religious system which has been called ultra-Protestantism, not only are the sacraments not superior, but they are much inferior in authority and in dignity to the Word: just as signs, gestures, copes and surplices, candlesticks and altar-cloths, sacred vessels and music, are undoubtedly inferior in dignity and authority to the Word. For sacraments, like these, are in that theory purely symbolical acts or things, and belong to a class essentially lower than that of direct appeals to the rational faculties of man. Why then should they be guarded with greater jealousy?

37. It may be said the sacraments are intended to testify our Christianity. Doubtless they are meant to serve the purpose, which is served by formulas of admission, and by renewals of the same; but it might be urged that the denomination of badges is only applicable to them in a restricted sense; that we may easily overstate their witnessing force, because they are scarcely witnesses to the world, and because the holy communion, according to the system now before us, is scarcely a badge or witness at all, though it may be a memento to the individual. Nay, in Scotland, for instance, the observance of the Lord's day is, in this sense, a far greater and more palpable and effective sacrament. But if the holy eucharist is to be regarded as a witness, why should it not be a witness to nascent, as well as to mature, desire? If it was intended to attest, much more was it intended to promote and ripen what it attested. And Erastus shows that the *onus* of proof clearly lies with the rejectors; with those who would withhold certain means of improvement, certain provocatives to holiness, from parties desirous to make use of them.

38. It is not hard to perceive that those, who think

there is an essential power and gift of grace in the Christian sacraments, may well feel it a very solemn obligation to keep them from profanation, and to endeavour to ascertain that all due pre-requisites exist in those who are to receive them. But what pre-requisite, beyond disposition in its crudest and weakest form, can be necessary in order to justify the use of a sign? The Church, indeed, can consistently refuse to admit to the familiar feast of the Lord those, who have not yet put on the wedding garment: but the persons of whom we speak deny His peculiar presence in the holy eucharist, and treat the inscrutable contact with Him which it affords, as a dream; so it would seem that when they repel, they are as it were forbidding men to prostrate themselves even at His chariot wheels, and to worship Him even as a sun from afar. So thought Erastus. And he cried, instead of forbidding, invite: by exclusion, you are marring and hindering your own work, you should rather urge them and compel them to come in. So also he asserted in another form the connection between restraint of admission to sacraments, and the dogma of grace in them; for he makes it a complaint that in consequence of the practice of repulsion "people began to ascribe salvation to the sacraments."* Conversely those who deny their inherent efficacy, as he argued, should give the freest access to them, and turn their utility as instruments to the largest account. Can his argument easily be impeached? We renounce the function of censuring him for ourselves; and it seems hard that it should be exercised by those who by separating the sacraments from their lawful administrators, have also emptied them of their in-dwelling spiritual

* Thesis LXXII.

grace, and have prepared and laid down the road which, trodden by Erastus with bolder step than theirs, has led him to a more advanced conclusion, and a riper development of error.

39. So much for admission to sacraments. Let us now briefly inquire whether the same apologies may not be offered on behalf of the physician of Heidelberg (we beg Dr. Lee's pardon for stumbling a little at his epithet, and thinking its omission on the whole the safer course), with respect to the kindred question of church power.

If any person at the present day were to teach, that sin, as contra-distinguished from crime, should be punished, not by exclusion from Sacraments and holy rites, and by excommunication, but by the civil magistrate, we should think it probable that he meant to secure its impunity, and confer on it a sort of social title to exempt it from rebuke or question; but should feel no doubt whatever, that such must be the result of the establishment and acceptance of his position. This idea we cannot but regard as a *reductio ad absurdum*, or something near it, of his sentence against repulsion from Sacraments. There may be a stage of the infancy of society, in which the magistrate, being both king and priest, may wield both swords, as the father of a family does, in a qualified sense, at all periods: but the entire impossibility of any such method of retribution in modern Christendom is so evident, its demonstration stands out in such strong relief from the public law of every civilised country, that argument would be wasted upon it. Erastians of the present day would probably repudiate it as much as their opponents; and, while approving of the fundamental principle of their chief, would shrink from vindicating the consistency of his system in the manner he has chosen, and would contend

that any punishment for sin, as such, which it is desirable to administer by human hands, should take the form of purely spiritual censure or privation. *But it by no means follows that the notion was as visionary in the mind, or in the age, of Erastus himself: he contemplated, it is plain, a very stern reality. Perhaps the method of punishment by the magistrate was recommended to him by the very circumstance that he thought it promised to be more stringent and effective than that of ecclesiastical judgments. Let us, at any rate, listen to his language:

“Wherefore it would follow, that profligate persons should not be excluded from the Lord’s Supper, but executed; a consequence which I should admit without difficulty, and which I even desire; for nothing do I more wish, than that a most rigorous discipline of manners should be maintained in the Christian Church: only let it be that which God has appointed, not that which men have devised.”*

40. He wished, therefore, in the first place, with regard to the controul of evil livers, not to relax the reins but to tighten them; in the second place, not to lower the sanction under which misconduct was restrained, but to raise it to a higher standard; to reject a title of human invention, and to recur to a divine appointment. He had before him the State, undoubtedly divine; he had also before him a model of Church power exercised by the State, which likewise was undoubtedly divine, though not divinely ordained to the permanence he would have given it. He had not before him the Episcopate to which the delivery of spiritual power, according to the sense of the Church, belongs; but he saw Presbyters professing to transmit that which they had received no charge to trans-

* Thesis XVII.

mit, and laymen pretending to give to others that which they had never received even for themselves. The question may arise whether he did not make the most logical choice, which the materials at his command would allow? Yet we must still alter the phrase of Dr. Lee, and call Erastus not the illustrious, but the unfortunate physician.

41. It was not only, however, the breach in the succession of the ministry, which might have led his thoughts in that direction. Calvin, to a certain extent, Zuinglius and others to a much greater degree, had lowered the idea of the Christian sacraments: Erastus simply outstripped them in their course. To judge from the doctrine promulgated in the Theses, of which specimens have been given, he had sunk to the level, which is that of most of the popular religionists of the present day, and towards which they were only sinking. We have shown how his judgment with regard to access to the Holy Communion involved his whole system. We have shown how his view of sacraments warranted and perhaps logically necessitated that judgment with regard to access. We have stated, for the matter is scarcely one of dispute, with how great a force separation from the Episcopate has been found experimentally to threaten the ancient doctrine of the Sacraments, and how that view has been gradually effaced wherever the doctrine of the succession is denied, and its chain severed. But the doctrine of succession is thus denied by the whole Protestantism of the Continent, and by no small portion of that of the British isles; and the notion of Sacraments, prevalent within the same region, is that of Erastus.* Why then, if the Established Church

* [I conceive that a reaction has since occurred, both in this country and abroad; but I am not able exactly to measure its extent.—W. E. G., 1878.]

of Scotland, or her ministers, in good faith follow out the principles on which they stand to their conclusions, should this be made a matter of vituperation to them, by those who agree in the principles, but have not as yet been vigilant enough to discover the goal to which they tend?

42. We repeat it; those who deny the succession, those who strip the Sacraments of their power, have no solid ground on which to resist the doctrine of Erastus. They have indeed the secondary arguments in favour of confiding the administration of religious offices to a distinct class of men. They can urge that the decorum, with which it is requisite to environ them, is thus best maintained; that a certain position in society for the ministers of religion is useful to religion itself, and that it is thus best secured; that the learning, necessary for the custody and illustration of the sacred records, could not be guaranteed by any other means. This is all very well; but it does not hit Erastus: he is as conscious of these things as his opponents. He says expressly:—

“I allow, indeed, the magistrate ought to consult, where doctrine is concerned, those who have particularly studied it.”*

43. He agrees therefore that there should be in a State what Coleridge calls a clerisy. As in every civilised country there is a legal profession, so would he have a profession for theology and religion: but he would argue that the ministers of sacred things, having an access to the feelings and passions of men more ready and effective than any other class, and wielding therefore a greater power, should in proportion be placed under a more

* Thesis LXXIV.

effective subjection to the supreme will of the State. He would exclude the civil authorities from officiating, because that would destroy the distinctness of the professional class appointed for religion; but he says, as you do not pretend to a special custody of the Word and Sacraments delivered to you from Christ, through a succession of commissioned clergy; as you have rejected that bugbear of Popery, that relic of barbarism, that figment of the middle ages, therefore, upon the very same principle as that on which you will not allow voluntary magistrates, or voluntary soldiers (namely, because all great social powers should depend upon the State, as the necessary guarantee of its unity), you ought *a fortiori* to refer all title to administer religious offices to the same origin; or else, while you are taking caution from the weak, you will suffer the strong to go free. How this kind of argument is to be resisted in the abstract, we cannot conceive, especially when it is remembered how broad a basis early history affords for the union of religious prerogatives with civil magistracy; unless upon the ground that there actually exists another power not less real, not less historical, and even more properly and definitely divine, namely the power conferred by the charter of our Lord to the Apostles; "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

44. Those indeed who are of *this* faith: those who are not deterred by the charge of Popery from holding what they learned in their catechism, that sacraments are made up of two parts, whereof one is an inward spiritual grace; and who draw their ideas of Church power from the Ordination and Consecration Offices, may lament any forward step in that path of delusion; and, while endeavouring to vindicate individuals from censure, for mischiefs

entailed on them by their false position, may rather cherish the hope that a day is coming, in which the minds and hearts of all men desirous of the light of God's countenance, may revolt from the restlessness and the barrenness of such religion, as does not prove its conformity to the Divine Word by the incorrupt and united testimony of the Catholic Church.

45. Upon the whole, therefore, we submit, that while it may be quite true that in itself Erastianism has the seeds of a very "foul and dangerous heresy," yet the seeds of Erastianism, the premises which warrant and entail it, are to be found not merely in the particular view of the Scottish Church Establishment on ecclesiastical sentences, or Non-intrusion, but wherever the blessed Sacraments are denied to be intrinsically more than their outward signs; wherever the holy ministry of the Gospel is regarded as a conventional institution, and not as representing, by ecclesiastical descent, the Apostles, and that commission which they had from the hands of our Divine Redeemer.

46. We have already referred to the very singular picture which the ecclesiastical state of Scotland at the present time offers to view. Protestant dissent was strong and active in that country, even before the recent secession. In some parts of the country its numerical preponderance is now overwhelming; although the national Establishment is probably still owned by a majority of the entire population.* The strength of that Establishment lies partly in its civil connections and its position in the Act of Union, now more than ever important to it, partly in the orderly and decorous character of its recent traditions;

* [Apparently not so at this date.—W. E. G., 1878.]

partly we are bound to add, in the general, and we believe almost uniform respectability, both as to life and knowledge, of its ministers, and in their sincerity and diligence. A more angry and intractable spirit prevails, perhaps, in the ministers of the Free Church; but we do not envy the sceptical boldness of the man who can question their earnestness or magnanimity, or who can impute the sacrifice they have recently made to anything else, in the main, than a lofty determination to follow at all hazards the dictates of their consciences.

47. In the abandonment of a fixed and certain livelihood, and of a defined and highly respectable social position, by a large body of persons, most of them having wives and children wholly dependent upon them for support; in the splendid liberality with which all ranks and classes of the religious community they have formed, have contributed their temporal means for providing a religious organisation; in the activity, rapidity, and decision with which the proceedings of a body seemingly so large and loose, have been conducted on a scale so comprehensive; we think that every man must recognise, at the least, objects worthy of a searching curiosity, and we plead guilty for ourselves to perceiving in them abundant matter for admiring as well as sorrowful reflection. The causes of the admiration we have already explained or intimated; it is not difficult to explain the occasion which they afford for the sorrow and the shame justly attaching to our religious shortcomings.

48. We hear much of reviving zeal and activity in the English Church; if public notes of it were to be selected, perhaps most men would point to the recent subscription of £150,000 for the erection of schools in the manufacturing districts: and to the fund raised in London, under

the auspices and example of its excellent Bishop,* for the erection of churches; which amounts, we believe, to between £200,000 and £250,000. But compare for a moment the population of England with the population of Scotland, the wealth of England with the wealth of Scotland; then recollect that the Church of England is the Church of the noble and the rich, as well as of the people generally; that the Free Church has not perhaps an entire fourth of the population of Scotland for its adherents, and that of that fourth a very small proportion indeed are possessed of temporal abundance; that short indeed is the list of her noble names; and have we not ground for sorrow,—for that kind of sorrow which is full of bitter shame,—when we are told that the contributions to the Free Kirk of Scotland already reach nearly half a million sterling!

49. We know it has been said, that some of this is on paper, and will never be paid; that much of it has been abstracted from the contributions, that under the former system would have gone to the support of the poor; and that much of it has been collected by deceptive representations, by flattery, with addresses to the passions, and by a pertinacity of request almost carried to intimidation. This may be true of mere fractions; but it is not, as we are persuaded it cannot be, true of anything more; it does not impair an important general deduction; here are great masses of men ready to offer the sacrifices of faith according to their power, and beyond their power: with one heart, and with one soul; and that for the sake of a system, with regard to which we contend that its appeal, however elevated and touching it may be, has not the

* Dr. Blomfield.

Divine authority which we know to belong to the Body of Christ.

50. The minimum allowance for a preacher of the Free Kirk is fixed, we believe, at one hundred guineas from the public or central fund, over and above what may proceed from congregational contributions.

The Episcopal Communion of Scotland numbers among its adherents a large proportion of the nobility and other landed proprietors, as well as of the learned professions of that country. Of the lower (and, as one should suppose, the non-paying) class, it has but a small part. Yet it is only within the last few years that the minimum stipend of the incumbents of its churches has, mainly through the exertions of Dean Ramsay of Edinburgh, been raised to £80, including the offerings of their flocks; and the income which the Bishops derive from their sees amounts to about £100 a year upon the average, a moiety of that £100 proceeding from the bounty of the Crown.* Can there be found upon the face of the earth a more disgraceful contrast!

At the same time, there is some slender consolation in reflecting, that even the present state of things within the episcopal communion of Scotland is an improvement upon that to which it succeeds. It is, as we have stated, a *recent* effort that has secured to the clergy anything like a fixed stipend, however low. Another important undertaking is now in progress. About £20,000 have been raised for the erection of a college† in Perthshire, which is intended to bear the name of the Holy Trinity, and is

* [This state of things has been much mitigated by later efforts; while the State grant has been, I do not think improperly, withdrawn.—W. E. G., 1878.]

† [Now known as Trinity College, Glenalmond.—W. E. G., 1878.]

both to afford the means of training young men for orders, and likewise to offer to the members of the Church generally, what at present is unknown in Scotland, a good school on a large scale for their children, founded upon her principles.

51. When we observe the materials of religious excellence that everywhere abound in Scotland, and see how powerfully they work even in a narrow system, of human and secondary origin, it is impossible not to look with deep interest to the problem of her future destinies. What may not be expected from that land in times to come, if the beauty and the glory of the Lord's own house should once more become the desire of her people's heart, and should be restored by their willing hands throughout her borders ?